

Plato's *Republic* on Democracy

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Freedom, Fear and Tyrants Everywhere



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Abstract

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This thesis poses the question 'What is the critique of democracy in Plato's *Republic*?' It is not the first to do so. But contrary to standard readings, this thesis does not assume neither epistemological nor elitist explanations. Rather, it sees the Kallipolis, 'the beautiful city in words' as predicated on a particular anthropology. This theory of human nature, which claims that it is human to be greedy for wealth, sex, and power is contributed by Glaucon, Socrates' main interlocutor in the dialogue. Noting this, the argument of this thesis makes the following interpretational claims about the *Republic*: First, I claim that the Kallipolis should be read as an answer to the following question: *What would a just city look like given the anthropology of Glaucon?* The second claim informing this thesis is the following: Reading the *Republic* itself as challenging this anthropology, the function of the anthropology it provides is not so much a positive theory of human nature as it is revealing of what Glaucon, in most regards a paradigmatic Athenian citizen, thinks is human nature. His ideas and character are thus central to my reading of the *Republic*. What has this got to do with democracy? Glaucon's beliefs, ideas, and his character can not be understood without reference to the society which has produced him, that is, the democratic polis of Ancient Athens. This premise is inserted by the city-soul analogy, a central tenet of the argument of the *Republic*. As this thesis argues, the tripartite soul provides an explanatory model which accounts for why and how the human soul is moldable and plastic. Furthermore, the thesis contributes to the issue of akrasia, by that it based on this interpretation becomes possible to say that cases of akrasia, – breakdowns of rationality – differ in its causes like the souls of humans differ in their internal constitutions: Humans, the *Republic* postulates, simply attribute different weight to different reasons, depending on what part of our soul rules, and hence, what the soul has set as its 'good'. Building on this account of individual decision-making, this thesis offers a twofold analysis of how the interaction between regime and man is portrayed in the *Republic*, first with regard to the social institutions, secondly with regard to the political institutions.

This analysis is based on the premise that the Kallipolis represents an implicit critique against democratic Athens, but rather than being an ideal to offset democratic shortcomings, I argue that the Kallipolis is the realization of democratic desires combined with a need for justice. If, and only if, Glaucon's is the true anthropology of man, is Kallipolis the most just state. But, as this thesis will show, Glaucon's anthropology is not universalizable, but is rather an expression of the particularly democratic anthropology. Ultimately, Socrates will show that if allowed to evolve unchecked, the natural culmination of the democracy is tyranny. In order to make this argument, the *Republic* mobilizes tropes related to tyranny which already abound within democratic and dissenting discourse, in order to posit the democratic value of 'freedom' as closely related to the tyrannical lust for power. Following this interpretation, the answer to the initial question is that the *Republic* criticizes democracy's institutional practices, poetic tradition, and theoretical ideals showing how democracy instills in its citizens the kind of desires and values that will make them susceptible to the tyrannical coups which the Athenians of the fifth century seemed more than eager to avoid. In my reading of the *Republic*, the main threat was not outside forces, but their own desires and internal constitutions. Only through developing self-knowledge in the philosophical sense can the Athenian, represented by Glaucon, truly learn to guard himself against tyranny from within.

Keywords: Plato, Socrates, democratic theory, democratic philosophy, political philosophy, political theory, Ancient political theory, action theory, rationality, social choice theory, autonomy, epistemic vulnerabilities, akrasia, moral psychology, Ancient political institutions, Ancient social institutions, Athens, tyranny, oligarchy, democracy, simultaneous vote, Kallipolis, guardians, kings, kingship, decision-making, city, soul, polis, self-knowledge, judgement, freedom, power, fear, The Republic, oikos, private, public, History of Philosophy, demos, collectives

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Abbreviations

General Abbreviations

RR Reason Rules

AR Appetite Rules

SR Spirit Rules

Works by Plato abbreviated:

Symp. *Symposium*

Alc. *Alcibiades*

Gorg *Gorgias*

Prot. *Protagoras*

Apol. *Apology*

Charm. *Charmides*

Menex. *Menexenus*

For ancient works and authors, I have aspired to follow the standard listed in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed., rev, ed. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth and Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012).

Ath. Pol Athenian Constitution

Xen. Xenophon

Diog.Laert. Diogenes Laertius

Ps.Xen. Pseudo-Xenophon

Hdt. Herodots

Thuc. Thucydides

Hell. *Hellenica*

Mem. *Memorabilia*

Alc. *Lives, Alcibiades*

Introduction

Research Question and Topic

This thesis poses and answers the question, – “What is the *Republic*’s critique of democracy?” While the question is simple enough, the answer, according to this thesis, is complex. A simplified version of the answer is this: The *Republic*’s charge against democracy is, in the end, a critique of the values it ingrains. The answer is complex because as I will argue, understanding what this means, relies on understanding how the *Republic* conceives of the mouldability and plasticity of humans in relation to the institutions that we inhabit. How the singular individual responds to particular outside stimulus varies on its account, but the *Republic* sketches up a psycho-political typology which shows some typical constellations and synergies between regime and man. Among these regimes is democracy, and while the explicit critique of democracy is fairly limited, it is commonplace to read all or most of the *Republic* as a more or less implicit critique of democracy. This makes democracy by far the most central regime in the *Republic*, despite the fact that much of its argument is concerned with constructing a brand-new kind of regime, the Kallipolis. The analysis presented in this thesis takes the view that fundamental to the political ideas presented in the *Republic* is the interaction between the individuals and the social world they inhabit. I will adhere to the differentiations that the *Republic* itself operates with and analyze the *Republic*’s ideas on democracy in relation to its private, social, and political organization. In conclusion, I will argue that the *Republic* attacks democracy by attacking the logic inherent to its discourse: Democratic ideology is criticized by showing and arguing that what it places as its ‘good’: freedom, is an unsustainable principle. Furthermore, rather than standing in opposition to it, it has tyranny as the natural conclusion by virtue of the desires and ideas that it instils in the citizens.

In the *Republic*, a regime is a societal model and hence ‘democracy’ cannot be taken to mean only the political institutions that constitutes it but denotes the whole of the world that it encompasses and rules.^{1*}The *Republic* is the

¹ At the same time, it differentiates between institutions that belong to politics *proper* and the larger society. I embellish on this in chapters 3 and 4.

*An apology regarding the reference apparatus. I have used Zotero to keep track of my references which has caused some errors I have been unable to solve. This includes the punctuation mark which in all cases comes before the page numbers. It has also sometimes

answer to a challenge, known as ‘Glaucón’s Challenge’: Socrates is tasked with answering the question: is justice good?’ and thus to defend justice, without resorting to arguments pertaining to its consequences. Within this challenge, this thesis argues, is contained a hypothesis about human nature – an anthropology. While much of the surface-argument of the *Republic*, most importantly the Kallipolis – ‘the beautiful city’ which is constructed in the *Republic* – is predicated on a particular human anthropology, I argue that since the *Republic* itself, as well as several of the individual dialogues in the corpus present us with alternative anthropologies, there is no reason to assume that neither Socrates nor the author of the *Republic* subscribes to Glaucón’s anthropology. Rather, I argue, we should interpret the anthropology as revealing of Glaucón’s character. It is Glaucón who claims that human is by nature greedy, and who argues for the hypothesis that human nature seeks sex, wealth, and power, and further that this is the rational thing to do. But Glaucón is not unique in his views. Rather, he is portrayed as a young man in this dialogue, one that stands at a crossroads for choosing his path in life. As Plato’s younger brother, Glaucón – a historical as well as a dramatic character – undoubtedly belonged to the Athenian elite. It is a premise in this thesis that any views of his should also be seen as expressing paradigmatic views, prevalent among his peers with the effect of highlighting the crucial point: Regimes have a tendency to produce a certain kind of person. From Book I and from Glaucón’s Challenge in Book II, we get a core issue of the *Republic*, which is also at the core of political philosophy itself: How to defend cooperation against egoism; or how to conceive of the autonomy of the individual *vis a vis* the needs of the collective?²

These interpretational premises open up for a reading which differentiates between the argument of the Kallipolis and the argument of the *Republic* as a whole. While the Kallipolis is a radical exploration of a hypothetical “as if”-statement, based on the anthropology of the honor lover as exemplified by Glaucón, the *Republic*, taken as a whole, is a much more sophisticated construction in which democracy is challenged for the values which it imposes on and instills in the citizens – values that, I argue, have contributed to lead Glaucón to assume his anthropology. The anthropology upon which the Kallipolis is predicated is hence the democratic anthropology, and the question of justice is thus reduced from a universal claim to a claim about what justice is, to another question: what justice would look like if *and only if*

generated less or more information, like the year being left out. I have tried to remedy errors of the latter case, but feel fairly certain more remains. My apologies for any inconveniences to the readers. A further disclaimer regarding the text itself: Some formatting issues occurred in the pre-printing process, which unfortunately un-italicized many Greek terms and changed the sizes of the references, both in the text and in the notes. I have tried to rectify these errors as well, but more may very well remain.

² Or, the ethical formulation, the tension between a person’s interest and his “moral obligations”. Nicholas P. White, *A Companion to Plato’s Republic* (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997).p.9.

human nature was the way in which Glaucon claims it is, that is, if the democratic anthropology were indeed *the* human anthropology. This means that I do not see the critique of democracy as limited to what I will call the “direct critique” of Book VIII. Rather, I regard the critique of democracy as conveyed indirectly, through the constructive argument of the Kallipolis. This is a position I share with most of Plato’s readership. Contrary to many readings, however, I do not see the Kallipolis itself as a vehicle of criticizing democracy in the sense that ‘because the Kallipolis is good, democracy is bad,’ or that everything that is said to be good about the Kallipolis conveys to us what is bad about democracy as in a negative film. I see the argument of the Kallipolis as posing a criticism against democracy in the sense that democracy is what has caused the citizens to become such that the Kallipolis is the best kind of justice they can receive. So, while Kallipolis is the legislation of a just state for unjust men, I claim that the critical power this carries against democracy should be seen as a causal explanation for how the citizens come to be, and believe that they are, as Glaucon describes them. This sets my reading apart from others who also see the Kallipolis as an indirect critique of democracy, but who interpret Kallipolis as Plato’s political ideal. My reading also means that a similar reading could not be employed to all or any of the regimes mentioned in the *Republic*; Glaucon’s challenge as well as the values communicated therein, are distinctly democratic.

As one can read in any introduction to Plato’s political philosophy, the main criticism he seems to be making, is that the democratic system is lacking in knowledge. Plato’s political axiom is that knowledge is fundamental to good rule.³ A brief summary of a standard account of Plato’s views would tell us something along the following lines: Democracy does not support or make room for expertise in the realm of politics.⁴ On the contrary, it erroneously elevates each and every citizen to the level of political expert, installing as leaders others who lack technical expertise, namely the rhetors, who have learned from the sophists how to please the crowds. This also means that the democratic form of government is built on a fundamental denial of there being such a thing as a political expert.⁵ It is based on the notion that every farmer,

³ Melissa Lane, “Plato’s Political Philosophy: The *Republic*, The *Statesman* and the *Laws*,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. M.L. Gill and P. Pellegrin (Malden, Oxford, Victoria; Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 170–91. p. 171.

⁴ See for instance Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1981).p. 323, or David Keyt, “Plato on Justice,” in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. Hugh H. Benson (Malden, Oxford, Victoria; Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006). p. 346.

⁵ Something the *Statesman* claims at least, but which we should be careful not to unwittingly apply to the *Republic*, in which the question is treated of differently. For a succinct summary of what makes the *Republic* stand apart in Plato’s political thinking, see Christopher Rowe, “The Place of the Republic in Plato’s Political Thought,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato’s Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge Collections Online (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo: Cambridge University Press, 2007).p. 40.

merchant, and nobleman is equally well equipped to make decisions on behalf of the political community. As a consequence of the fact that each citizen inhabits several roles and is, unjustly, in a position of political authority, the democratic city-state is lawless and disorganized, lacks respect for traditional authority and hierarchies, and values liberty excessively.⁶ It is not the aim of this thesis to argue against this general portrayal. Rather, the aim of this thesis is to elaborate on some of the fundamental insights that in the *Republic* and elsewhere in the *corpus platonicum* lead to this very diagnosis. In Plato's masterful dialogue, the decision-making practices and the institutions themselves exert as much influence on the decisions and the decision-makers, as vice versa: Together they make up a self-escalating system. This crucial premise informs the analysis of the *Republic* on democracy in this thesis.

Central to most readings of the *Republic*, are the simile of the cave, the divided line, and the sun, all of which we find in what are often referred to as the 'central books', and all of which are concerned with knowledge. They also have in common that they will hardly be mentioned in this thesis. The relationship between virtue and knowledge is perhaps one of the most commented-on aspects of the *Republic*, and one that is left out of this thesis almost entirely. The reasoning behind this is as follows: What Books I- IV show us, is not only that the production and attainment of knowledge are socially determined, but also that whatever knowledge is, it is very often not the basis of our decisions. What constitutes the basis of decisions then? Some candidates are mentioned – fear and desire are hot contenders. What this thesis argues, is that the *Republic*'s answer to what constitutes the basis for our decisions is that this is a question which can only be answered by understanding decisions in relation to the social practices and environment within which these decisions are made. When Plato criticizes democracy, he treats democracy as both, one: a decision-making procedure, and two: a cultural idea that shapes the lives and preferences of its citizens. This reading of the *Republic* focuses on the textual layers that are concerned with how institutions – political and social – along with democratic decision-making procedures in and of themselves shape the kinds of decisions that are made, in that ideology not only influences political decisions, but also determines what should be regarded as political problems at all. Since the analysis of the institutions is, as is Socrates own argument, dependent on an understanding of the careful framework developed in Books I-III of the *Republic*, the first chapters of this thesis will be devoted, first, to an analysis of the premises of the argument of Plato's dialogue (chapter 1) and second, with the analysis of 'the soul' and how the soul is driven by a combination of internal and external

⁶ See Josiah Ober for a compact summary of Plato's political views, albeit based not only on the *Republic*, but including the *Apology*, the *Crito* and the *Gorgias* as well. Josiah Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule* (Princeton University Press, 2011). p160-62. See also Lane, "Plato's Political Philosophy: The *Republic*, The *Statesman* and the *Laws*."

forces (chapter 2). With this approach, it becomes possible to tease out more subtle and interesting nuances in the *Republic's* critique of democracy than the initial summary seemed to give cause for.

Given these premises, the thesis may now ask: what, in a democratic state, particularly, influences our decisions? This is an essential research question of this thesis and will inform my discussion in chapters 2-4. I will devote the first chapter to establish my particular reading of the *Republic* and its anthropologies. Since my argument hinges on a specific understanding of the tripartite soul as it is represented within the argument of the *Republic* this will be made topic in chapter 2. The interplay between internal motivations and how they are each (and differently) affected by the push and pull of external forces are integral for understanding what precisely it is that democracy is being blamed for and why. For this reason, the argument will proceed from a focus on internal forces to a discussion of external influencing factors, all the while noting their interplay, in chapters 3 and 4. The systematized way in which external factors work in a regime is through its institutions, and the analysis of democracy is divided between its social and its political institutions as these chapters will show, respectively. Finally, the explicit critique of democracy, as it is posed in Book VIII, will be read in the light of the preceding analysis, and in the end, I will argue that the *Republic's* critique of democracy is that the democratic principle of freedom, in a particular political interpretation as power, is an unsustainable and unstable principle. This principle and its workings in the citizens and institutions are, I conclude, what makes democracy susceptible to tyranny.

Research Context

The issue of Plato's critique of democracy in the *Republic* is well-known, and to ask what it is, what it consists in, might therefore perhaps appear surprising to some readers. For about two and a half millennia, it has been known that Plato dismisses the rule of the unwashed masses over that of the more educated, the intellectually superior philosophers and thinkers. This interpretation might be a commonplace, and on certain grounds, defensible reading of the *Republic*, but it has not gone uncontested. Scholars have come to quite different conclusions regarding central issues of the *Republic*. As Julia Annas puts it, "Plato has been seen as a revolutionary, a conservative; a fascist, a communist; a fiercely practical reformer and an ineffective dreamer."⁷ Since the time of Annas' publication, many excellent volumes have been added to the sections on Plato's Political Philosophy, especially with regard to works that operate in the intersections of Political Theory, Classics, Political Philosophy, and History of Philosophy. Jacob Howland has recently published

⁷ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 1.

a thought-provoking contribution in which he suggest that Glaucon might have died fighting alongside the Thirty Tyrants of Athens, and that we read the *Republic* in light of this.⁸ Gro Rørstadbotten has recently defended a thesis on the *Republic*, finding in Plato a voice for peace, against war.⁹ Melissa Lane has written the *Eco-Republic*, exploring how the political ethics of Plato can be utilized in our own battle against the climate crisis, and Cinzia Arruzza (2019) has analyzed Plato’s tyrant in relation to democracy.¹⁰ I mention these volumes as they are all relatively recent, well-conducted and in some regards persuasive, but very diverse in their approaches, their results and in which aspects of the dialogue upon which they base their interpretations. Importantly, they all contribute, in my opinion, to ‘keeping Plato in the conversation’, that is, to show how the *Republic* can still contribute to modern day intellectual debate about ideas that hold relevance, also for our own time. In this, I see these works as ideal. For, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in the post-war era, Plato’s most famous dialogue has received much more attention as a work in moral psychology and epistemology than as a political work.¹¹

This may well be due to Karl Popper’s “lingering influence’ as Arruzza writes. For even though Popper’s reading of the *Republic* has been discredited and for the most part refuted by Plato scholars,¹² there is still a prevalent tendency within the scholarship to either label Plato as a totalitarian, and to dissent from him on the relevant issues, or to not treat the politics of the *Republic* and the Platonic corpus at all. This lingering impact of Popper’s attack has, as Cinzia Arruzza points out, contributed to cementing modern liberal democracy as the “definitive political doctrine with which to measure thinkers of the past”.¹³ Navigating the *Republic* within this framework,

⁸ Jacob Howland, “Re-Reading Plato: The Problem of Platonic Chronology,” *Phoenix* 45, no. 3 (1991): 189, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1088791>.

⁹ Gro Rørstadbotten, “Plato - A Voice for Peace. Political Accountability and Dramatic Staging.” (Bergen: The University of Bergen, 2018).

¹⁰ Melissa Lane, *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue and Sustainable Living* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012). (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691151243/eco-republic.;>

Cinzia Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City: Tyranny and the Tyrant in Plato’s Republic*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹¹ *The Cambridge Companion*, and the *Blackwell Guide*, published only one year apart in the first decade of the 2000’s both demonstrate my point by including one or two chapters on its political aspects, among 16 and 13 contributions, respectively. G. R. F. Ferrari, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato’s Republic*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Gerasimos Santas, ed., *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic*, 1st edition (Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

¹² Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p 157.

¹³ Cinzia Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City: Tyranny and the Tyrant in Plato’s Republic* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). p. 98. I take the debate about Socrates’ conception of courage, conducted between acclaimed Plato-scholars like Paul Woodruff and Gregory Vlastos, and also Ryan K. Balot, as an example of this tendency. These texts are among those who regard Plato’s political thinking as inherently flawed, as they approach

modern-day scholars who in fact do treat the political aspects of the *Republic*, have often deployed the following two strategies or a mixture: either to condemn Plato on the charge of being an anti-liberal, or to employ a more apologetic stance. The latter has given rise to a number of claims arguing that Plato was not, after all, so opposed to democracy but should rather be seen as an immanent and friendly critic. As a result, two positions have emerged as dominant and may be clearly identified in the debates about the *Republic's* overall position on democracy: Plato the totalitarian, and Plato the critical democrat.¹⁴

The latter position sees Plato's Socrates as more of a liberal with no deep quarrel with democracy, but rather engaged with democracy as a friendly critic. This line of interpretation is rather recently argued for by Arlene Saxonhouse, and by Sarah Monoson.¹⁵ Paying heed to the dramatic aspects of the dialogue, Saxonhouse argues that the inconsistencies of the *Republic's* positions on poetry and imitation open up for another kind of reading, one that sees Plato's dialogue as conveying a "democratic orientation".¹⁶

My own position is this: while I do agree that the critique of democracy offered in the *Republic* is "inherent", in the sense that it comes from within democracy itself¹⁷, I do not therefore necessarily see it as friendly. In the 5th century BCE, the hegemonic political discourse in Athens was the democratic one.¹⁸ This made democracy difficult to criticize not only socially, but discursively as well. The *Republic* is a critique from the inside of democratic

Plato's work from a perspective where liberal democracy is the standard for good form of government, and thereby find that Plato falls short of it. Paul Woodruff, "Socrates and Political Courage," *Ancient Philosophy* 27 (2007): 289–302. Ryan K. Balot, "Socratic Courage and Athenian Democracy," *Ancient Philosophy*, Mathesis Publications, Inc. 28, no. 1 (2008): 49–69, <https://doi.org/10.5840/ancientphil20082813>. Gregory Vlastos, "Epilogue: Socrates and Vietnam," in *Socratic Studies* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo; Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Melissa Lane is typical in her explicit condemnation, signaling that she condemns the *Republic's* politics, before she goes on to extract the salvageable pieces, when she concedes that "details of the Republic are antiquated beyond repair", criticizing Plato for putting too much weight on the ruling classes while ignoring the rest of the citizens, thereby restricting knowledge to an elite. Melissa Lane, *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue and Sustainable Living*. p.96.

¹⁵ Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "The Socratic Narrative: A Democratic Reading of Plato's Dialogues," *Political Theory* 37, no. 6 (2009): 728–53. C. J. Rowe also argues in support of this general vein. C. J. Rowe, "Killing Socrates: Plato's Later Thoughts on Democracy," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (2001): 63–76, <https://doi.org/10.2307/631828>; Sara Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "The Socratic Narrative: A Democratic Reading of Plato's Dialogues," *Political Theory* 37, no. 6 (2009): 728–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591709345461>, p. 730.

¹⁷ As opposed to maybe the kind of critique offered by the "Old Oligarch", Ps.Xen, *The Athenian Constitution*.

¹⁸ Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p. 28. See also Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989). pp. 332-339.

discourse in the sense that it aims to reveal and destabilize it, so as to create a theoretical position from which criticism is possible without turning into a defense for other, also problematic, kinds of regimes. Following Josiah Ober, I think the target for the political criticism evident in Plato's work targets not only his fellow-elite readership, but also includes "the language and logic of democracy itself".¹⁹

While also this thesis offers an approach which takes the drama of the dialogue seriously, I do not, unlike Saxonhouse and Monoson, conclude that the inherent ambiguities in the *Republic* add up to a reading which allows for the *Republic* to be portrayed as pro-democratic. And, unlike Strauss, I do not see the elitism of the Kallipolis as central to Plato's views on democracy in the sense that his critique of democracy could be summed up as an epistemological legitimization of elitism. I find this view to be debunked by certain claims within the *Republic* itself, as I will come back to during at various point in this thesis. Unlike Popper, I do not find in Plato a spokesperson for the origins of fascism, but rather a thoughtful investigator of political regimes and their effects, in which the politically minded reader might very well find the origins of fascism in the guise of tyranny, but only because the author of the *Republic* is holding them up for us to see. In my reading, many of the controversial ideas from the *Republic* are presented not to be admired and imitated, but rather as a cause for concern or scrutiny: Some prime examples are the themes of power, violence, force and persuasion, – all on which the *Republic* is nuanced, thought-provoking and ambiguous. Furthermore, the dialogue itself tasks us with pondering over the causes of such phenomena, especially in how we conceive of political power. For, in the *Republic*, the origins of the ideas of political power discussed are in part to be found within the structural and ideological framework of the democratic regime itself, and this, I argue, is more than anything, the central tenet of Plato's critique of democracy.

What underpins many of the available readings of the political philosophy expressed in the *Republic*, and certainly that of Popper, is that every positive suggestion in the *Republic* is taken to indicate an implicit critique of democracy. The explicit and direct criticism of democracy in the *Republic* is almost exclusively conveyed in Book VIII and amounts to a critique less damning than one might expect from democracy's most famous adversary and which I will present in a summary below. Hence, most of what is usually understood as Plato's antidemocratic sentiments is arguably inserted by the reader. As such, a reading of Plato's *Republic* such as Popper's, largely relies upon biting into a specific perspective and then swallowing it hook, line and sinker. So that when Popper accuses Plato of omitting the competing democratic theory of justice, such as that of equalitarianism (*isonomia*), he assumes that Plato does this out of spite, "and all we hear of it consists of a

¹⁹ Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p. 28.

few sneers and pin-pricks, well-matched with the abusive attack upon the Athenian democracy”.²⁰ The fact of the matter is that we do not know whether Plato has Socrates allude to egalitarianism in a scornful way, or if the joke is rather at his own expense.²¹ As Saxonhouse’s careful analysis has shown, even such passages are not unambiguous,— when Socrates calls the democratic regime “beautiful”(557c) we need not insert scornfulness, but perhaps rather a true duality on the part of the text towards democracy.²² The so-called “cheap cracks”²³ referred to by Popper, are placed within the only part of the *Republic* which explicitly states that it targets democracy, the passages 555b-565d.²⁴ To provide an initial summary of the passages in which Socrates alternately accounts for the becoming of, and is critical towards democracy, I will present the main points, first against the democratic regime, then against the democratic man.

The democratic regime:

1. Democracy comes into being when the poor realizes that the wealth-elite does not rule because of their superior strength (566d-557b).
2. Wealth is valued above virtue, particularly moderation. (555d-556c).
3. a) The democratic regime is characterized by freedom and license.
b) Because each is free to pursue whatever activity and organize his life as he wishes “all sorts of human beings come to be” (557b-d).
4. Given iiiia) there follows a lack of compulsion and force (558a).
5. Given iiib) it also contains all sorts of regimes (557e)
6. Democracy does not discriminate on skills, but appoint leaders and politicians on the grounds of how well disposed they are to the multitude. (558c)
- 7.
8. The democratic man:
9. Through the influence of external influences, the son of the oligarch is torn between suppressing desires for the sake of making money and giving in to pleasure. (559d-e)
10. He then comes to be at the mercy of external forces (559e-560a)

²⁰ Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: The Spell of Plato* (London: Routledge, 2012). p 99.

²¹ If we were as imaginative as Popper e.g., regarding the intentions of the author, we might surmise that Plato here has Socrates make a fool out of him for failing to address adequately a crucial theory, for example. For, when an analogous case happens in the *Theaetetus*, and Socrates abstains from going into the Paramedian theories of being as stillness this is usually interpreted as a form of reverence.

²² See Saxonhouse, “The Socratic Narrative,” 2009. p. 746-7.

²³ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: The Spell of Plato*. p. 280, n. 14.

²⁴ Between Book I and VIII “democracy” is not mentioned even once. The passages could be further divided into topics: The democratic regime, the democratic man, democratic desires and the democratic relation to tyranny. I have here included the transformation from oligarchy on the reasoning that important premises are retained from that argument, especially pertaining to the relationship between wealth and virtue.

11. If the democratic forces are victorious, they will take the “acropolis” of the young man’s soul through breeding desires which in turn multiply and banish virtuous sentiments (560a-d).
12. Insolence, anarchy, freedom, wastefulness and shamelessness are returned from exile and given new names. (Insolence = good education, anarchy = freedom, wastefulness = magnificence, shamelessness = courage) (560e).
13. If lucky, he will live within his means until the “great disturbances” of youth have passed, and some of the exiled sentiments will be reinstalled. He then goes on to hand over the rule of his soul to pleasures whenever they occur to him. (561a-b)
14. He honors and caters to all desires, based on the principle of equality (561b-d).
15. Given vi), the democratic person can undertake quite a variety of endeavors, ranging from philosophy to gymnastics or money making.
16. The problem is that what becomes his main engagement is left in large part to a) chance and luck (561d3) and b) to what he admires (561d4).

This is, strictly speaking, what Plato’s famous critique of democracy adds up to. Seeing the argument thus drily summarized, one may wonder not only what the fuzz is about, but also what the disagreements consist in. The answer, of course, has to do in part with Plato’s literary devices, and the wording in which he wraps these arguments. In these passages, certain words and allusions stand out to anyone who have some knowledge of Greek history and it certainly would have caught the attention of the original readers. Ambiguities are introduced into the text by careful wording, references, both plain and subtle, and omissions as well as inclusions are subject for scrutiny, as they should be. To provide an example: in passage 556, Socrates and Adeimantus discuss the change from oligarchy to democracy, and Socrates says that it happens as follows: “Just as a sickly body needs only a slight push from the outside to become ill, [...] so too doesn’t a city that is in the same kind of condition, on a small pretext – men brought in as allies from the outside [...] fall sick and do battle with itself [...]?” (556e). This is given the form of a general assessment, but may, when the historical and literary context is taken in to consideration, as well as the intra-dialogical context, be taken to indicate the Spartan involvement in the power struggle that occurred after the death of Pisistratus, and which played a role in what became a full civil war between 510 and 508 BCE.²⁵ Related to this, as in part, a consequence of such textual Russian dolls as the one mentioned above, is that “Plato’s critique of democracy” very rarely denotes merely the limited, direct critique of Book VIII, but normally includes a reading of many of the arguments as well as the Republic itself as an indirect critique of democracy. This is also true of those

²⁵ See Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp 67-68.

volumes which place less weight on interpreting the dramatic aspect of the dialogue.

By pointing to this tendency as explanatory for the lack of consensus on democracy in the *Republic*, I do not mean to criticize it. In fact, I myself argue from a similar assumption, explicated below. Rather, I wish to point it out as a way of preparing the ground for my own interpretation, by reminding the reader that our assumptions about what is said in the *Republic*, often rely not so much on singular textual passages as it does on our own interpretational premises. These interpretational premises, we would do well to remember, are always of our own making, however well-funded they may be. In the following, I will make clear my own set of premises and the method by which they have been reached.

Notes on Methodology

Ancient Greece is a historical reality, but it is also an imaginary place symbolizing our common origin. It contributes to our ideas of self and identity, in that we see ourselves as related to it while it also constitutes an Other, one that places our own culture in a relief. Since this thesis relies heavily on contextualization of the *Republic*'s ideas in establishing its argument, some of the issues and methodological problems associated with historical research are relevant for this thesis. These issues are elaborated on in appendix I, and so I will here only comment briefly on some important considerations. Furthermore, I will justify the choice of emphasizing contextualization in this thesis. Methodologically, Plato's works pose challenges for the interpreter mainly on two accounts. First, because they were written in the form of dialogues, and secondly, because of the distance in time between the time of writing and the present. Although intertwined, these challenges will be treated separately in this section.

The ancients hold a special kind of sway as we see them, at least symbolically, as our predecessors and as the cradle of western culture at large. Yannis Hamilakis writes that the name 'Greece' itself always primarily denotes antiquity, hence creating a need to add the prefix 'modern' in order to denote modern day Greece and its people. 'Greece' is thus both a country and a *topos* of the western imagination,²⁶ with the Acropolis as the center piece in the crown of ruins that is our history and self-understanding. That Ancient Athens holds a special place in our cultural imaginary and self-understanding is a fact, and this is particularly prominent with regard to the democracy we see ourselves as having inherited from them, and which is the focal point of this thesis. There is an imminent danger of exaggerating our likenesses. The

²⁶ Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). p. 58.

answer to this challenge is, I think, not to deny that any such likeness can be found but to try to be careful and diligent in our work.²⁷ This means, in my interpretation, to sometimes take on the role of the “friendly reconstructor” as suggested by Richard Rorty²⁸, but to also strive to be very lucid and clear about which notions, concepts, and thoughts one ascribes to the ancient sources, and to engage in reflexivity about which assumptions and additions one brings to the table. While this route undoubtedly will lead to yet more missteps, the rewards are also greater than in the alternative: to insist on “the irreducible foreignness”²⁹ of the ancients, and in consequence, their inaccessibility. This holds true especially when it comes to the potential for philosophical yields.

Contained within these pages, the reader will find an in-depth study of the political philosophy of the *Republic*, in which some points of contact with current issues within political science are pointed out by a reformulation of these issues into a contemporary vocabulary. This approach seems to be in tune with what Gadamer has in mind when he writes about historical research: A researcher reading the history from two or three generations back will find it “outdated” because he knows more, but will also see that the sources were interpreted differently because “they [the researchers] were moved by different questions, prejudices, and interests.”³⁰ As research continues to unearth new knowledge about the ancients, we must continue to reread and re-contextualize Plato as well.³¹

²⁷ In 1949 E. R. Dodds insisted on the ancients’ difference from the moderns in terms of their irrationality. Later, Quentin Skinner’s contributions to historiographic methodology also contributed to cementing the attitude that the Greeks were fundamentally different to us, by insisting on the embeddedness of the political thinkers of times past. While I take Skinner’s program for contextualizing arguments seriously, I do not think this reasoning amounts to the arguments being unable to say something beyond being responsive. While this thesis does not itself offer an historical-comparative approach, this is not due to any principled opposition on my account, but rather on limited time and recourses. Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London; University of California Press, 1951).; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, vol. Volume 1: The Renaissance* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town; Cambridge University Press, 1978). See preface.

²⁸ Richard Rorty, “The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres,” in *Philosophy in History: Essays in the Historiography of Philosophy*, ed. Jerome B. Schneewind, Quentin Skinner, and Richard Rorty, Ideas in Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 49–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511625534.006>.

²⁹ A paraphrase of Paul Cartledge, who wrote that the ancients were “desperately foreign” and their communities “irreducibly alien” to our own. Paul Cartledge, “Reading History: The Birth of Greek Civilisation,” *History Today* (London, United Kingdom: History Today Ltd., July 1, 1983). p. 45.

³⁰ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London, New York; Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). p. xxix.

³¹ Kurt A. Raaflaub wrote in his introduction to *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* that research on the ancient Athenian democracy during the last 30 years have “intensified and yielded most impressive results. Kurt A. Raaflaub et al., *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, First edition (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2008). This thesis will also demonstrate how such new research can portray certain aspects of the *Republic* in a new light, in chapter 4 particularly.

But this does not mean that we should overlook differences which are significant for understanding the scope of the arguments presented. One such noteworthy difference is in the very notion of democracy versus *demokratia*. The most striking difference between ours and their democracy is the extent to which democratic decision-making in Ancient Greece was direct whereas ours is representative. This difference plays a minimal role in my analysis, but could, given a different project, be granted a much more prominent role. As it is, I will suffice to say that I think many of the challenges remain the same – collective decision making is still in some sense social decision-making, although that comparison remains to be made at another time.

The word itself, democracy, composed of *demos* (people) and *kratia* (rule) is one amongst the many we have inherited from the Ancients, and it would seem to be self-explanatory, usually taken to mean “rule of the people”. But one does not have to think very hard or look very far to discover that what this commonly used term designates in reality is a wide array of systems of state-management, albeit connected in that they all involve elections in some way. The term democracy has come to be used almost synonymously with representative democracy and with electorate systems, but as democracy has become more widely accepted as the political currency of legitimacy, the more broadly it is defined”.³² One feature of the Greek sources that have survived, perhaps most strikingly evident in the funeral speech of Pericles³³, is the extent to which ideology and cultural self-understanding *as* “a democratic culture” constitute democracy and democratic attitudes and so in turn impact the success or failure of the system itself: A democracy is, among other things, a system made up of people who believe that they live in a democracy.

Despite these differences, the study of the Ancients and their political institutions continues to endlessly fascinate scholars in history as well as in political science, and in my contextualization of the *Republic* I will, despite the perils of such an endeavor, draw on historical research from several disciplines that are not my own. I do this because I truly believe it is the best methodological approach to access the philosophical and political content encompassed by this multifaceted dialogue.

For Plato did write dialogues. The format carries endless possibilities: for alluding to real-life events; for inserting historical figures laden with meaning for those who wish to see it; for ambiguities and inconsistencies. As such it also contains endless possibilities for the interpreter to pursue an exploration of any given topic, and also endless problems. While it has become a commonplace remark to make note of the fact that Plato wrote dialogues, the question of what one should do about it still seems to generate an array of

³² Katherine Fierlbeck, *Globalizing Democracy: Power, Legitimacy and the Interpretation of Democratic Ideas*, 2nd edition (Manchester University Press, 2008). p. 45.

³³ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, II, 235-246.

answers and some confusion.³⁴ Some will note it while only attributing to it minor weight and little significance, while others take the dialogues' dramatic aspect very seriously.³⁵ Despite the variety, I think it is safe to say that most Plato-scholars now seem to unite behind the idea that Socrates is not reducible to a stand-in for Plato. The problem of Platonic Anonymity, that Plato never in fact says, or argues, for anything at all, and that Plato's own views are destined to remain mythical creations I have tried to honor by diligently attributing the arguments I refer to, to the dialogue instead of the author. As a result, this is a thesis about the *Republic's* critique of democracy' rather than on Plato's critique of democracy'. This might seem like an easy way out, but I have found the approach to be recommendable. For one thing, it keeps the mind from slipping into ascribing to Plato ideas and motives which we really cannot know whether he held, simply because language demands a subject to which to ascribe its verbs. Secondly it takes into account what Tigerstedt calls the "double dialogue":³⁶ On the one hand 'the dialogue' is the "meeting of minds" between Socrates and his interlocutors, and on the other hand, there is another meeting of minds, another dialogue, between Plato and his readers. "These two dialogues are not identical", Tigerstedt states.³⁷ I agree, and even though it is difficult to say in a sentence what exactly paying heed to this difference will amount to, I hope the reader will find that I strive to treat Socrates, perhaps not as any old character, but as a character within a dialogue. Socrates can therefore have views that he argues for, and he can have motives and strategies. What Plato's philosophical, or argumentative aim in showing these particular views or conversational strategies at any given point of the dialogue amounts to is a much more elusive object of study. But it is clear to me that the whole dialogue speaks, and that its voice is not tantamount to any one or all of the characters appearing in it.

It is tempting to draw on Plato's own imagery when describing his works, for are they not beautiful and do they not seem to be like a "multicolored robe embroidered with every kind of ornament, [...] and embroidered with every kind of character type"? (*Rep*, 557c). These are the words Plato has Socrates

³⁴ An extensive treatment is Charles L. Griswold Jr, *Platonic Writings/Platonic Readings*, 1st edition (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2001).

³⁵ See Reeve for an example of someone who duly notes the dramaturgy of the dialogue, but yet see it as of minor importance for the interpretation. C. D. C. Reeve, *Blindness and Reorientation: Problems in Plato's Republic, Blindness and Reorientation* (Oxford University Press, 2013),

<http://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199934430.001.0001/acprof-9780199934430.p.38>.

³⁶ E. N. Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato* (Stockholm, Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1977). p.98. G. R. F. Ferrari, I take it, argues for basically the same idea, when he insists on the importance of the difference between Socrates and Plato in that Plato will sometimes communicate to the reader things neither Socrates nor his interlocutors can participate in. G. R. F. Ferrari, "Plato the Writer," *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, December 19, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.5840/epoche2014121728>.

³⁷ Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*. p. 98.

use to describe the democratic regime and they could likewise be used to describe his own texts. That this inserts a certain ambiguity or a polyphony into the texts of Plato is undeniable, as has been duly noted and the implications argued for by many prominent scholars.³⁸ To make matters worse, even if one does ascribe to the mouth-piece theory, inconsistencies will appear, in the corpus surely, but within a single dialogue as well.³⁹ While some are fallacies, some seem to be purposefully inserted. The problem lies in determining which is which.

Furthermore, Socrates, even without the additional burden of being a mouth-piece, is a difficult character. Socrates is at times a ventriloquist, an old man, a young boy, a joker, and a deadly serious thinker, a dreamer and conjurer of images and myths so beautiful as to make one cry, only for in the very next moment to bring us crashing down to earth again by some soul-crushingly bitter insight into the warped and limited existence we call human life. His manifold character can with equal credibility be likened to such unlike images as the Typhon, the Silenus statues, and the gadfly.⁴⁰ He is also in the habit of using irony, and to sometimes ridicule his interlocutors by feigning naivety or incredulousness. Or perhaps not feigning. The point is that it is hard to tell.⁴¹ He is a character of whom we cannot make uniform claims without resorting to reductionism, and he seems to be crafted to make it impossible to overlook the full complexity that makes up a human being, and as such he not simply a philosophical hero, but things less sympathetic as well. As the dialogues themselves, the sheer unpredictability of Socrates is engaging.

That a Platonic dialogue is not simply an argument, but also a drama, that is, a text which is also decidedly a piece of literature, is hard to overlook, although heroic attempts have been made. But, faced with Plato's manifold literary devices, several scholars have come to make use of interpretational tools imported from literary studies. Concepts such as 'intertextuality' and "polyphony" have proven fruitful when applied to the corpus, and are now widespread in the literature.⁴² Confronted with what may seem a disappointing

³⁸ I recommend especially Saxonhouse on the topic, or Jacob Howland, both of whom reads Plato with a sensitivity to the literary aspects that I can only aspire to. For example Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity: The Birth of Political Science in Ancient Greek Thought*, Reprint edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Howland, "Re-Reading Plato." See also Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). And Christopher Gill on "Platonic Dialogue" in Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin, eds., *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, 1st edition (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

³⁹ Tigerstedt makes a pleasant read on this topic, see for instance pp. 13-16, and p. 22.

⁴⁰ In the *Phaedrus* Socrates asks whether he is like the Typhon, a mythical many-headed beast with as many voices. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 820 – 841. See also, respectively, *Symposium* 215b, and the *Apology* 30e.

⁴¹ See also Tigerstedt, who makes this point. p. 95.

⁴² Andrea Nightingale is an early and prominent proponent of this approach and Martha Nussbaum is an example of the successful merging between literary methods and analytical

lack of unity, or at least not an easily available unity, the reader is forced to engage with the dialogue's philosophical questions on her own.⁴³ I hold, as did the Neoplatonists, that there is not one single correct reading to a Platonic dialogue, although there are ones that are well substantiated and those that are not. A dialogue is not, as many Plato-scholars have now come to acknowledge, at least in theory, simply an argument. Neither is it a crossword puzzle or some kind of rebus in which, if we are clever enough, we can find the one true answer, or the hidden meaning that reveals all.⁴⁴ Rather, I think it can be interpreted as a series of challenges and responses, which at the same time open up to a multitude of other possible responses, responses that the reader herself would want to inject, and which sometimes place the dialogues into conversation with other Plato-dialogues, as well as with other ancient works of literature.

Does this approach lay the thesis bare to the critique we have often heard of the Straussian tradition, that, as long as one cherry-picks among passages and allows for ample use of Socratic irony one can make the dialogue say whatever one wants it to say? I do not think so. A well conducted contextualizing is rich, transparent, and well-grounded in the text itself, and, in the end, – plausible, – which a worse one will not be.

This thesis is guided by the question of democracy, and so the scope to some extent determines which some themes and passages will be highlighted, and which will remain overlooked. Readings are also guided by their intellectual aims. While some are intended to describe Plato's views, others are more interested in characters, or to use the dialogue a starting point for further philosophizing. As the different readings in this thesis do not address the same questions, neither do they produce the same answers. Similarly, my own selection of materials has necessarily centered on the sections which I think contributes to enlighten the topic of democracy. Other sections are included insofar as they inform what I take to be the main thread of the argument. My main focus in chapter 1 is Book I and 'Glaucón's Challenge'

philosophy. Arlene Saxonhouse, as well as G. R. F Ferrari both thank Leo Strauss for the turn towards literature in Plato-readings, as does Jacob Howland but the Straussian interpretational tradition seems to bring with it more assumptions than only the tools from literary studies to Plato- research. Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511582677>.; Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).; Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁴³ Many have pointed out and argued for the presumably educational and activating aspect of the platonic dialogues. See e.g. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue.*; A. K. Cotton, *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014). On lack of unity, see Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato. Sic passim*. The unity-issue mostly falls outside the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁴ I say this knowing full-well that this is how I myself are often tempted to treat Plato's dialogues and undoubtedly, the danger of over-interpretation is present in this thesis as well.

from Book II. In chapter 2 I turn to the question of decision-making, most clearly related in Book IV. In chapter 3 I treat of social institutions and their political status, making Book V the natural locus of attention. Chapter 4 treats of political institutions, making Book VI of particular interest, especially the ‘ship-of-state’ simile and the ‘apology of the philosopher’. Book VIII and parts of Book IX are addressed in the final chapter. As regards secondary literature on Plato I have not aimed at a comprehensive bibliography, but limited myself mainly to the literature which in some way has informed my own reading and interpretations. Finally, I have included secondary literature to support and inform my readings which would fall under the heading of ‘political theory’. This literature is minimal and could in the future be added to.

Finally, a note on developmentalism, or the idea that there is a particular order to the dialogues, a debate which for a happy but brief moment in time seemed to have solved most problems regarding chronology and authenticity.⁴⁵ This consensus no longer exists and has not existed for some time. The order of the dialogues concerns this thesis only in the slightest sense, and all relevant issues can be solved without entering into this debate. When I still bring it up, it is for the reason that I do not, as it were, support developmentalist arguments, and this opens up for some ways of approaching the materials which would otherwise be awkward, or even impossible. More specifically, this applies for Book I’s relation to the rest of the Books of the *Republic*, and potentially holds relevance for the relationship between the *Republic* and other dialogues mentioned in this thesis. So, without unity, without chronology and without a hidden doctrine, where does that leave this thesis?

Before going on to the constructive part of this account, let me sum up this section in the dialogue form by stating clearly that I do not think that the polyphonic and multifaceted character of Plato’s works means that it is not possible to make convincing arguments in favor of one reading or another, as we have seen, and undoubtedly will continue to see in the future, many impressive examples of. But what they are, and how to read the dialogue, depend on which dialogue, and on what angle or topic one wants to examine and with which tools one approaches the topic. For my purposes, the tools imported from literature studies will be an important supplement to the historical approach, in that they enrich the contextualization to include also the dialogues’ contexts within the corpus, as well as the broader literary context Plato wrote in, although they too contribute to exposing the thesis to further risks; literary studies is not my discipline neither. Yet again, my

⁴⁵ Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*. p, 19-20. See also Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue*. particularly chapter 2, pp, 38-48. The most persuasive arguments against developmentalism, I find, is that there is nothing to indicate in the texts themselves, that something would be gained in understanding by reading the dialogues in a particular order. On this, see Howland, “Re-Reading Plato.” p. 203.

defense is that the questions I want to pose to the dialogue are best answered by an approach that takes the dialogues seriously as literature, and that literary studies offers me the tools I need in order to do so.

Contextualization will be my most important methodological approach and by contextualization, I mean historical and political context, as well as textual context, both internal and external to the corpus. This will cause me to rely on methods and tools from disciplines other than philosophy, making this thesis an interdisciplinary work.

Interpretational Premises

After having gone through all the ways in which I do not think the *Republic* should be read, this section will outline the premises that underpins my own interpretation of the *Republic*. As such, this is an attempt at stating, rather briefly, the main tenants of the reading one will find in this thesis, and the assumptions and considerations which underpins them.

As mentioned, scholarly contributions on the *Republic* differ greatly, both in scope and method. Nevertheless, I do agree with Christopher Rowe that while there might be controversies surrounding almost every claim made about the *Republic*, the bottom line of the work still holds: the main proposal that “embraces” the whole structure of the dialogue, that justice is good, is a serious one.⁴⁶ But this does not go to say that all of the *Republic*’s many digressions, topics and paradoxes equate to that simple proposition, that justice is good. Other topics, explored on their own, might very well lead in other directions, and fruitfully so. But one question that we should be able to at least suggest an answer to, is this: if the message of the *Republic* is simply “justice is good”, why is it that we get the *Republic*? In other words: If the question is “is justice good?”, why is this particular dialogue the answer? My own suggestion is twofold: The answer is partly methodological, and partly it has to do with the philosophical and normative proposition that the dialogue defends. The methodological part of the answer is that the *Republic* is the exploration of a hypothesis that follows the implications of one formulation of that hypothesis to the very end: The hypothesis is that human nature is rationally self-interested,⁴⁷ and additionally that what it is to be rational is to want more (and more) of sex, wealth, and power. Granted this description of human nature – and given that one would want the luxurious city that Glaucon wants – the institutions of the Kallipolis are the ones that will secure justice in

⁴⁶ Christopher Rowe, “The Literary and Philosophical Style of the Republic,” in *The Blackwells Guide to Plato’s Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Santas, Blackwell Guides to Great Works (Wiley-Blackwell, 13-24, 2006), 7-24. p. 9.

⁴⁷ Obers reformulation in Josiah Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*, Sather Classical Lectures, 2019 (UC Berkeley: University of California Press, Forthcoming). See chapter 1.3. in particular.

the city. The implicit premise of the “beautiful city” is that if this is an accurate representation of human nature, which one can deem probable or likely, or untrue – and, given that justice is what Socrates postulates it to be, *then* justice can only be obtained by a strict division of labor in which it is the task of the philosophers, and only the philosophers, to rule.

This idea points to another facet of the methodological answer. As mentioned above, one of the premises of this thesis is that I regard the *Republic* as aimed at criticizing the prevalent democratic reasoning, its discourse, without getting caught up in the dichotomy between democracy and tyranny. One of the implications this interpretational premise brings out, but that Socrates and the interlocutors are silent about, is that to ask “is justice good” would compel the average democratic Athenian to answer both yes and no. “Yes”, justice is good for a city, but “no” justice is disadvantageous to myself. This inconsistency of reasoning is built into the very challenge upon which the dialogue is predicated and shapes the answer: Socrates is trying to show what it would take for justice to be good for both citizen and the state, by making it into one thing. As such, the inconsistency in democratic reasoning which is pointed out is revealed, in part, from the format the answer takes.

Methodologically speaking, the *Republic* can be seen as a radical exploration of two hypotheses, not immediately consistent with each other: 1) Glaucon’s theory of rationality as self-interested and 2) the idea that justice is good. This observation carries important implications for the interpretational premise of this thesis. In the following, I will draw on two methodological strands from respectively *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus* in order to elaborate on this premise. *Parmenides* is of particular interest because in my view the method employed in the *Republic* in some regards corresponds to the method, we find that the young Socrates learns from Parmenides, and which he also alludes to in the *Theaetetus*. These dialogues are helpful for illuminating my take on the methodological approach in the *Republic*, as will become clear below.

The *Parmenides* belongs to the *Republic*’s intra-corpus context in the sense that also in this dialogue does Kephalus meet Glaucon and Adeimantus (126a). Although this Kephalus is a different one from the version we encounter in the *Republic*, the intertextuality is clear. In the dialogue named after the man who has been referred to as Plato’s spiritual father,⁴⁸ a young Socrates is schooled by the then venerable Parmenides and told that if he wants to be trained more thoroughly, he: “must not only hypothesize, if each thing is, and examine the consequences of that hypothesis;” but he “must also hypothesize, if that same thing is not.”⁴⁹ Now, what does Parmenides mean by this, and why do I think it has anything to do with the *Republic*?

⁴⁸ Vigdis Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women: The Birth of Sexism in Western Thought*, trans. Peter Cripps (London ; New York: Continuum, 2003). p. 21

⁴⁹ *Parmenides*, 136 a.

The answer to the first question is that Parmenides seems to be saying that a hypothesis, being the starting point for philosophical investigations, must be examined not only in itself, but also in its consequences; If the logical consequences of a given hypothesis are unreasonable or seems to lead to conclusions that are obviously false, then the hypothesis must be wrong. A version of this form of argument may be observed in the *Theaetetus*, a dialogue which can be read as an exploration of philosophy's different working methods.⁵⁰ Here, Socrates has the young man Theaetetus suggest definitions (hypotheses) of what knowledge is. Theaetetus' first attempt is shown to result in multiple absurdities, and hence, a statement such as "knowledge is perception" must be abandoned due to its unreasonable consequences.⁵¹ Now, this is not to say that Plato claims that this sort of *reductio ad absurdum* is the philosophical method per excellence, – on the contrary; in the *Theaetetus* we can also read a warning against eristic arguments, arguments employed only with the aim of winning an argument rather than to uncover the truth about a matter, in which this kind of argument may be included if used poorly.⁵² However, as recently pointed out by Evan Rodriguez, the method laid out by Parmenides prescribes exploring *both* sides of an argument.⁵³ Notwithstanding, another mention of Parmenides, found in the *Theaetetus*, might alert us to how we could interpret the above methodological reflections in relation to the *Republic*: Socrates abstains from going into the Parmenidean account of being in the *Theaetetus*. Yet, at the same time, he expresses great admiration for him. This I take to mean that to indicate that ideally, a hypothesis must be examined from both points of views. That is acknowledged even though the dialogue does not deliver such an examination.

While the *Republic* is a dialogue which does not shy away from following its hypothesis to its conclusion. it does not seem to offer a hypothesis of both 'justice is good' and 'justice is bad'. What it does offer though, is a set of propositions which arguably amounts to a hypothesis about human nature – an anthropology – and hypothesizes how to prove justice good on these

⁵⁰ It is worth noting here that the narrator of the dialogue is Euclides, famous for having founded the Megarian school of Philosophy, said by Diogenes Laertius to combine Parmenidean and Socratic ideas and who was further known for his eristic style of argumentation. Indeed, his followers later gained the name "Eristics". (Diog. Laert. 2.10.)

⁵¹ This is reading B in Burnyeats' analysis, to be found on p. 9 of his introduction. *Theat.* 170e–171c. Plato, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, ed. Myles Burnyeat, trans. M. J. Levett, 1st Edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1990).

⁵² See 157b and 160b for examples.

⁵³ Both in Evan Rodriguez, "Structure and Aim in Socratic and Sophistic Method," *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis* 23, no. 1 (September 8, 2020): 143–66, <https://doi.org/10.30965/26664275-02301010>. and in Evan Rodriguez, "A Long Lost Relative in the Parmenides? Plato's Family of Hypothetical Methods," *Apeiron*, December 4, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1515/apeiron-2019-0026>. In the latter Rodriguez points to Richard Robinson's work as the cause of the *Parmenides* demotion as a Plato dialogue "on method", and makes a convincing claim for including it again.

premises. Another dialogue, the *Laws*, offers a different anthropology and, as has often been pointed out, ends up with a different regime as well. Perhaps, then, we must look elsewhere for 'the other side' of the argument.⁵⁴ The intertextual relationship with the *Parmenides* should serve to remind us that the argument is not complete and that the topic is not exhausted. The function of the intertextual relationship between the *Parmenides* and the *Republic* is, I suggest, even though the 'two sides' method is not employed, to remind us that the methodology employed is to postulate a hypothesis, a proposition, or a set of propositions, and exploring the hypothetical consequences of assuming those propositions.⁵⁵ This, I contend, is what the *Republic*, does.

Plato, in this work, lets Glaucon provide the premises in terms of the framework and the material conditions, and devotes a great deal of consideration in order to convince the reader to accept the additional premise regarding human nature: That our tripartite souls make us vulnerable to external influences. From this understanding of human nature, the discussion on state institutions, rule, social and family organization, as well as what we could refer to as 'popular culture', follows. *If* one accepts the premise that human nature is prone to greed and if one wants to allow for a society that institutionalizes living beyond its means (aka in luxury) then, according to Socrates, it follows that we should abolish the institution of private houses and families, granted that we think personal greed is incompatible with justice.

With this interpretive claim, I go against the mainstream interpretation of the *Republic* as primarily a utopia which is also intended to be obtainable. This claim is a consequence of the interpretational premise of seeing the *Republic* and as a radical exploration of a hypothesis. This reading is arguably supported by the interpretation proposed by G. R. F. Ferrari, who suggests that Plato's "writerly utopianism" should be seen as more aimed at planting the seeds of thinking differently about some matters, like for example why it would be a good idea that philosophers rule, in the right minds, rather than as a matter of proving the feasibility of a constitution like that of the Kallipolis.⁵⁶ In this thesis, I take Ferrari's suggestion a step further and include the notion that we may well read the *Republic*, not as evidence that Plato was harboring totalitarian tendencies (after all, Plato's views and inner motivations are

⁵⁴ In the case of the *Theaetetus*, one had to look outside of Plato, to *Parmenides* himself, who indeed in his poem postulated that being is stillness – the antithesis to 'being is flux'. In the case of 'justice is bad', perhaps we need to hypothesize it ourselves.

⁵⁵ Hugh Benson argues that in the *Republic* we find what he determines to be "the core features" of the hypothetical method, namely a "process of identifying and drawing out the consequences of propositions, known as hypotheses, in order to answer the question at hand, and a process of confirming or justifying those hypotheses." I do not agree with Benson that this adequately sums up what goes on in the *Republic*, but the argument remains to be made at another time. Hugh H. Benson, "Plato's Method of Dialectic," in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. Hugh H. Benson (Malden, Oxford, Victoria, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006). p. 85.

⁵⁶ Ferrari, "Plato the Writer." G. R. F. Ferrari, "Plato the Writer, in: *Epoché*, Vol 19. Issue 2, 2015. Pp. 119- 203.

neither interesting nor available to us), but as a philosophical work that expands our space for thought about the relation between humans and the political in general. With this, I conclude the methodologically informed discussion of the question initiating this section: “why is this particular dialogue the answer to the question ‘is justice good?’” and turn to the philosophical and normative proposition defended in the *Republic*.

This discussion is informed by the explicit premise of the dialogue: The challenge that Plato devices for Socrates, first presented by Thrasymachus, and later taken up by Glaucon in the myth of Gyges is the challenge of egoism, or rather, individualism. When Thrasymachus states that “justice is the advantage of the stronger”,⁵⁷ Socrates is able to refute him by exploiting the ambiguity of the word ‘advantage’, but the challenge remains: To act purely out of self-interestedness, taking what is in one’s power to gain, seems to bring with it more profit, and honors too, than the opposite. This is no easy argument to refute, far more difficult than the previous attempts at defending justice. This amounts to refuting that the life of the unjust person is better than the life of the just person. What Socrates must explain is why it is unjust that I act in such a way as is consistent with my beliefs about what is in my self-interest in a coherent way, such as to satisfy the consistency-demand and thus make my self-interest rational. The argument of the dialogue as a whole can be construed in light of this: It is an attempt to argue that a self-interest that privileges the individual on the expense of the community is not really the rational interest of any individual, not even for those who come out, seemingly, on top, like the tyrant. This is how I propose that the *Republic* should be read.

In the above, I have accounted for how my reading sees the *Republic* as a radical exploration of a hypothesis put forth by Glaucon: That human desires and motivations target sex, wealth, and power, and that these motivations are universal (359c-360c). Against this, my reading shows that these traits which in Glaucon’s challenge are identified as universal, are rather the result of a certain personality type – the ‘honor lovers’ – in interplay with a certain regime – the democratic – and the synergies between them: Man and regime mutually influence each other through the sharing of social practices and institutions. From this perspective, The Kallipolis should be read, not as a blueprint, but as a means of testing a hypothesis. Therefore there is, as far as I can see, no reason to accept this hypothesis as a postulate, even if some of the *Republic*’s dramatic characters subscribe to it.

This is, to some, a radical interpretation. In the following subsections, I will therefore account for a selection of passages which inform the approach taken in this thesis. In subsections 4.1.-4.5., I will outline readings that will be elaborated upon in the analysis of this thesis. I will also account for some central passages which have a strong interpretational history, and which may

⁵⁷ *Rep.* 338d.

be taken to oppose my reading. Additionally, in subsections 4.6.-4.7., I will address passages that are analytically outside of the scope of this thesis, but are included in this introduction in order to put to rest a few of the off-the-bat objections which may otherwise prey on the readers' mind for the remainder of this thesis.

Glaucon's Challenge

In a passage of enormous importance for the *Republic*, to which I devote much attention in this thesis, especially in chapter 1, Glaucon delivers a strong defense for injustice (357b- 362c). He claims that it is in the self-interest of any rational man to act unjustly, as long as he could do so with impunity. The only good reason to avoid unjust actions, this reasoning goes, is to avoid punishment. In illustration of this point, we get the myth of the ancestor of Gyges, who obtains a ring which renders its wearer invisible. The point of this story is to illustrate that if one could act unjustly without risk, one would. This proves his point that even those who do act justly do so unwillingly. About this view, Glaucon makes two claims. One, he claims that this view is a restoration of Thrasymachus' arguments (358c) in Book I, which we may for now sum up as: "justice is the advantage of the stronger". Second, he claims that he himself does not buy into the arguments he is producing but is rather acting as a devil's advocate. This claim of Glaucon, it has been argued, shows that Glaucon is sincere and has good intentions.⁵⁸ This is further supported by that Socrates states that he believes Glaucon is sincere when he claims to be unconvinced by the arguments himself (368b). But, as I will argue in chapter 1, Glaucon is either wrong, or intentionally misleading, in his representation of Thrasymachus' arguments – which he claims to restore. For, as I will show, there are important differences between Thrasymachus and Glaucon's ideas, differences which in turn demonstrate the differences between their characters and motives.

There is also, as I will argue, reason to doubt Glaucon's sincerity regarding the second claim, that he himself does not subscribe to the view he is expounding.

⁵⁸ According to Leo Strauss it shows that Glaucon is "courageous and high-minded" and that "Glaucon believes in justice". pp 85-7 G. R. F. Ferrari, asserting the first claim of Glaucon's (p.22), takes Socrates statements about Glaucon very seriously, and assumes that Glaucon is intellectually superior (p. 26), very bold and manly, - competitive, yet uninterested in prizes and rewards. P. 21-22. Julia Annas does not question Glaucon's' claims (p. 59) and Roslyn Weiss seems to think that Glaucon is on the "right side", that is, is a champion of justice. (p. 92). Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (University of Chicago Press, 1978). G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*. White, *A Companion to Plato's Republic*. Roslyn Weiss, "Wise Guys and Smart Alecks in Republic 1 and 2," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, S~ao Paulo: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

As Jacob Howland has pointed out, Glaucon has a certain resistance to acknowledging inner experiences in others – a trait, or a choice, which leaves him at moral peril.⁵⁹ In the myth that Glaucon recounts, a shepherd robs a grave and comes to possess a ring that renders its wearer invisible. Howland comments on Glaucon’s premise that “committing rape with the aid of the ring would be one of its more attractive uses,” and notes that “if we should consider the matter from the inside, [...] it becomes clear that raping is not like robbing a grave.”⁶⁰ That Glaucon is inclined to contemplate with longing to expose another to such a trauma, and treats the victim’s pleas for mercy, or the terror in her eyes as mere surface, show according to Howland, and I agree, that the wearer of the ring who uses it for this purpose, and perhaps also the teller of this story, must already in some way be fundamentally unable to “see through the eyes of another”⁶¹. There is more to say on the topic of Glaucon of course, and indeed this thesis will say much more, but let it suffice for now to say that Glaucon’s rape fantasies should be enough to at least challenge an *a priori* assumption of Glaucon as a sincere and philosophically minded guardian *in spe*.

Since Glaucon’s challenge entails an assumption that the same desires would be what every true (359b) and sane man wants, his challenge contains both a theory of human nature and the seed for a theory of rationality. While Socrates agrees to this as a premise of the challenge, that does not go to say that this is what Socrates believes. Furthermore, and importantly, this neither gives us any reason to believe that the *Republic* should be read as promulgating these specific theories of human nature and rationality. The main argument for this is that Plato both within the *Republic* itself, and in other dialogues, launches for our consideration not one, but several competing anthropologies.⁶² Why then, should Plato devote so much time to this particular anthropology? Why should Socrates? The answer, I argue, is that Glaucon’s anthropology amounts to the anthropology of the honor lover within a democratic regime, and that the reason why this is important is that the democratic institutions and way of life hold some special attractions, and hence, perils, for this personality type. There is a connection between the honor lover and the lover of wealth, and when Glaucon is portrayed as an honor lover and an erotic man, this should alert us to the implication that he is in imminent danger of becoming a money-lover: “for no other transformation

⁵⁹ Jacob Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate. History, Myth and Character in Plato’s Republic* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Paul Dry Books Inc., 2018).p.145.

⁶⁰ Howland.p. 145. See *Rep.* 360c.

⁶¹ Howland. Ibid. Interestingly, also Strauss points out that at this point Glaucon looks into his own heart “and has found there injustice struggling manfully with his good breeding”, but Strauss takes this as a sign of Glaucon’s sincere concern with genuine justice, and not as a moral flaw. Strauss, *The City and Man*. p 87.

⁶² I argue that Thrasymachus’ arguments make out a different anthropology. The others are Protagoras, the Laws, the Gorgias. This latter point is made by Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. p.2.23.

is as swift and sure as the one from a young man who is an honor lover into a man who is a money lover” (353e). The moral risks of becoming a money-lover are intertwined with the political dangers of oligarchy, a danger which the *Republics’* dramaturgy suggests as a pressing background-issue for the conversations within it. The *Republic* places Glaucon’s ideas as embedded with democratic discourse, and Glaucon should in this regard be considered as a paradigmatic Athenian. The argument of the *Republic* should therefore arguably be read as an *as if*-argument. If everyone is like Glaucon, or at least, if everyone is how Glaucon thinks they are, what would a just city look like? The answer, I think, is the Kallipolis.

Glaucon’s Calculations

The mathematical and deliberating (calculating) skills of the Guardians and philosopher-rulers are a recurring topic in the *Republic* (e.g., 525b).⁶³ As mentioned above, there is also a quite strong tradition for regarding Glaucon as the potential philosopher-ruler, on account of his superior ability to follow Socrates in his reasoning about the metaphysics that underpins the epistemology of the *Republic*.⁶⁴ But there is also reason to doubt Glaucon’s mathematical skills. In chapter 2, I will show how Glaucon’s decision exemplifies the error that takes up much of the *Protagoras*: the failure to attribute correct weight or size to each alternative in a decision-making situation. But there are other instantiations that would fall outside of the scope of this thesis, but which support my reading of Glaucon as having a different function as Socrates interlocutor than merely demonstrating his own superior intellect. Rather, in my reading, Glaucon exemplifies exactly the kind of person to whom the democratic regime is most harmful and corruptive. It is his acute social awareness, his ‘love for honor’ that makes it so. This will be

⁶³ See e.g. Amélie Oksenberg on the role of mathematics in education: Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, “Plato’s Counsel on Education,” *Philosophy* 73, no. 284 (1998): 157–78.

⁶⁴ Glaucon’s moral psychology is often portrayed as key to correct understanding of the *Republic*, and there is a widespread understanding of Glaucon as politically ambitious and an honor-lover, at least in the tradition from Strauss: “...while Socrates is responsible for the discussion of justice, Glaucon is responsible for the manner in which it is treated.”, p. 85. (See also p. 65.) Bloom follows Strauss in this. G. R. F Ferrari sees Glaucon’s love of victory as an uncharitable interpretation by his brother Adeimantus, and argues that Socrates sees him as better than that. He interprets both brothers as “quietists”, already by their gentlemanly ethos dissuaded from pursuing a life of politics. C. D. C. Reeve interprets Glaucon (and Adeimantus) as the philosopher-kings, the wisdom lovers. The story from Xenophon goes that Socrates cures him of this ambition, but recently Jakob Howland has put forth a suggestion that argues on the account of historical evidence that Socrates failed in this quest. Strauss, *The City and Man*. Allan Bloom, “Interpretive Essay,” in *The Republic of Plato: Translated, with Notes, an Interpretive Essay and a New Introduction by Allan Bloom* (US: Basic Books, 1991).p. 341. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato’s Republic*. p 13. C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato’s Republic* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co, 2006). pp. 34-5, 39-40. Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*.

explained later in the thesis, but let me recount, for now, some pieces of evidence that will perhaps weaken the alleged splendor of Glaucon.

Consider this: In crafting his just city, which readers of the *Republic* have learned to know as the ‘city of pigs’ but that he himself calls both “true” and “healthy” (372e), Socrates paints us a picture of a picturesque and simple life. In the city, bread and other necessities will be produced, and: “They’ll put their honest cakes and loaves on reeds or clean leaves, and, reclining on beds strewn with yew and myrtle, they’ll feast with their children, drink their wine, and, crowned with wreaths, hymn the gods.” (372d). Compare then, Kallipolis, in which the children will instead be taken to war from a young age (467a-e). Now, Glaucon does express some concern for the children's safety, but is soon reassured that all possible precautions will be taken so that the benefits far outweigh the risks.

The passage that describes the healthy city where the children feast happily with their parents, is precisely the passage that makes Glaucon intervene with his request for relishes, calling the city “fit for pigs” (372d). While Adeimantus and Socrates both seem content with the healthy city with its frugal lifestyle, which is, in comparison to many fates, nevertheless fulfilling basic needs and leaving its citizens with spare time in which to dance and enjoy themselves, Glaucon, I would argue, here demonstrates his own anthropology by demanding more of everything. From Socrates’ reply, it becomes evident that the urge for luxuries will require overstepping their resources and will lead to war (373e). Glaucon confirms.

This point is an important premise for the analysis in this thesis because it conveys the insight that it is Glaucon’s choice to bring children into war, not an inherent feature of an ideal city. Every war poses a danger of loss, with the suffering of civilians as a result. Waging a war against one’s neighbors for meat is to put the children of the city at risk for luxuries. This was Glaucon’s choice, early on in his city’s construction process, and a choice which he stands by even when the consequences are spelled out for him. This follows a pattern in which Glaucon repeatedly makes choices that are by no means innocent; rather they seem to arise from a specific anthropology which he himself is the spokesperson for. These choices furthermore seem rash, and therefore they are also incompatible with the kind of measured reason Socrates thinks the rulers of the city should display.⁶⁵

Leontius

The story of Leontius is well known, and perhaps particularly so for those concerned with Plato’s moral psychology. Leontius personifies the akratic

⁶⁵ I elaborate on this pattern in chapter 2, section “Dying Cloth is a Manly Art”, and chapter 5, section “Glaucon’s Confirmations”.

man. The question of *akrasia*, which remains a conundrum for philosophy of action today, is, briefly, the cases in which agent X, in choosing between action alternative a) and b), given that the agent thinks that action a) is the overall better course of action than b), and further, is able to choose a), still chooses action b). The discussion of *akrasia* is often framed by an epistemological understanding where the answer to irrationality in Plato is suggested to be ‘knowledge’. When Socrates tells us how Leontius, who is torn between wanting to look at the corpses lying by the executioners, yells out, cursing his own eyes and battling with himself before finally giving in to temptation, this is an example of the moral conflict of *akrasia*. This is my interpretation as well. However, I furthermore argue that the Leontius-story also encompasses a motivational conflict which, rather than demonstrating a lack of knowledge in the agent, shows that desires are able to overrule knowledge. Supporting this claim is the observation that the *Republic* is mainly preoccupied with the instances in which the intellect is well and thoroughly put aside, and other forces battle within us. This distinguishes my analysis because it is common to assume, as I will elaborate on in this thesis, that *akrasia* is perhaps primarily an epistemological issue. Such a framework for understanding *akrasia* fits well with the types of readings which sees the ‘allegory of the cave’ and ‘the divided line’ as the *Republic*’s epistemological core. Based on such a premise, one is likely to assume that the *Republic*’s critique of democracy is primarily an epistemological one, and hence, elitist, since only the wealthy men of leisure (*scholê*) could afford to increase their epistemic competence.⁶⁶ As we shall see, I will develop an interpretation that pushes back against this approach.⁶⁷

The story of Leontius is central to my interpretation of the *Republic*. It is also central to the argument of the tripartite soul in that Leontius’ battle with himself is taken to prove the existence of at least two distinct parts of the soul. In this thesis, I claim that the tripartite soul poses a challenge to, and in part, an explanation for, Glaucon’s universalization of his own desires, because it shows that we have different socio-political constitutions. Furthermore, the story of Leontius demonstrates how the different parts of the soul are differently involved in decision-making. This also provides us with information about why some kinds of psychologies are more susceptible to certain external forces than others. This particularly applies to those decisions that belong to the kind of social decision-making which is more prominent in the democracy than in any other regime.

⁶⁶ Although it seems that some epistemic failures cannot be remedied by education. See White, *A Companion to Plato’s Republic*. p 28.

⁶⁷ Which for example Keyt’s is an explicit example of, but which more often can be found to be an implicit assumption. David Keyt, “Plato and the Ship of State,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic*. Ed. Geronimos Santas (Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

Employing a reading strategy which gives prominence to the place where the infamous Leontius-story takes place, I suggest a reading in which Leontius can be seen, on the one hand, as an image of the democratic decision-making process, and on the other, as a criticism of democratic values. From this perspective, the story reveals that the democratic value-system is not a system at all, but rather something far more coincidental: To applaud the production of dead bodies for wealth and honor in war but to regard having sexual relations with dead bodies as shameful, arguably exposes a flawed system with regard to prescribing 'right' action beyond those motivated by self-interest. To sum up the core of this interpretational premise: If both the desires of Glaucon and the desires of Leontius lead to the death of another, or is death-dependent (if Glaucon shall have his honor in war, this requires someone else's death) but the actions are regarded as being of opposite moral value, then I contend that there is something missing from this moral theory.

The Life of the Guardians

For reasons not unrelated, the organization, or eradication, if one wants, of the guardians' private lives is another controversial aspect of the Kallipolis. Socrates contends that for the men and women of the Guardian classes, "all must be in common" (424). This includes children and housing. Procreation and sexual relations between the Guardians will only be allowed through a series of deceptively arranged marriages, lauding those who have distinguished themselves with 'more marriages', that is, more opportunities to procreate.

Scholarly reception tells us that this is (yet) another example of Kallipolis as a totalitarian state control with the aim to suppress, equipped with a program of eugenics which, if nothing else does, shows the true, fascist colors of Plato. I will in this thesis elaborate on the abolition of private housing and families. The objective is, however, not to debate eugenics or individual liberty *per se*, but to contribute a philosophical analysis of the notion of democracy in Plato's work. Notably, my discussion will be guided mainly by the central focus of this thesis, namely the distribution of wealth and poverty and how institutions, ideology, and anthropology interact. Furthermore, I claim that Plato sees the private households as so central to the drive and possibility for accumulation of riches, and that the *oikos* in this sense is the culprit for diverging interests for the citizens, that to dissolve this social institution, is to dissolve the need for politics, in the democratic sense.

But the limitation of the personal freedom for the guardian classes and the justification for me to side-step them, still warrants a comment. In chapter 3 of this thesis I will argue that Socrates is exchanging one type of arranged marriages for another. While the Athenian marriages were marriages of reason, directed at increasing wealth and status of private households, Socrates

suggests that marriages should rather be conducted for the benefit of the state – that is, for the benefit of all, rather than for the few. I will also address Book IV of the *Republic* in a feminist perspective. While some feminist readings have found some aspects of Book IV problematic, others have celebrated them as feminist. In chapter 3, I take to task with some of these objections and clarify my own claim that Plato sees the private households is so central to the drive and possibility for the accumulation of riches that to dissolve the political institutions of Athens, would in effect mean to dissolve the need for politics, in the democratic sense.

Notwithstanding, the issue of eugenics, and my justification for side-stepping them, still warrants a comment. On this issue, my reading, aligns with Catherine Rowett’s proposal, that the aim of regulating reproduction in this way is to produce more of the best kinds of gold-types,⁶⁸ not in order to e.g. *increase* the number of ‘gold people’, i.e. the best kind of people, according to the ‘Noble Lie’, but rather to increase the chances of getting more exceptional gold-type of people. The aim, then, would be to ensure that some exceptional ruler-types are born, not to increase the ‘quality’ of the overall population.

What so of the other suggestions for population control? Does the *Republic* argue for exposing unauthorized babies to the forces of nature (461c), depriving children of their parents (540e) and condone, even advocate for, state-orchestrated rape (468b)? We do know that infanticide was not entirely foreign to the Greeks.⁶⁹ In the case that Plato or Socrates should be seen as proponents of infanticide, this surely is a problem of their times, and an issue which, to my mind, has little bearing on the critique of democracy. But there are also some discrepancies here, enough that it allows us to say that such a *prima facie* reading is not the only possible interpretation of the inclusion of these ideas in the Kallipolis.

First, while infanticide by exposure was not an unheard-of practice in Ancient Greece, Socrates suggests rearing “defective”, but legitimate children, albeit hidden and separated from the general population(460c). This perhaps shows the importance Socrates places on regulating sexuality, but it also indicates a puzzling inconsistency: Why take care to rear “defective” children and throw out perfectly (potentially) healthy children, if it is true as Socrates’ states: Only very few naturally inclined philosophers are born (431c). What if the child he disposes of is one of them? Further, if the Greek

⁶⁸ Catherine Rowett, “Why the Philosopher Kings Will Believe the Noble Lie,” in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Victor Caston (Oxford University Press, 2016), 67–100, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198778226.003.0003>. p 91

⁶⁹ See Cynthia Patterson, “‘Not Worth the Rearing’: The Causes of Infant Exposure in Ancient Greece,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) 115 (1985): 103–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/284192>.

myths teach us anything, it is that children of (even philosopher?) kings left out to die have a cunning habit of coming back with a vengeance.⁷⁰

These reflections do not make up a comprehensive argument, and the question of the role of eugenics in Kallipolis will remain unresolved in this thesis. I do, however, in this thesis propose to see the arguments regarding marriages of Kallipolis as textual constructions that demonstrate some particular aspects of Glaucon's nature. This perspective springs out of the interpretational premise of this thesis, elaborated upon above: I see the Kallipolis as a corrective move following Glaucon's fateful decision to go to war for meat. After all, he is the *erastês par excellence* of the *Republic*. It seems to me that the function of the argument is to show how Glaucon's reasoning is colored by his nature – his particular motivations and aversions. More on that later, but suffice it to say for now, that even though I do not claim to have answers to these problematic and difficult passages in the *Republic*, I do not subscribe to an assumption that the *prima facie* reading and an knee-jerk response of disgust is an entirely justifiable mode of interpretation.

The Ranking of Regimes – A Question of Unity?

This section addresses the problem of explaining the ranking of regimes in the *Republic* and accounts for this thesis' approach to this well-known issue. In Book VIII, Socrates ranks the political regimes and accounts for their demise. The regimes are ranked as follows:

- a. Aristocracy
- b. Timocracy
- c. Oligarchy
- d. Democracy
- e. Tyranny

The aristocracy is referred to as the regime “which they have already been through”, and from this we surmise that the Kallipolis is the aristocracy, (even though Socrates speaks “as if” having an “even finer constitution and man” to tell of [...]. (543c-d)).

The reasoning behind this ranking is largely left unexplained, or at least unclear. This has caused scholars to insert their own explanations, and to attribute these explanations to Plato. The most widespread explanation is the unity-explanation: the idea that the regimes are ranked according to their decreasing ability to comply with a criterion of unity-criterion. This is Julia Annas view and she identifies the breakdown of unity within the guardian

⁷⁰ As both the tragedy of Oedipus and the story of Paris thematizes.

class as the crucial point for the demise⁷¹, and the organizing criterion behind the ranking of the regimes. This is at least true until we reach democracy on which she writes: “In a democracy the breakdown of unity is complete; there is not only no universally recognized common good, but no universally respected common government”.⁷² Arlene Saxonhouse, in *Fear of Diversity*, adopts a very similar position, and sees the demise of the regimes as hierarchically ordered by the extent of internal division.⁷³ Josiah Ober suggests that consistency, in terms of ordered preferences and beliefs, informs account for the ranking.⁷⁴

However, there are several problems with these accounts. First, if the breakdown of unity is “complete” in the democracy, why does democracy outrank tyranny? While there is little positive to say about the tyrant, he does seem to be quite unified. He is ruled by a single part of his soul, appetite, and since he is close to all-powerful, the city under him is also unified. Furthermore, he seems to fulfil any and all consistency-criteria: He is completely consistent in pursuing his goal of satisfying his appetites and yield his power for his own benefit. The unity-model can, at least not in and of itself, account for the demise, nor the ranking of the regimes. While I do not profess to have the key to the ranking of the regimes, I propose in this thesis that we see the ranking as strategically aimed at destabilizing the binary political discourse and that we, rather than searching for an elusive principle regards the ambiguous reasoning behind the ranking as significant in and of itself. Ultimately, I will argue that the ranking shows that unity in and of itself can be the best and the worst kind of regime, and that difficulty lies in ensuring that a city get the good one.⁷⁵ In the course of the demise Socrates he investigates the relationship between the regimes in light of the principles that Plato ascribes to them: Love of honor, money loving, freedom, and fear. While this may not provide a full explanation for the ranking, it does lay the ground for a much more interesting analysis of democracy, and one that stays closer to the actual text than does the explanatory unity-model. Therefore, this thesis operates with the interpretational premise that the object of analysis is the specific value of freedom. From this basis, I will argue that it is the particular democratic interpretation of this value that makes Plato’s democracy vulnerable to tyranny.

⁷¹ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*. p. 296.

⁷² Ibid. p. 299-300. The passage she lists as reference is 557e-558a.

⁷³ Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. p. 155.

⁷⁴ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. p 5.6

⁷⁵ See chapter 5 for this analysis.

Censorship

Among the Kallipolis' unattractive and illiberal traits, is the event that the poets are banished from this regime. I do not in this thesis devote nearly as much attention to this aspect as it arguably deserves, but I will venture an, albeit brief, comment in this section. It follows from the approach taken in this thesis – seeing the *Republic* as a constructive *as if* argument – that the banishment of poetry, or certain types of poetry, should not be seen as representing Plato's utopian city. Nevertheless, this reservation should not cause us to treat the argument as something less than it is. A great part of the dialogue is devoted to stories about this topic, and he takes stories very seriously. Almost ridiculously seriously, a modern reader might think. I see the fact that so much serious attention is devoted to poetry as a testament to the force Plato attributes to external influences. The emphasis on the power of words when it comes to shaping our plastic (377a) human natures is evident in the *Republic*.⁷⁶

Moreover, it is worth noting that the treatment of poetry in the *Republic* is consistent with the postulate that “one imitates what one admires.” (500b-d). It is rather us modern readers who are prone to an inconsistency, in the sense that we seem to be much more ready to accept this premise with regard to political or moral action than we are with respect to the arts. While the *Republic's* mimesis-theory is thoroughly criticized and overall discarded by aesthetic theory, we are, I would venture, more prone to accept the premise of imitation for social practices.

In addition to the *as if* argument, I, like other scholars have before me, find that the *Republic* itself warns against taking the argument against poetry entirely at face value. In Book II, Socrates launches the investigation of how to educate the guardians by an invitation to Adeimantus: “Come then, like men telling tales in a tale (*muthos*) and at their leisure, let's educate the men in speech.” (376d). Within this education, we are told, tales, aka stories, will have a prominent place. Like they already have, we might add, for it is clear that the poetic inheritance of the Greeks was central to their culture and their *paideia*. As Saxonhouse points out, the inconsistency regarding Socrates treatment of poetry lies in that his meta-comments inserts a polyphony, a depth and room for interpretation that contrasts his own reduction of the mythical tales to one-dimensional stories.⁷⁷ So, even if Plato's character Socrates is suggesting to purge the city of poetic ambiguity, we are not from this forced to conclude that the *Republic* as a whole argues that this would be the best possible idea. Since, as already mentioned, I do not in this work engage with the role of poetry as such, I will leave the matter open, as does the *Republic*.

⁷⁶ See Danielle Allen for a good analysis to the effect of the latter claim. Danielle S. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).p 22.

⁷⁷ Saxonhouse, “The Socratic Narrative”. *sic passim*.

The Noble Lie and the Cave

'The Noble Lie' and the allegory of the cave are among the most well-known and perhaps also among the most disliked aspects of the *Republic*.⁷⁸ Neither passage fall under the scope of this thesis, but they warrant a comment here, for, contrary to some scholars, I do not see them as expressing an oppressive and elitist ideology. Rather, I follow Rowett's brilliantly argued reading of these passages, of which I will here provide a brief account. For, even though I believe that the anthropological explanatory model explains more than does the knowledge model, this does not go to say that I deny the importance placed on knowledge, education, and truth in these passages. However, Plato's conception of knowledge has often been seen as oppressive and elitist, no doubt in part due to Popper's lingering influence. Rowett on the other hand, sees these passages as carrying ideas that are designed to liberate rather than to oppress. As a brief reminder, the 'Noble Lie' consists of a two-part story that Socrates claims will try to persuade first, the rulers and the soldiers, then all the rest: The *pseudos* is that the citizens had spent their entire rearing and education underground, in a dream, until they sprang forth from the earth, fully formed, arms and all. (414d-e). This corresponds perfectly to other autochthony-myths.⁷⁹ The second part of the story is that the god infuses the soul of the citizens with a metal: gold for the rulers, silver for the auxiliaries, and bronze for all the rest, upon their birth (415a-c). Rowett argues that the first part of the myth is not about the birth as we think of it, a new human coming to be from its mother's womb, but about a birth of citizens.⁸⁰ Her reading of the second part of the myth supports this claim; it takes time for the metals to be infused – incidentally the time of education and rearing. The Cave analogy, which needs no further introduction, takes up again themes from the Noble Lie, and Rowett's interpretation shows that it is not the case that the rulers will relate the Noble Lie as a means of control and oppression. Rather they are the ones who will above all believe the story, recognizing it for what it is: a metaphor expressing a truth. At that point, the lie will no longer be a lie, but a tool, or a step on the ladder on the way to the truth about the forms. For those who are never able to leave the ladder behind, the Noble Lie formulates the closest approximation to truth that they are able to receive.

⁷⁸ Danielle Allen finds, for example, that she must part ways with Plato at the noble lie as she regards this deception as substandard for the political philosopher as he or she should by default be committed to truth. Julia Annas writes that the falsehood of the Noble Lie "demonstrates Plato's readiness to revise the contents of morality in the interests of morality". Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*. p. 22. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 108.

⁷⁹ On this topic see Songe-Møller and Nicole Loraux. Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. Nicole Loraux and Froma I. Zeitlin, *The Children of Athena: Athenian Ideas About Citizenship and the Division Between the Sexes*, trans. Caroline Levine, revised ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁸⁰ Rowett, "Why the Philosopher Kings Will Believe the Noble Lie."

But the true radicalness of Socrates' idea here lies in the complete disassociation of birth from societal position. The reason for Socrates' hesitation and doubts (414c) about expressing the Noble Lie is not that he fears a falsehood, but that he recognizes that what he is suggesting is against societal beliefs about "how social status is transmitted".⁸¹ What hinders belief in the Noble Lie is not knowledge of history or biology, but ideology, Rowett writes. By this she is referring to the fact that the Greeks did believe that 'excellence' was inherited by birth and that social status should follow bloodlines, rather than personal merit. Socrates repeatedly challenges this conception in other dialogues as well.⁸²

This stance resonates well with my own reading of the roles played by knowledge and ideology, respectively, in which knowledge, under certain circumstances, and certainly in the democracy described in the *Republic*, seems to be subordinated to ideology.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, Myth, Motivation, and the Anthropology of the *Republic* I preform a reading of Book I and parts of Book II which together constitute the set-up of the *Republic* by laying the premises for the remainder of the conversation. In the first Book of the *Republic*, several topics are launched that will guide my reading of the remaining Books of the dialogue, and which illuminate the topic at hand: the question of democracy. In Book I, the political challenge of cooperation is launched through Thrasymachus' argument that 'the stronger' is better off by acting purely out of self-interest. To counter this, Socrates will, during the course of the *Republic*, try to show that self-interest can, and should, be construed as 'community interest'. In my reading, a central implication of this is that there is a tension between what is commonly thought to be in the interest of the individual and the interest of the city which is endogenous to democratic ideology.

Related to this, the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus also launches the further topic of trust, and the problem of recognizing motives in others for social interaction. In their discussion, Thrasymachus interprets Socrates' motives from the hermeneutical position of suspicion. Their conversation thus prepares the ground for a thematic which, I will argue, is central to the complex problem of political trust. My reading, takes the *Histories* of Herodotus into account as belonging to the context of the set-up

⁸¹ Rowett. p 82.

⁸² See e.g. the *Protagoras*. See also Luca Asmonti for a problematization of this assertion. They nevertheless conclude that while the democratic laws of equality were imposed externally, they stood in somewhat opposition to an old order of hierarchy and reverence. Luca Asmonti, "Gentrifying the 'Demos': Aristocratic Principles and Democratic Culture in Ancient Athens," *Studi Classici e Orientali* 61, no. 1 (2015): 55–75.

of the *Republic* in that it is explicitly placed in an intertextual relationship with it through the Myth of Gyges. In this way, I will show that Thrasymachus is a bad judge of Socrates' motives and that the reason why Socrates outmaneuvers him in argument, is that the philosopher is a superior judge of the psychological and personal motives which drive the actions and arguments of his opponent. (This topic is also related to the philosophical practice of self-examination and midwifery, to which I will return in chapter 5.)

In chapter 1, I furthermore address "Glaucón's Challenge", in which Glaucón presents the reader with an anthropology of human nature, and a theory of rationality. Glaucón asserts that it is human nature to be self-interested and to be insatiable for wealth, sex, and power. This challenge (357b-362c) is often said to be Glaucón's formulation of Thrasymachus' position into a stronger one, and he himself certainly claims this. This has had the curious additional effect that Book I becomes somewhat redundant to the *Republic* as a whole, and various explanations for why it is nevertheless included have, as a result, been constructed.⁸³ This seems rather elaborate, and a simpler explanation is available: If we do not take Glaucón's own assessment of what he he's doing at face value, another picture emerges. Glaucón does not only reformulate and restate Thrasymachus' arguments, but the different ways that Thrasymachus and Glaucón approaches the same question: *Why is it better to be unjust than just?* is revealing as to their respective natures and motivations. While Thrasymachus argues from a position of fear and suspicion, Glaucón is more preoccupied with desire-satisfaction. My analysis of the differences between these two approaches illuminates an important analytical point that greatly impacts my reading of the *Republic*: Glaucón makes the mistake of universally attributing his own motivations to others. Moreover, the historical personae of these characters insert contextual layers to take into consideration and which guides my assessment of their arguments and Socrates response to them: While Thrasymachus is established as sophist and speech-giver of some repute, Glaucón is a young man on the verge of entering political life in the *polis*. Glaucón is an Athenian, belonging to the elite as Plato's brother. I argue that we should see him as a paradigmatic young man of Athens, raised withing the democratic environment and culture. He is in the dialogue posited as at the intersection between Socrates' and Thrasymachus' respective ideas about justice. Thrasymachus, in contrast, is a foreigner, a victim of Athens power-politics, and as such serves several functions within the text. This sheds light on the relationship between personal experience and reasoning about beliefs,

⁸³ Prominent among these is the «farewell to Socrates» thesis which argues that the first Book represents Plato's final break with his teacher and his Socratic methodology and topics, in order to develop a more self-reliant philosophy. This particularly comes to light, supposedly, through Thrasymachus exposing the weakness of the craft analogy. Terence Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). p. 182.

an idea which underpins the discussions about the relationship between the individual and the community, which will be the topics of chapters 3 and 4. The motivations with which we engage in actions will become very important in the course of the dialogue, and in this thesis, not least because, as we shall see in Chapter 2, the different ways in which the part of our souls contribute in making decisions, will impact how different natures interact with their surroundings.

Chapter 2, The Tripartite Soul of the *Republic*: Motivations and Decision-Making, contributes to the analysis of the *Republic*'s criticism of democracy by developing an analysis of individual decision-making. Democracy is after all also a method of making decisions, even if these decisions are hallmarked by being collective decisions. However, since the *Republic*, by offering a theory of the human soul and the way the soul is engaged in decisions and actions, seems to assume that knowing the workings of an individual decision-making process is necessary before turning to societal institutions, so does this thesis. In Book IV Plato has Socrates approach rationality and decision-making from its night-side; from the side of errors, failures of the intellect and of enforcing our own judgements over ourselves. While some of these shortcomings are epistemic in nature, I argue that treating akrasia in the *Republic* as primarily failures of the intellect cannot provide the full account of what is relayed to us by the treatment of akrasia and the tripartite soul. Rather, such an approach presupposes and imports aspects from the *Protagoras* in which the topic of akrasia is also treated. While the *Protagoras* deals with errors that belongs to the intellect (epistemological errors), the *Republic* deals primarily with failures of making the right decision *despite* having the relevant knowledge. Other motivations, primarily desires and fears thus influence decision-making. For the purposes of this thesis, it should be noted that Plato's psycho-politics portrays a person's 'character' as a relatively stable disposition over time, but also as changeable and affected by external surroundings. The tripartite soul entails, as is well known, some problems for action theory, relevant to our discussion of decision-making. This particularly regards the question of unity of action, which in the *Republic*, I argue, is related to the political problem of cooperation and coordination. In order to show how we should conceive of the tripartite soul in relation to decision-making, I suggest building on Christine Korsgaard's constitutional model for decision-making. While I find Korsgaard's theory lacking as a reading of the *Republic*, there are aspects of her model which make it useful as a point of departure in an analysis of decision-making. Her novel contribution lies in that she shows what is required for a divided and tripartite soul to function as a unity. How does one unify a non-unified being? According to Korsgaard's reading of Plato, unification lies in the ordering and continued cooperation of the elements. I draw on this insight from Korsgaard and develop it into what I see as a more accurate model of action in the

Republic. This results in a new framework for understanding, which may be applied to the text as an analytical tool. The *Republic* itself showcases for us several deliberative case-studies, to which we may now apply this analytic framework. This particularly applies for the choices made by Leontius and Glaucon, respectively. By analyzing their choices, we get a clearer picture of how the *Republic* conceives of the relationship between fears, desires, and reasons.

In Book IV Socrates provides a full theory of human motivation and the different constellations the at times diverging internal motivations that can be involved in decision-making processes. I find that this theory challenges the suggested anthropologies in books I and II. In this way, Socrates subtly destabilizes the premises of Glaucon's challenge, in which human rationality was represented as instrumental. Socrates retains the premise of instrumentality – self-interestedness – but shows that this is not a reliable or stable ground upon which a normative theory of justice can be built. The notion of what is in our 'self-interest' is susceptible to epistemological errors, as our ideas generally are. Furthermore, as the story of Leontius shows, normative claims extrapolated from the notion of self-interest are inconsistent at their core, and thus, they lead to widely discrepant results and moral judgements. From the analysis of the story of Leontius follows a comparative analysis of Glaucon's and Leontius' respective actions and motivations, which will reveal to the reader, even though Glaucon remains oblivious, that Glaucon's anthropology cannot be universal, and hence not really an anthropology at all. This is particularly revealed by that what Glaucon and what Leontius fears are shown to be quite different things respectively fear of social ridicule and fear of restraints. From this I will extrapolate a model of fears which corresponds to the desires as they are enumerated by Glaucon. This analysis will amount to a full-fledged picture of the soul of the honor lover – the personality which, I will argue, is the most susceptible to the damaging aspects of democracy, on account of being the most socially-directed of the types. In the subsequent two chapters I will turn to the external surroundings and what may now be identified as the 'exogenous influences on the individual'.

In chapter 3, Private Life and Politics: Why the *Oikos* Must be Dissolved⁸⁴, the argument will, as does the *Republic*, turn to the social world of the *polis*, with particular attention to the *oikos*. In this thesis, I operate with a distinction between private and political institutions for which, I argue, the dialogue itself provides textual support. Chapter 3 will be concerned with private institutions as they are described in Book V. Here, I argue that the *oikos* as the

⁸⁴ This chapter was printed in an earlier version in Norwegian, Oda Elisabeth Wiese Tvedt, "Privatliv og Politikk: Hvorfor oikos må avskaffes i Platons Staten," *Agora: Antikkens politiske filosofi*, Journal for Metafysisk Spekulasjon, no. 2-3 (2018): 111–35.

institutionalized family home is crucial for the project of the *Republic*, and, hence, for my thesis, in the following senses: First of all, it is illuminating for how the relationship between the individual and their surroundings should be conceived. Secondly, chapter 3 retains Glaucon's premise that humans are greedy for desire-satisfaction, but also accounts for why, within systems directed at acquisition, having the same basic desires and pursuing similar goods will, because of other individual differences, lead to very different results. These different results, e.g., that some will become wealthy and some less so, will in turn lead to inequality, envy, divisions, and factions within the *polis*. The idea of a conflict of interests between the community and the individual as embedded in democratic culture, launched in chapter 1, will resurface here. Few of the *Republic*'s suggestions have given rise to more criticism, not to say revulsion, among commentators than the ones regarding the family relations of the guardians.⁸⁵ It has been criticized for its cruel sacrifice of individual relations between the guardians for the sake of societal stability, and even though it places women guardians on equal footing with the men of their class, it has been accused of eradicating women.⁸⁶ While my aim in this chapter will not be to argue against these claims, *per se*, the contextualized reading I offer will go some way to mitigate the revulsion expressed by modern liberal readers of the *Republic*. Weddings in Ancient Athens were arranged. That is a historical reality. Socrates' proposition really amounts to exchanging one type of arranged marriages for another type: The historical purpose of the arranged marriages was private gain and wealth/power acquisition. The marriages in the *Republic* are to be rid of such motives for the classes with positions of power, and instead be conducted with a view to what is best for the state. This chapter argues that the destruction of the nuclear family aims at abolishing politics from the *polis* altogether. This relies on my interpretation of the *Republic*'s conception of 'politics'. I argue that politics, as it is portrayed in the *Republic*, can be summed up as that of 'negotiating diverging interests within the *polis*'.

This analysis contributes to my reading in that it shows clearly how i) the private institutions and structures shape and mold the people that live them, and ii) one type of nature, the one that is encouraged by the private institutions in the democratic society, in turn is the one most susceptible to cause detrimental effects. This contributes to the thesis' overall objective by showing clearly how 'human nature' in the *Republic* is conceived in close interplay with its surroundings, in the widest possible sense of the word. Both the physical surroundings, such as houses, the structures of societal organization that they

⁸⁵ See Natalie H Bluestone, "Why Women Cannot Rule: Sexism in Plato Scholarship," in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana, Re-Reading the Canon (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1994).

⁸⁶ See e.g., Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato," in *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana, Re-Reading the Canon (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1994).

are part of, and the ideology that encompasses them take part in shaping not only everyday life but the very core of beliefs and dispositions that make up a person. Furthermore, this chapter will lay the grounds for the claim that democratic values are expressed and imposed through surroundings in a wide sense. My interpretation of Socrates' restructuring of the household sphere shows clearly how the *Republic* posits the democratic value of individual freedom as having far-reaching consequences, no matter how unintended they are. In sum, this chapter shows how the family-politics of Book V constitutes an important part of the critical assessment of democratic ideology in the *Republic*.

In chapter 4, Democratic Institutions for Decision-Making and their Role in Shaping the Soul, I will, as the title indicates, continue the analysis of the relationship between the individual and their surroundings and turn toward the political institutions. In Book VI, Plato has Socrates explicitly target the social dynamics of the political institutions of democratic Athens as the culprit for imposing, shaping, and enhancing the desires and fears of the citizens. I argue that the *Republic* sees the inherently social nature of democratic decision-making institutions as a threat to the autonomy of reason in that it both encourages a social aspect of decision-making, but also, through its procedural practices encourages and produces socially-oriented citizens. Attitudes and beliefs that are prevalent in the body politic are thus in effect transmitted between citizens and become self-reproductive, or self-corruptive in Socrates' normative judgement. Central to this argument are the practices of the *thorubos* and of open, direct voting and the assembly procedures which proceeds it.

As a result, this chapter devotes some attention to contextualizing Athenian decision-making procedures, especially the assembly proceedings. I account for my selection of empirical material within the chapter. Here, I will let it suffice to say that I operate from a narrower conception of 'political' than perhaps has become commonplace, and that I justify these choices by pointing to textual passages from the *Republic* which I take to support my choices.

Two parts of Book VI are particularly enlightening for my purposes. One, the ship-of-state-simile, and two, the apology for the philosophers. Contained within these passages I find a critique of democratic decision-making procedures which brings out some problems with democratic group-decision making, hereafter referred to as simply group decision-making. First of all, group decision-making is non-simultaneous. Non-simultaneousness allows for a greater possibility for deferring to others. This makes judging others, in terms of character, motives, and judgement, into a political skill. I will elaborate on this argument in greater detail in the final chapter. Here, I will only point out that while deferring to experts or 'one's elders' would seem to be in line with Socratic advice, his argument seems to be that due to the inherently social nature of the Athenian group-decision-making procedures,

there is a danger of deferring to others on faulty grounds. Operating from the premise that “one imitates what one admires.” (500b-d) I argue that in the *Republic*’s arguments an implicit view is detectable that democracy shapes its citizens’ attitudes toward admiring the wrong kind of skills and traits. This is what I take the ship-of-state-simile to mean. The combination of deferring to others as well as deferring to them on faulty grounds is a threat to reasoned decision-making.

Secondly, Socrates seems to attribute some properties to the demos as a group. This is especially prominent in the passage which likens the demos to a “great beast” (493). On the one hand, Socrates seems to say that the demos are self-corrupting, and on the other hand, he seems to ascribe special responsibility to the teachers of rhetoric, the sophists. To come to clarity about this puzzle, I rely on Mirko Canevaros’ research which identifies the procedures in the Athenian demos as construed to foster consensus and asks whether the demos could be meaningfully construed as a ‘group’, liable to the problem of group radicalization e.g., concluding that they could in some cases be construed as a group in the relevant sense. This point can partly be said to rest on epistemic grounds, but the social dynamic again takes a position of primacy when it comes to the role of the sophists and the *thorubos*. Finally, I conclude that the *Republic*’s critical treatment of the political decision-making procedures of the demos is based mainly on a premise that their social aspects serve as a machinery for shaping citizens: the procedural practices make the citizens more socially oriented, thus strengthening their *thymotic* side on the expense of reason, something which in turn rewards those who are most able to comply with the majority view.

In the final chapter, I pick up on the topic of judgement as central for the ability to navigate politics. **Chapter 5, Freedom, Fear, and Tyrants Everywhere: Men who Gaze at Statues and How to Find the Tyrant in the Democrat** traces the simile of the statue throughout the dialogue and claims that the many ocular references which rely on modes of seeing or looking at something as a metaphor for conveying ideas about different ways of theoretical investigations are informative if applied to an evaluation of Glaucon and his function in the text. In Book IX, the time has come to judge between the tyrant and the king, and Glaucon is asked to be the judge. In these passages I argue that the *Republic* exploits a semantic correlation between the king and tyrant, and that, by leaving out any reference to philosophers in connection with the kings in question throughout Book VIII and IX, a pre-existing ambiguity is, deliberately, inserted into the text. This interpretation also serves as a suggestion towards solving the problem of the ranking of the regimes which I argue should not be interpreted as expressing the author’s expressed preferences, but as serving a textual function: Following Josiah Ober and Cincia Arruzza, I argue that an aim of the *Republic* is to criticize democratic discourse and logic. Democracy reasoning had at the time of the

Republic obtained a quasi-hegemonic position as sole supplier of the political narrative that accounted for the Athenians' political identity and self-understanding. Central to this narrative was a binary opposition between tyranny and democracy. In order to establish a theoretical place from which democratic critique is not automatically delegitimized by being labeled 'tyrannical', the argument of the *Republic* tries to destabilize the bipolar political categories within the discourse. This theoretical move is necessary to prepare the ground for the ideological critique of democracy which Socrates pinpoints as a problematic conflation of the defining ideological principle, freedom, with that of power. My analyses show that the *Republic*'s argument reveals that the natural conclusion of the democratic desires is the unlimited freedom of the tyrant. This reasoning is valid on the premise that freedom is understood as having power over others. This is the notion of freedom I argue the *Republic* claims to find in the democratic desires and which the criticism is predicated on. Further, the *Republic* proposes a safer route to freedom; – to find it within, by exercising power over oneself.

The character of Glaucon, I argue, is burdened with the task of illustrating this point for us. He is in this thesis understood as a paradigmatic Athenian, and as my analysis shows, he is incapable of recognizing others' motives and characters because of a tendency to universalize his own desires. But as Socrates' argument can be taken to indicate, these desires are not universal, but belongs to Glaucon and many of his fellow citizens by virtue of the regime they are brought up in. Unfortunately, not being able to judge correctly the characters of one's fellow citizens is a political liability – both for democracy, which may not recognize its potential usurpers before it is too late, but also personally: Glaucon's ideas about elite rulers might make him more susceptible to Thrasymachean teachings than to Socratic ones, and thus he becomes vulnerable to tyranny which here is also portrayed as a personal tragedy.

Chapter 1

Myth, Motivation and the Anthropology of the *Republic*

The question he [the philosopher] asks is, What is Man? What actions and passions properly belong to human nature and distinguish it from all other beings? This is what he wants to know and concerns himself to investigate. (*Theat.* 174b)

The history of political philosophy begins with a story. This story has since been written many times, and each of the stories has taken the form of a hypothesis. This hypothesis is an answer to the foundational question: What is human nature really like? And whether one thinks, like Hobbes, that humans, taken *au naturel*, are a mean and brutish type of being, or whether one thinks, like Rousseau, that we are a peaceful and kind-spirited species, this premise of political philosophy guides what one thinks is the purpose and aim of state in a normative sense.⁸⁷ The same question, as Josiah Ober has shown in his recent work on Greeks and game theory, also preoccupied the Greeks.⁸⁸ And most of all, it occupied Plato, who in the course of his dialogues offers at least 4 different anthropologies, at least one of which we find in the *Republic*.⁸⁹ The story told in the *Republic* also begins with an idea of man. But this man does not live in a ‘state of nature’. His release from the constraints of social norms comes in a different guise, in the form of an invisibility-ring. The

⁸⁷ Thomas Hobbes furthered the view that human life without corporation could be said to be a “war of all against all”, a view that is often summed up by the phrase that human life, in a state of nature would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Christopher Brooke, First Edition (Harmondsworth, Meddlesex: Penguin Classics, 2017). p. 2

⁸⁸ Ober is not the first to argue this. William Charron offer an analysis and a reasoned argument for why and how the ancient Greeks mode of argumentation overlap with modern day game theory in: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Two “Discourses” and the “Social Contract,”* ed. John T. Scott, Illustrated edition (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2014). on which the See also Chung, Hun, “A Game-Theory Solution to the Inconsistency between Thrasymachus and Glaucon in Plato’s Republic,” *Ethical Perspectives*, no. 3 (2016): 383–410, <https://doi.org/10.2143/EP.23.3.3170038>.

⁸⁹ The others are: the *Protagoras* (322d), the *Laws* (678c), the *Gorgias* (483a-484b).

“ancestor of Gyges” stumbles upon a ring that renders its wearer invisible upon demand and thus, free from the gaze and subsequent judgement and punishment of others. This reveals his true nature. By the aid of the ring, he seduces the Queen, overthrows the King, and takes the role of ruler. This is the tale told by Glaucon in Book II of the *Republic*. And so, the *Republic* establishes its theory of human nature, through a hypothetical anthropology in the form of the median man, the *true* man, whose desires are as recognizable as they are banal: Sex, wealth, and power. The dispositions, needs, and desires of this hypothetical man, *sine* society, or *pre* society, have had a profound impact on the political history of the West, although he is by necessity a figment of imagination, a construct, a *hypericon*: he has never existed, and if he had, the pre-social man by definition did not communicate his dreams or desires. Nonetheless, he is an enormously influential persona: Since all political theory and hence, ideology, ultimately relies upon, first, a theory of human nature, second, a theory of how societies come to be, and third, some kind of explanation for how societies come to achieve any kind of extension in time, the pre-societal construct is at the core of political ideology. It is as it should be that these questions are also at work in the *Republic*, but its most vivid contribution is perhaps the theory of human nature – the theory of human motivation as it is related through the notion of the tripartite soul. Human motivation is also at the forefront of this chapter, in which I argue that Glaucon and Thrasymachus each personifies a certain psycho-political profile which will become essential for understanding the criticism that Plato directs against democracy: While there are many known pitfalls (and advantages) to group decision-making,⁹⁰ an important contribution made by the *Republic* to political thinking is, as I will argue, to question our ability to judge other’s motivations and credibility when engaging with them in either private or political settings.⁹¹ Such pitfalls threaten both the process and the quality of decisions

⁹⁰ See Jon. A. Oppenheimer, Chapter 4, for an introduction to some main benefits and concerns. See also Black for an argument for the advantages. Oppenheimer is mainly concerned with how institutions and procedures can contribute to, or be detrimental to obtaining a pareto medium, (a reasonable, median outcome) such as ‘structure induced equilibria’ (p.91). Other concerns are less technical and more social, such as those mentioned by Jon Elster in a paper on a 1789 vote in the French Assemblée Constituante - emotions and social positions, or as contributed by Christian List: Group radicalization. Joe Oppenheimer, *Principles of Politics: A Rational Choice Theory Guide to Politics and Social Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) <<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=944727>> [accessed 16 April 2021]. Duncan Black, “On the Rationale of Group Decision-Making,” *Journal of Political Economy* 56, no. 1 (February 1948): 23–34, <https://doi.org/10.1086/256633>. Jon Elster, “The Night of August 4, 1789. A Study of Social Interaction in Collective Decision-Making,” *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales* 45, no. 136 (2007): 71–94. Christian List, “What Is It Like to Be a Group Agent?,” *Noûs* 52, no. 2 (June 2018): 295–319, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12162>.

⁹¹ As such I am deeply at odds with Christopher Rowe when he states that “it is not persons but ideas that interests Plato”, because I think that the ideas and how and why those particular ideas came to be embedded in that particular person is of utmost relevance and interest for Plato in that the method for dislodging those same ideas to the extent that they are erroneous

made by bodies such as the Athenian demos. In this chapter I will show that this is of political significance for Book I, which contributes to the argument of the *Republic* and must be seen as part of the critique of democracy.

The *Republic* begins by proposing and discussing three different notions of justice through three different interlocutors, – Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. In chronological order: “Justice is speaking the truth and giving back what one has borrowed” (331d); “Justice is to give to each what is owed to him: harming one’s enemies and benefiting one’s friends” (331e-335e); “Justice is the advantage of the stronger” (339). This is generally agreed upon, but little else is.⁹² There does seem to be a majority reading, though, that Book I is a failed, and therefore almost expendable, part of the argument. Book I has been said to be an appendix, not really integral to, or necessary for, the rest of the work, and the suggested explanations vary from that it was intended to be another dialogue, or that it represents Plato’s final departure and farewell to the Socratic method. The latter point has been made particularly in relation to the craftsman-analogy.⁹³ The craftsman-analogy between shepherds and rulers is suggested by Socrates in the discussion with Thrasymachus, a discussion which Socrates himself, echoed a little later by Glaucon, claims that he fails in a fit of gluttony (354b). Contrary to this consensus, I hold that Book I is indeed a valuable object of interpretation, on these grounds: by the end of Book I, Socrates has defended the assumption that there is such a thing as a determinate answer, and one that will satisfy Socrates’ own truth-requirements, to the question ‘what is justice?’ against Thrasymachus relativism. Moreover, he has refuted the claim that ruling is to the advantage of the ruler, by simply pointing out that rulers demand wages (345d). This, at least, is the function of Socrates’ point in the argument. I will further suggest that the argument about wages is also an example of another layer to the text which, when brought out, serves to enrich the whole set-up of the argument of Book I, namely that of a deliberate intertextuality with Herodotus’ *The Histories*. This intertextual relationship is well known when it comes to Glaucon’s thought-experiment in Book II (359d-360b) but otherwise overlooked until Ober’s recent contribution.⁹⁴ What is gained, I argue, from bringing out just these threads in the fabric of Plato’s text, is a particular reading of the premises upon which the arguments of the *Republic* are predicated.

would depend on this. Christopher Rowe, “Interpreting Plato,” in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. Hugh H. Benson, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006). P.10.

⁹² See Christopher Rowe’s essay for an overview. Christopher Rowe., “Interpreting Plato”.

⁹³ The arguments for this rely on both stylistic, thematic and dramatic interpretations, plus the external evidence thought to be found in *Cleitophon*. See Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*.p.17 See also Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory*. p. 182.

⁹⁴ In his forthcoming book on Greeks and rationality Ober takes the link between the two Gyges’s as a point of departure for placing *The Republic* into a broader Greek conversation about rationality and the justification for political rule. I aim to follow his approach. Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*.

The *Republic*, one might say, is the answer to a challenge, but since it is predicated on a certain anthropology, an anthropology challenged within the text itself, this chapter will argue that the crafting of a city in words cannot be seen as an expression of Plato's ideal state. Instead, it must be seen as a project of distributing justice, given that all, or most, citizens would be motivated by greed for sex, wealth, and power. I will demonstrate how the tension in the discourse that would make justice good for the state but bad for the individual is explicated in Book I of the *Republic*, and any need for cooperation and inter-human dependency crumbles away in Thrasymachus reasoning which reduces our relations to a question of power. Furthermore, I will challenge Glaucon's assumptions by showing that the motivations of sex, wealth, and power enumerated by Glaucon in Book II – are not the only kind of motivations recognized in the *Republic*. Moreover, I will argue that the force and play of these motivations are contingent on what kind of regime a person has been brought up in, and that this further challenges Glaucon's assumptions.

My analysis will show that the argument of Thrasymachus in Book I is substantially different from that of Glaucon's, and not reducible to a failed explication of the same argument.⁹⁵ Acknowledging Thrasymachus' contribution as essential and original, allows us to see not only the role of Book I in relation to the whole of the *Republic*, an observation which contributes to an argument about the unity of the work; it also allows us to bring out novel aspects of the dialogue. This analysis will thus prepare the grounds for my discussion in the the final chapter, where I will argue that Thrasymachus idea of power, freedom will be very important to the discursive attack the *Republic* launches at paradigmatic democratic reasoning about politics.

In the speech of Glaucon, we are presented with the famous 'Ring Myth', or the 'Myth of Gyges', presented in the opening of this chapter, a defense of injustice which, in the predominant interpretation, makes out the 'true' beginning of the *Republic*: this is the challenge that Socrates accepts, and which leads him to embark on his quest in defense of justice (368c). Now, it is known that Plato's 'Myth of Gyges' shares some properties with a story of Herodotus': Both stories share the proper names and the *motif* of regicide. But for the longest time, the main view regarding the relationship between the narratives has been that they both refer to a common source, an consensus which, perhaps, has obstructed more fruitful approaches to the interplay between these tales.⁹⁶ I follow Andrew Laird's convincing argument on the following points: that there is no such common source for Plato's and Herodotus' stories, that the 'Ring Myth' is an invention of Plato's, and that

⁹⁵ See e.g. C. D. C. Reeve for the view that Glaucon "defends and restate the views first offered by Thrasymachus. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*. p. 24.

⁹⁶ See e.g. Kirby Flower Smith, "The Tale of Gyges and the King of Lydia," *The American Journal of Philology* 23, no. 4 (1902): 361–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/288700>.

the similarities to Herodotus' narrative have a positive significance.⁹⁷ This line of reasoning allows us to also see how Plato utilizes what we may assume is background knowledge for his audience when he, I argue, integrates and responds to some problems regarding power and the legitimacy of rule, as formulated by Herodotus, into his own work. In this chapter, I will argue that Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's positions represent two different psychological motivations, which, in consequence, present us with two different pictures of human nature. What I propose, is to read the positions of Thrasymachus and Glaucon, respectively, as closely and purposefully interconnected with two different approaches to kingship and power related in the *Histories*: the stories of Deioces, King of the Medes (1.96-1.100), and of Gyges. (1.6-1.13). When read against the background of Herodotus' stories about power and rule, my claim is that Books I and II of the *Republic* bring out two particularly strong and problematic motivational forces, namely fear and bodily desires, which both compliment and challenge the discourse about justice. Throughout the dialogue, we are continuously reminded of their presence and impact on action and choices, also political ones. These two forces would be recognizable for the Greek audience as traits particularly connected to the tyrant in that they were most prominent in this figure.⁹⁸ These two forces of the human psyche are also, I argue, at the core of the *Republic*'s exploration of the relation between power, human motivations, and political rule.

This argument is indebted to Josiah Ober's ongoing book project on Greeks and Game Theory. Ober reads Glaucon's speech, and the myth of Gyges particularly, to be aimed at exposing revealed preferences. He argues that Glaucon's story exemplifies the instrumental rationality that makes up the basis of the Greek 'Folk Theory' of practical reasoning. The position can be summarized by the following quote from Xenophon's Socrates: "For I think that all persons choose (*proairoumenous*), out of what is available to them, what they think is most advantageous to themselves (*sumphorôtata autois*), and they do this."⁹⁹ While Ober further holds that this is Plato's own definition of rationality, I have a different conception of the role that the 'Folk Theory of Rationality' plays in the *Republic*. As mentioned, I suggest that we may read the *Republic* as addressing the underlying assumptions that Glaucon's challenge relies on, and rather than adopting them, critically assess them.

A 'Folk Theory' might sound like an oxymoron of sorts, but what is meant by this is simply that the Greeks shared some background assumptions about how a fully rational individual *ought* to act, and what would be, under normal circumstances, how they should be *expected* to act. These background

⁹⁷ Andrew Laird, "Ringing the Changes on Gyges: Philosophy and the Formation of Fiction in Plato's *Republic*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (November 2001): 12–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/631825>.

⁹⁸ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 39.

⁹⁹ Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.9.4.

assumptions include shared conceptions of morality and justice. They are what Ruby Blondell off-handily calls the “popular ethical outlook”.¹⁰⁰

Since the present chapter is above all an exposition and an interpretation of the two types of motivations, fear and desires, and hence, of two types of anthropologies, the main focus of this chapter will be on the views argued for by respectively Thrasymachus and on Glaucon, contextualized by their dramatic and historical personas. I will account for the main components of Thrasymachus view, but the analytic reconstruction will be conducted by placing equal weight on the dramaturgy of the interaction between Socrates and Thrasymachus, which in turn allows me to tease out the importance of what is not so much told to us, but shown: namely the character and motivations of the main characters in Books I and II, and, more importantly, why it matters. This line of procedure is complex since it must operate on so many levels: The drama of the dialogue constitutes one context, the Platonic corpus another, and the broader political-historical-literary setting constitutes a third. Although these levels overlap and interact, I will endeavor to portray them one by one. The analysis will start by treating the passages concerning Thrasymachus. Second, I will turn to Glaucon. Here I will account for Herodotus’ story, comparing it to Plato’s Gyges, before engaging in a comparative analysis of the two views and characters. In conclusion, I will argue that both Glaucon and Thrasymachus fail to see the full range of motivational sources at work *within* an individual, and furthermore, that the reason they fail is that their own motivations are of the sort that blinds them to the notion that other people may be motivated differently than themselves.

What Thrasymachus Argued

The question of ‘what is justice’ is what drives the conversation on Socrates’ lead, but in a dramatic moment, Thrasymachus takes center stage: like a wild and roaring beast he attacks, and he sends Socrates and Polemarchus

¹⁰⁰ Ruby Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato’s Dialogues* (Cambridge, UK, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). These assumptions, both in their descriptive and normative form, can be reconstructed into something which comes very close to the premises for modern choice theory. This premise, argued for by the likes of William Charron is what guides Obers’ investigation. By this is meant that the reconfigured ‘Folk Theory’ was predicated on the assumption that a rational individual will act according to his desires and his beliefs. That is to say that “the agent has (1) ordered preferences over outcomes; (2) coherent beliefs about the relevant state of the world; and (3) acts accordingly, based on his expectations of preference satisfaction. I will not contribute or engage with that particular debate although I will rely on the works of those who do. William Charron, “Greeks and Games: Forerunners of Modern Game Theory,” *Forum for Social Economics* 29, no. 2 (January 1, 2000): 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02779101>.

“fluttering” from the stage” (336b).¹⁰¹ For the remainder of Book I, Socrates and Thrasymachus discuss between themselves, with only a few interjections from others. In this section, I will provide a paraphrased summary of the arguments and show the dramatic staging in which Socrates and Thrasymachus are embedded. This will be crucial for my aims, which are to identify core elements of Thrasymachus’ and Socrates’ discussion which is maintained throughout the dialogue, contributing to establishing its anthropology. The paraphrased summary below will provide an outline of what I deem to be the most important elements of their discussion, thus laying the grounds for my analysis about judgement, motives and cooperation.

Thrasymachus’ views are, in essence as follows: He thinks that justice is a vice and not a virtue. Justice is praised solely because it gives the one who is regarded as ‘just’ a good reputation. Those with real power do not need to rely on a reputation of justice. Furthermore, those who do praise justice, either out of weakness or due to some pragmatic deliberation which causes them to choose justice as neither the best – which he thinks is to not be just and not suffer consequences – nor the worst – to suffer someone else’s injustice – do so out of fear of the worst consequences. Thrasymachus makes it clear that he is not referring to, necessarily, ‘the stronger’ in a physical sense, but in terms of decision-making power. The ‘stronger’ means, at any given time, ‘the ruler’ and so we are given to understand that ‘stronger’ means for Thrasymachus ‘free to pursue one’s own interests without fear of punishment or restraints’. The following quote quite clearly expresses the purity of Thrasymachus power-politics:

You are so far from understanding about justice and what’s just, about injustice and what’s unjust, that you don’t realize that justice is really the good of another, the advantage of the stronger and the ruler, and harmful to the one who obeys and serves. Injustice is the opposite, it rules the truly simple (*euhetikos*) and just, and those it rules do what is to the advantage (*sumpheron*) of the other and stronger, and they make the one they serve happy (*eudaimon*), but themselves not at all. You must look at it as follows, my most simple (*euhetikos*) Socrates: A just man always gets less than an unjust one. (343c-d)¹⁰²

His insulting tone is also captured within this quote. By saying that those who are ruled are simple (*euthikos*) and by describing Socrates as simple too, Thrasymachus presents his views in the form of a personal attack, implying that Socrates are of the kind suited to be ruled.

¹⁰¹ In Howland’s interpretation: Thrasymachus flushes them “like birds from the *meson*” the “middle ground of political debate about the advantageous and the just”. Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. p.125.

¹⁰² Translation from G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve, in: Plato, John M. Cooper, and D. S. Hutchinson, *Complete Works* (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub, 1997).

This definition of justice, that justice is what is advantageous for those who are ‘free to pursue one’s own interests without fear of punishment or restraints’ is perhaps peculiar-sounding, and the trained reader of Plato will immediately recognize that this does not satisfy Socrates’ criteria for a definition: For one thing, a definition is supposed to cover all relevant instances of justice and only instances of justice; it is clear that Thrasymachus’ *definiens* would prescribe very different actions from a ruler and his subjects, while still employing the term ‘justice’ to all of them – even if these actions are in direct opposition to each other.¹⁰³ Socrates exposes the inconsistency of the definition by getting Thrasymachus to admit that rulers sometimes err. This means that the subjects of the ruler, following his orders, must, when the ruler is wrong about what is advantageous for him, do what is disadvantageous to the ruler. (339 c- 340a). This is a clever refutation and anticipates the rule of non-contradiction which is explicated later on in the dialogue. Cleitophon interjects, for the first and only time in the dialogue: if Thrasymachus had rather chosen to say that “justice is what the stronger believes to be to his advantage” (340b) the definition would not be liable to Socrates’ refutation. This is true, but Cleitophon’s reformulation of Thrasymachus’ statement into radical relativism is not pursued.

Instead, Thrasymachus asks if Socrates really believes that he would call someone ‘the stronger’ in the very moment he makes a mistake? (340c7-8). Socrates says that he does think that, and Thrasymachus replies that this is because Socrates is a sycophant in argument (340d).¹⁰⁴ Thrasymachus does respond to Socrates challenge though, by referring to and narrowing his definition of a craftsman: A craftsman never errs in respect to the craft that he is a master of, so when a ruler fails, he does not do it *qua* ruler. A ruler is therefore not a ruler and hence not ‘the stronger’ in respect to the error he makes.

The position of Thrasymachus in the *Republic* is often compared to that of Callicles in the *Gorgias*.¹⁰⁵ Callicles claims that “by nature” (*physis*) some men are naturally stronger and that the many who are weaker, impose law (*nomos*) on the few, forbidding anyone to have more (483a-484b).¹⁰⁶ The obvious weakness of Callicles’ claim is of course that if the ‘many, weak’ dominate the ‘strong, few’, the many weak turn out to be *de facto* stronger and as such the claim is self-refuting. Thrasymachus avoids this error in his distinction between the ruler *qua* ruler and the ruler as person.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Vasilis Politis, forthcoming, On Plato’s forms as essences.

¹⁰⁴ Read: false accuser, false witness.

¹⁰⁵ Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato’s Dialogues*. p.77, Annas, *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*. p 37, Roslyn Weiss, “Wise Guys and Smart Alecks in Republic 1 and 2.”p. 93.

¹⁰⁶ In the *Gorgias* Socrates argues that it is worse to commit injustice than to suffer injustice. This argument is not part of the discussion here, but we should still consider it background. (*Gorg.* 479e).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Thrasymachus' new definition, had it been properly explicated, would now read something like this: 'Justice' is 'what is advantageous to a ruler in the instances in which he displays perfect mastery of his craft of ruling.' The new definition relativizes justice not only in regards to persons, but also in relation to time. This is not the line of reasoning Socrates pursues.¹⁰⁸ Instead, he patiently chips away at another weakness of Thrasymachus' reasoning, namely the underlying assumption that ruling is what any self-interested agent would aim for, if he thought he could get away with it. Socrates makes the point that the fact that whoever rules demands some compensation for doing so, seem to challenge that assumption. Rather, as any other craftsman, the ruler provides some benefit and expects some benefit in return. Mutual advantage designates the relationship between a ruler and the ruled, like the one between a shepherd and the sheep, he argues.

At this point, however, Thrasymachus makes another important claim to counter Socrates: Justice is the benefit of another, while injustice is the benefit to oneself (344c). After having disseminated this piece of questionable wisdom, Thrasymachus is ready to take his leave. Socrates persuades him to stay, through arguments that are remarkable, given Thrasymachus' own instrumental reasoning: Socrates mixes arguments about care with a more instrumental language, and persuades Thrasymachus that it is in his own benefit to stay and "instruct" them in how to live well; after all, he is the one who will have to live in a society of ignorant people if he chooses to leave. If he *cares* (*kêdesthai*) (344e) for them, Socrates says, he will stay, and so they will all benefit from the discussion. "It wouldn't be a bad investment for you to be the benefactor of a group as large as ours," (344e-345a), he goes on. Interestingly, and inconsistently, Thrasymachus stays. Thrasymachus will advance the view that "justice is the advantage of the stronger" (338c), by which he means that what is truly just is the opposite of what is usually thought to be so, which he calls 'benefit of the weaker'.

Thrasymachus is thus refuted in two ways: Implicitly, by Socrates' successful demonstration of an inconsistency between words and actions, and explicitly by not being able to make his definition universally applicable. To take them on in order: First, Thrasymachus is inconsistent in the sense that his actions speak of a different kind of nature than the one his arguments allow for. He does not adhere to his own standard of instrumental rationality; his conception of justice does not allow for the concept of care to have any argumentative force. In this way, Thrasymachus' argument that it is in the self-interest of the powerful to be unjust is shown to be a view that he does not fully ascribe to – either that, or he is confused or lacking in knowledge about what is really in his self-interest. Second, Socrates' refutation exposes a lack of universalizability on account of his claim: By asking whether a

¹⁰⁸ Unlike in the *Theaetetus* where relativism is thoroughly explored, both in itself and in its consequences.

constellation or group, even one with unjust aims, would obtain more when being just or unjust to each other (351c), Socrates makes Thrasymachus concede to the point that perfect injustice in every relation as a general rule of action would lead to a very disadvantageous state, where all form of collective action is made impossible. At a minimum, the unjust man depends on some other men being just so that he can cheat them, or collaborate with them in order to cheat others, and Socrates concludes his refutation of Thrasymachus by stating that “injustice is never more profitable (*lusiteleston*) than justice” (354a).

Socrates and Thrasymachus: A Personal Drama

The text is, parallel to the arguments, riddled with personal remarks. This is part of what is known as the *drama* of the dialogue. This drama I interpret as having two intertwined main *motifs*: that of motivations and of judging others. Socrates, who narrates the whole dialogue to persons unknown, perhaps to the reader directly, makes some meta-comments about Thrasymachus. The rest is rendered in direct speech. From Thrasymachus comments, we are given to understand that this is not the sophist’s first encounter with Socrates (e. g. 337a). Thrasymachus begins by launching an attack on Socrates, and his charge is that Socrates is “gratifying his love of honor” by refuting others, but that he never himself takes on the more difficult task of answering (336b-c). He demands that Socrates tells him, tells them all, what he thinks justice is, and not satisfy himself by refuting others as is his wont.

Despite what is said, what happens is that Socrates, intentionally playing on Thrasymachus’ own love of honor (it was obvious that he wanted to earn their admiration by giving what he himself thought is a very fine answer, Socrates says (338a)), is able to avoid giving such an account, at least for the time being. Rather, he deploys his understanding of his opponent’s character and motivations in order to elicit a definition from him instead. (337d- 338b).

Thrasymachus is described as a “wild beast” (336b): aggressive, forceful, and intimidating to Socrates, and Socrates admits to feeling frightened. Had he not seen Thrasymachus before he launched his attack, he might have been dumbfounded entirely, he confides to the reader (366b- d). By this, the “beastliness” of Thrasymachus is connected to the shape of the wolf, the animal most connected to tyranny, for Plato is here most likely alluding to the popular belief that if a wolf sees a man first, the man is struck speechless.¹⁰⁹ Thrasymachus, on the other hand, does not have the privilege of being the narrator and must direct his insults against Socrates directly. He says that Socrates is a false witness (*sukophantês*) in argument (340d), and when

¹⁰⁹ Plato, *The Republic of Plato: Second Edition*, trans. Allan Bloom, 2nd edition (New York: Basic Books, 1991). Bloom, note 30, p. 444. Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 39.

Thrasymachus has explained that the craftsman is unerring in so far as he is a craftsman, and so the ruler is no ruler in respect to his mistakes, Socrates' first question to Thrasymachus is not about the argument he made, but about the motivations he attributes to Socrates: "[...] so in your opinion I play the sycophant?" (341a). And, further: "Do you suppose I ask because I am plotting to do harm to you in the argument?" (341a). Again, when Socrates asks for a clarification about the argument, Thrasymachus, self-satisfied, repeats "do harm to that and play the sycophant, if you can [...]" (341a). Three times Thrasymachus repeats his claim about Socrates' motives. This constitutes a *motif* of judging or assessing others, particularly with respect to their motives. The above analysis shows how the dramatic layer of the discussion between Thrasymachus and Socrates brings out this *motif* as an important theme in the dialogues' overall argument. This thematic framework of our ability to judge and interpret other's correctly, is decidedly social. As will become clear when more layers are brought into the analysis, this *motif* is related to that of cooperation and trust. Hence, it contributes to pointing out a direction for a political reading of the *Republic*, for trust and collaboration are fundamental issues of political theory, and so also for Plato. This is also a clue to Thrasymachus' character, for as this drama shows us, the motives that Thrasymachus attributes to Socrates turn out to really belong to himself.

Contextualizing Thrasymachus Within the Corpus: Sociable Madmen or Rational Beasts?

As I have argued above, the claims that the interlocutors make about each other bring out a topic of motivation. This point may be argued for solely on the basis of the *Republic* but gains weight by being placed in the slightly broader context of the Platonic dialogues. The *Gorgias* has already been mentioned. In this section, I will build on the theme of cooperation and show how this political problem has been connected to rationality through notions of madness and reason in other works by Plato. This contributes to the present discussion by showing how the ideas of instrumental reason, which are tied to strong normative claims about how humans, can be expected to act.

That Thrasymachus must think himself immensely strong and sure of victory if he does not even pretend to be just, is clear from the *Republic* alone. But the *Protagoras* would place Thrasymachus' view in an even less flattering light and indicate that this degree of self-assuredness might make Thrasymachus version of instrumental rationality into a form of madness. Consider the passages in which the sophist-teacher Protagoras argues that if a person publicly confesses to being unjust, people will think him mad, and even less than human:

But when it comes to justice or any other social virtue, even if they know someone is unjust, if that person publicly confesses the truth about himself, **they will call this truthfulness madness** [. . .]. They will say that everyone ought to claim to be just, whether they are or not, and that **it is madness not to pretend to justice**, since one must have some trace of it or not be human. (323b)

This description maps remarkably well on to the passages portraying Thrasymachus. This can hardly be seen as a coincidence, seeing as both Protagoras' description and Thrasymachus' arguments are penned by Plato. On this account, Thrasymachus' rationality amounts to Protagoras' madness. With his denial of the social aspect of human nature, Thrasymachus reduces himself to the "wild beast" Socrates wants us to see him as, at least in a certain sense (336a). As noted, it is fair to say that Thrasymachus is tied closely to beastly metaphors. In line with this, his arguments themselves are a constant denial of being part of a shared humanity: To profess without shame to have no share in the social virtues that connects us *is* to abandon one's humanity, or at the very least what many would claim is an essential part of it.¹¹⁰ This particular sophist brags about being unjust, no doubt thinking it a show of strength. But is that not in itself clearly madness?

No matter our strength, we are all of us, even the Achilles-es of the world, vulnerable, – and to some extent we rely on others. In the *Republic*, this need is reduced to a practicality. For example, it is clearly stated that cities come to be due to needs which we have that go beyond what we can satisfy ourselves (369b). With this, the *Republic* already here sets up the *advantage* or *profit* we gain from each other as central to our relations. This may be contrasted with the *Laws*, in which it is argued that humans come together for specifically social reasons: When all of civilization is wiped out and humans have been living in isolation from each other, they get together because they are so pleased (*asmenos*) to see each other because they are so few (*Laws* 678c).¹¹¹

We may, in order to tentatively answer the question of whether Thrasymachus' reasoning is reason or madness, contrast Thrasymachus' argument also with the dramatic staging of the *Republic* itself. Fathers, sons, and brothers populate this work, and bonds of friendship and kinship are made a point of on several occasions: When we are reminded that Polemarchus is Kephalus's son (331d), and when Socrates reminds us that Glaucon and Adeimantus are brothers, and sons of Ariston (367c-368a). Socrates initiates his conversation with Kephalus by asking him how he got his money, for he does not, like those who have earned their own money, seem to love his money like a "father loves his sons" (330c). And, of course, there is the striking point

¹¹⁰ Like e.g., Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a.

¹¹¹ I owe this particular point about the *Laws* to Vivil Haraldsson, who brought it out during a reading session in the Bergen Ancient Philosophy Research Group in 2018. The comparative project between the *Republic* and the *Laws* is one that I intend to develop at a later stage.

that we are reminded of Ariston, Plato's own father, in a book the author writes about his brothers, in Books IV and IX, where he is credited with a share in central constructive parts of the Kallipolis.¹¹² The *Republic* keeps reminding us that Adeimantus and Glaucon are brothers, and that Ariston is their father, by letting Socrates state that: "Well, son of Ariston, your city might now be said to have been established. The next step is to get some adequate light somewhere and call upon your brother as well as Polemarchus and all the others [...]" (427). I suggest that we take these reminders of brothers who have fathers and lovers, and fathers who have sons, and of friendship, to mean that the author is well aware that as humans we have profound relations to one another, despite that some of his characters will further arguments to the contrary.

In spite of these continuous reminders that, I suggest, are there to make us question this premise, Thrasymachus' denial of the social aspect of human existence is present throughout the *Republic*: From the abolition of a family life for the guardian classes – a dismissal of a need for private family life or romantic love – to the children at war, and further, to the sorting of citizens into separate classes that cuts through family and friendship-bonds between citizens, the anthropology of the *Republic* consistently downplays humans as social beings in the sense that our relationships matter deeply to us. But there is a tension in the text on this issue, because at the same time, Socrates will analyze decision-making in political institutions as fundamentally social. I will return to this point in chapters 3 and 4.

Thrasymachus fits well the role as the proponent of this anti-social view as a disenfranchised and rootless foreigner. Thrasymachus has not only given us an argument about justice, but he has provided a view about human nature, and drawn some normative claims from this premise: Human beings are rationally self-interested. Rationality is, for Thrasymachus, to act in one's own self-interest in a way that seeks to maximize profit given our best beliefs about the world we are in.¹¹³ Socrates, on the other hand, seems to accept Thrasymachus premise that it is rational to act in self-interest as profit maximisers, and he limits himself to showing that Thrasymachus is wrong about what is in his own self-interest and this premise. The point that we may

¹¹² M. F. Burnyeat takes this to mean that Plato hints at divine inspiration for the whole family, and further, –that it is a way of honoring the influence of good fathers. This is not a significance I find it reasonable to attribute to these mentions. M. F. Burnyeat, "Fathers and Sons in Plato's Republic and Philebus," *Classical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2004): 80–87.

¹¹³ This view of rationality come very close to the one employed by contemporary political science. Drawing on theories from economics a rational agent is, according to rational choice theory one who 1) has desires 2) has beliefs about the world, and 3) has a set of preferences (which are transitive) and 4) who seeks to maximize profit, that is; is self-interested. As we see, this set of propositions matches very well with Thrasymachus claims as sketched out above. This similarity is pointed out by Josiah Ober, who in *Greeks and the Rational* argues that the Greeks' understanding of rationality comes very close to the rational choice one. See also Charron.

well be confused about our own self-interest, is retained throughout the dialogue.

So is Thrasymachus, the mad beast, rational after all? He has argued that it is rational, that is, in our self-interest, to act in such a way that we maximize advantage to ourselves: Justice is the opposite of that. In fact, justice is the advantage of another, and therefore irrational. Justice is only a rational aim if one is so weak as to be unable to seek one's own advantage and thereby becomes dependent on others' charitable attitude, or on others being likewise deceived about the true nature of justice. Thrasymachus has argued for a purely egoistical self-interestedness, but as we have seen, his actions spoke of more humanity than he was willing to admit to. In the passage of the *Protagoras* recently reviewed, Protagoras provides an anthropology which differs from that of the *Republic*, and of which I will now remind the reader: Before they possessed the art of politics, humans were ineffectively defending themselves against wild animals and threats. But when they tried banding together, they wronged each other and soon scattered again. To prevent the destruction of humankind all together, Zeus arranged for shame and justice to be distributed amongst them.

[...] 'and let all have a share. For cities would never come to be if only a few possessed these, as is the case with the other arts. And establish this law as coming from me: Death to him who cannot partake of shame and justice, for he is a pestilence to the city.' (*Prot.* 322d).

Thrasymachus has already shown that he has "a share of justice" by agreeing to stay and better his fellow citizens, and in the end, he demonstrates the other necessary virtue as well: Shame. Eventually, as Socrates is able to refute Thrasymachus Socrates says, "[...] I saw something I'd never seen before – Thrasymachus blushing" (350d). In the end, Thrasymachus turns out to be less mad, less beastly than we thought, and he actually grows gentle during the discussion and gives "very fine answers" (351c) to Socrates' questions. So, Thrasymachus, the wild beast, is tamed, but the question that arose through his argument remains: What kind of creatures are we? Gentle and caring, suitable for cooperation, or the other, brutish kind?

In this section we have seen that the question of motives and motivations is related to an overarching question of what our grounds are for cooperation. In this context, the question of what is rational is in part contingent on how one understands human nature. Thrasymachus has contributed a theory that amounts to a specific anthropology, insisting that it is rational for a human being to seek power over others. This is the part that Glaucon will come to elaborate on. But is there a positive significance of Thrasymachus' presence other than the function of a steppingstone for Glaucon, then? This is the question I will address in the following section.

What Can Thrasymachus do That Glaucon Can't do Better? (Political Context)

While it is often noted that Socrates' arguments are less than convincing, Thrasymachus' own arguments seem not only unable to convince himself (to leave his 'friends') – they also entail an accusation that challenges the very character of Socrates. For Socrates is a reputedly just man, sitting right in front of him. Faced with what many, and certainly many readers of Plato, would claim was living proof of the just man,¹¹⁴ it takes some nerve from Thrasymachus to accuse him of being just for ulterior motives, or out of weakness. Is Thrasymachus accusing Socrates for merely *acting* just as opposed to *being* just? If so, to what end? This facet of Thrasymachus' accusation is best understood in the light of the historical-political and literary contexts within which these accusations are embedded, and the analysis I offer here has the added benefit of explaining why this part of the challenge could not be made by Socrates friend Glaucon, but rather must be proposed by an adversary.

Thrasymachus is a character in his own right – a rhetorician and a sophist, but he also symbolizes something more than himself. He was most likely sent to Athens to act as a diplomat for his homestead, Chalcedon, after the *polis* had attempted an unsuccessful rebellion against the empire.¹¹⁵ Undoubtedly, he was a forceful and persuasive public speaker, but he was also known for being ill-tempered in his private life.¹¹⁶ We have already mentioned that Socrates ties him to the figure of the tyrant through linking him to the wolf. But why is the tyrant an important background for understanding the exchange between the two men of Book I?¹¹⁷ The *Republic* seems to take advantage of the historical character of Thrasymachus in order to make a psychological point, one which has bearings on the *motif* of judging the motivations of others. Thrasymachus was outspoken in his criticism against the Athenian empire, which he himself, in the sense of his *polis*, was a victim of. In this sense, Thrasymachus might be there to remind us of *Athens* as the tyrant. Several further observations support this. At the same time, I will argue, Thrasymachus is himself arguing for the rationality of the tyrant.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Apology*, *Symposium*.

¹¹⁵ White argues convincingly for the likelihood that he addressed the Athenian assembly, and the only reason for why a foreigner would be invited to do that was as an envoy on behalf of some other place. Stephen A. White, "Thrasymachus the Diplomat," *Classical Philology* 90, no. 4 (1995): 307–27. p 308.

¹¹⁶ Debra Nails, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub, 2002). p. 289,

¹¹⁷ Besides being perhaps the most important theoretical notion that the democratic Athens defined itself in relation to. Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth- Century Athenian Democracy," in *Popular Tyranny Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, Kathryn A. Morgan (Ed.) (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). p.88,- See also Victoria Wohl, "The Eros of Alcibiades," *Classical Antiquity* 18, no. 2 (1999): 349–85, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25011105>.

One clue we find in Thrasymachus' choice of words in this dialogue. As he challenges Socrates to define justice, he provides Socrates with a list of prohibited terms: Socrates was not allowed to say that justice was the beneficial (*ôphelimos*), the profitable (*lusiteloun*), the gainful (*kerdaleon*), nor the advantageous (*sumpheron*) (336d1,2). The rationale of profit-seeking or the 'advantageous' (*sumpheron*) coincides with what guides the behavior of the tyrant, or the tyrannical *polis*, (to be understood as the Athenian empire), according to Thucydides: *andri de turannô ê polei archên echousê ouden alogon hoti sumpheron*.¹¹⁸ Hobbes translates: "Now to a tyrant or city that reigneth, nothing can be thought absurd if profitable"¹¹⁹. Since the word rendered 'absurd' in Hobbes' translation is *alogos*, a different translation could be that "to the tyrant nothing appears *irrational* which is profitable", and as such this statement from Thucydides explicitly ties the language of the advantageous to the tyrant. To him, 'profit' (*sumpheron*) is the *only* kind of good. Socrates, when appealing to care in his arguments, is introducing another kind of reasoning, one which perhaps would rather say that to overlook all other kinds of human benefits for the sake of profit, is *alogos*, irrational. Rationality would, in this account, be in need of some additional guiding principles, like ethics.¹²⁰ Thrasymachus' rationality of the advantageous turns out to have links to the madness of the tyrant. As such, Thrasymachus does not only show a tendency to project his own motivations upon others, but his rationale is a tragic, yet understandable, effect of his own experience: One either has power, or one is the victim.¹²¹

Furthermore, the accusations of Thrasymachus against Socrates also employ the language of war, in order to, I suggest, remind us of the broader context of war and power politics. Socrates is plotting to do him harm (in the arguments) (340a-341a). Without trickery, he says, Socrates will never be able to overpower him (with words) (341b). These lines of power and violence point beyond the scene of men arguing about theories and remind us of another reason why Thrasymachus is chosen as the main opponent in Book I, and why it could not have been Glaucon: What is retained throughout the dialogue, is a commitment to an idea that it is rational to act in one's own self-interest, and that friendship and kinship do not give grounds for stable cooperation over time. This makes more sense if seen as a point about intra-state relations in which Athens historically relied less on trust than on force: The defense-league forged after the Persian wars became rather less of a voluntary alliance,

¹¹⁸ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 36..

¹¹⁹ *Thuc.* 6.85.1, Thomas Hobbes, translation 1943; "ἀνδρὶ δὲ τυράννῳ ἢ πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ οὐδὲν ἄλογον ὅτι ζυμφέρων".

¹²⁰ This idea, crucial to the political thinking presented in the Republic is less important for the democratic critique, but will surface also in this thesis, even though not explicitly pursued.

¹²¹ Thrasymachus was not alone in this view of course. Aristotle devotes much consideration to this notion in the *Politics* I.

and more of an empire in the years following its foundation in 477BCE.¹²² If Thrasymachus primarily had Athens as a superpower in mind, then it becomes clearer why he argues as he does. This intra-state level of the *Republic* is often mentioned, but soon forgotten when the city-soul analogy demands the interpreter's attention. I do suggest that we entertain at least the possibility that the dialogue's forgotten 'third level' is at least as important at the intra-city level in which the *Republic*'s main question is seen as 'what kind of a rule would be best in a city?' (Unless one thinks this is a dialogue primarily about the soul).¹²³ If we do, then, the main question might also be, "what kind of life must we live if we do not want to be a tyrant to our neighbors"? And furthermore, if Thrasymachus is to serve as an example: 'So as that they do not become tyrannical toward us', the three levels of politics that the *Republic* could be said to address are the intra-city level, the inter-city-state level, and finally, the level of Greece vs. other regions (barbarians).

But all of this does not account for why it would be important to include these personal attacks on Socrates in the first place. This, I argue has to do with the political context of the *Republic*, which it is actively responding to.

Thrasymachus' Charge Against Socrates: A Question of Motives. (Literary Context)

In this section I argue that the *ad hominem* attacks on Socrates' character made by Thrasymachus entail a more serious charge that emerges when properly contextualizing the claims. As we have seen, the notion of the tyrant is one that does not only serve as background for the democratic self-understanding, but also hovers in the background of the discussion between Thrasymachus and Socrates. In this section, I will argue that treating Herodotus' popular *Histories* as a text that Plato deliberately engages with, brings out further implications of the drama of Book I in the *Republic*.

In Book I of the *Histories*, Herodotus relates a story about the Medes and how they came to be ruled by a tyrant, which resonates well with the charges by Thrasymachus, and which may be seen as echoed again in Book VIII of the *Republic* (566b).¹²⁴ The Medes were a people who had just liberated themselves from the reign of the Assyrians. Among them was a clever man, Deioces. We learn at once that this man was "enamored of sovereignty" (*erastheis turannidos*) (1.96.2), or, in a less euphemistic translation, "a lover of tyranny". This man set about gaining power and got it by the following

¹²² Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 4th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). p. 477.

¹²³ Christopher Rowe gives a fine overview of the different strains of Plato receptions. Christopher Rowe, "The Place of the Republic in Plato's Political Thought."

¹²⁴ See chapter 5, "Glaucón's Confirmations"

means: He had a reputation for being just, and he now took to “profess and practice justice more constantly and zealously than ever” (1.96). In this way, he became sought after as a judge, or maybe an arbitrator, in disputes until he was the monopoly supplier of justice to his fellow countrymen. He thus withdrew his services, saying it was of no *profit* to him to leave his business all day to take care of everybody else’s (1.97).¹²⁵ We should note the use of the word ‘profitable’ (*lusiteléein*), which was on the list of forbidden phrases provided by Thrasymachus to Socrates.

The result was a great increase in lawlessness and this caused the Medes to gather together to confer on what to do. The main speakers – and here Herodotus inserts that he supposes that they were friends of Deioces’¹²⁶ – suggested that the matter would be solved by instating a king. This was soon agreed upon. And when the issue was raised of who the king should be, Deioces was the natural choice. Deioces accepted, on the conditions that he was to be given a bodyguard and a fortress.¹²⁷ Immediately after this, he began secluding himself more and more from the common Medes by fortresses, bodyguards, and by severely restraining access to his person. He did all this, according to Herodotus, so that other, equally courageous, men of his own age and rank would think him changed from the man they had known, so that they would in turn not get jealous and plot against him. (1.98). In other words: He feared other men like himself, and the ‘profit’ that he demanded in return for his rule, was protection. Having arranged all this, Herodotus informs, Deioces grew harsh in his judgements.

Carolyn Dewald argues that Herodotus should be read as a political writer, and that he is consistently negative to kingship. She notes that Herodotus uses the word tyranny three times in the story of how the Medes got their king, «twice in the beginning, and once towards the end» (1.96.2, 1.100.1).¹²⁸ Deioces goes on to be a fairly successful king by some standards, but we will leave him here and go on to investigate how Deioces may shed light upon Book I of the *Republic*. Deioces loves tyranny for itself, that is: he is a lover of power. I suggest that we entertain the notion that Plato leads us in the direction of this particular story when he first lets Thrasymachus argue that there is no such thing as a just person, only a covertly unjust man. According to this reasoning, Socrates, advocating for, and acting, justly must have ulterior motives of power-lust for doing this. For a reader familiar with the at the time popular *Histories*, the accusation against Socrates is thinly veiled: Thrasymachus accuses this reputedly just man, of being either weak, or weak

¹²⁵ Greek: οὐ γὰρ οἱ λυσιτελέειν τῶν ἑωυτοῦ ἐξημεληκότα τοῖσι πέλας δι’ ἡμέρης δικάζειν.

¹²⁶ This kind of manipulation by *thorubos* will be made subject in Chapter 4 which deals with political institutions. See “The Roar of the Beast and How to Soothe it”.

¹²⁷ The «notorious tyrannical request» (*Rep.* 566b).

¹²⁸ Carolyn Dewald, “Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus,” in *Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece: Popular Tyranny*, Kathryn A. Morgan (Ed.) (United States of America: Texas University Press, 2003), 25–58., p. 27.

and fake.¹²⁹ Either he is weak and has to take refuge in being able to persuade others to refrain from abusing him, or he is perhaps like Deioces, an ostensibly just man out to get some advantage by gaining a reputation for practicing and professing justice, but seeking a manipulative route to power instead of relying on brute strength.

That the story of the Medes is implicated in the discussion of Book I is made even clearer when Socrates argues that ruling cannot be advantageous to a ruler since the ruler asks for wages (*misthos*), a far more shameful kind of ‘profit’. We remember that Deioces asked for compensation for his work, claiming that it was not profitable for him to dole out justice for free. In the preceding discussion following the claim that justice is the advantage of the stronger, Socrates and Thrasymachus have discussed ‘advantage’ using the Greek word *sumpheron*. A turning point in the linguistic terms comes at 344e, when Thrasymachus is about to leave, and Socrates asks if Thrasymachus really wants to leave before teaching them, or finding out, what life is the most profitable (*lusitelês*). Socrates is the one who turns the conversation to the topic of profit so that he can make a distinction between caring for that which one is the craftsman of, and the profit one makes from this. This in turn allows him to say that the rulers must be ruling for the sake of someone else, because they demand wages (*misthon*) (345e). But it is not Thrasymachus’ aim to make a profit. He does not argue from a money lover’s perspective, but sticks to the language of advantage, which is not so closely tied to monetary profit, but could imply other kinds of benefit, like power. We should note that it is at this point in the dialogue, when money, honor, and penalties have been tied to the discussion of ruling, that Glaucon makes his re-entrance (347a).¹³⁰

Thrasymachus tried using the story of a seemingly just man turned tyrant to cast doubt upon Socrates’ motives – Deioces loved tyranny and got his way by professing to be just. But Socrates remembers the rest of the story. We might take it that he alerts Thrasymachus, or his audience (the assembly in the dialogue or the readers of the *Republic*) of this when he inserts his comment

¹²⁹ Interestingly, T. Y. Henderson invents a rather elaborate hypothetical figure, Setarcos, who has many traits in common with Deioces. He is an ostensibly just man, who preaches justice in order to gain advantages for himself. By this (needless but imaginative) invention Henderson concludes much like I do regarding Thrasymachus’ position: that to act justly is to leave oneself open to being acted unjustly upon by others. T. Y. Henderson, “In Defense of Thrasymachus,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1970): 218–28.

¹³⁰ This I claim contrary to Nails who claims that Thrasymachus reveals himself as a money-lover when he “demands pay”. I think rather this is devised to remind us that Socrates is poor and that his justice has brought him no profit because the pursuit of such topics has led him to ignore, or to be utterly careless of, perhaps, his own affairs. Nails interprets *Rep.* 137 d to the effect that Thrasymachus “is eager to make money”, when Thrasymachus asks Socrates to speak, or otherwise pay a fine. But the reason why he in the end concedes to speak is another one: The seemingly persuasive argument is that to speak will benefit his fellow men, but Socrates guesses that his true motivation is to show off. Another design for the demand for money is to embarrass Socrates for his poverty, and for the interpretation of a mock-trial, Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. Nails, *The People of Plato*. p. 289.

about the rulers demanding wages, reminding Thrasymachus that Deioces claims that he himself receives no profit (*lusiteléin*) from delivering justice to his neighbors and ignoring (*exêmelêkota*: to be utterly careless of) his own affairs (*Hdt.*197). This is what allows Socrates to turn the story against Thrasymachus, since wage earning is seen as a less honorable pastime than is a gentlemanly life of leisure.¹³¹ I hold that this argument is not really addressed to Thrasymachus, but to the one who's attention it draws, – Glaucon – and that this makes it into a less convincing refutation.¹³² But, turning the story against Thrasymachus, Socrates shows that he is well aware of the charge that he is either weak or dishonestly trying to get power for himself by “professing justice”.¹³³ Construed against the political backdrop of the *Republic*, the charge is a serious one. After all, when Solon became an arbitrator in Athens and had the possibility of seizing the power for himself, it was on account of having a reputation for being just. Luckily (or who knows), for the Athenians, he had no inclination toward tyranny. But how could the Athenians have known that beforehand? The ability to be able to judge others' characters turns out to be central to the initial argument of the *Republic*, as I will argue in the following sections.

Summing up this section, I have so far argued that Thrasymachus' claims to knowledge about Socrates motives and intentions might be taken to be an expression of the particular anthropology that Thrasymachus sees as universal, and, further, that it might also amount to a serious *ad hominem* charge against Socrates: That he is either weak or covertly seeking the benefits of justice.¹³⁴ This ties in with the topic of motivations which I have already identified, and adds to it a more serious note. I have further argued that the hostility of these charges necessitates that they come, not from a friend, but from an adversary, and that this explains why they could not have come from Glaucon.

¹³¹ See e.g. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp. 135-6.

¹³² Glaucon is a young man about to take on a role of leading the demos, a role natural for him to assume because of his elite-status. But, as I will argue extensively in chapter 5, Socrates suspects that he seeks power for the wrong reasons.

¹³³ It becomes clear that Socrates is aware that Thrasymachus has not argued in terms of profit when he summarizes and says that Thrasymachus has said a bigger thing still, – that the life of the unjust man is *stronger*, that is: *kreitton*. *Kreitton* could be used of all sorts of excellence, (see Bloom pp. 444-5, n. 32.) Which do you choose, Glaucon? Socrates asks, innocently – I for my part choose the life of a just man as more *profitable*. (*lusiteleo*). (τὸν τοῦ δικαίου ἔγωγε λυσιτελέστερον βίον εἶναι.) (377e).

¹³⁴ Allan Bloom claims that the *Republic* is the “true Apology of Socrates” because here he takes up the accusations that really led to Athens condemning him, – that of the relationship between the philosopher and the community. My interpretation here can be said to tie in with this line of reasoning and further provide content to what is at stake. Allan Bloom, “Interpretive Essay,” in *The Republic of Plato: Translated, with Notes, an Interpretive Essay and a New Introduction by Allan Bloom* (US: Basic Books, 1991). p. 307. See also the final sections of this thesis for a conclusion in that direction.

Dog-Eats-Dog: The World According to Thrasymachus

In the above, I have argued that the drama between Socrates and Thrasymachus sketches up for us a thematic of motivations. In the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus we have so far seen many examples of statements pertaining to the ability to judge other's motives. A central point has been that Thrasymachus' claims about Socrates were designed with an aim to make Socrates seem suspicious even though he was known for being a just man, but that Thrasymachus' skills in judging his opponent were poor if his aim was to outmaneuver him. When he *de facto* is not able to avoid doing the thing he said he wishes to avoid (to answer Socrates) we must conclude that his attempt to judge his opponent correctly, failed. Socrates, on the other hand, was able to read Thrasymachus correctly, and he was also able to utilize his judgement in getting his way (make Thrasymachus give an account). To be able to judge others and recognizing their motivations and aims is portrayed as a skill Thrasymachus claims to have, but which Socrates demonstrably possesses. In fact, it also turns out that Thrasymachus is himself guilty of some of the things that he accuses Socrates of (the love of honor), and we might at least suspect that this is the case for other accusations as well, for example for secretly coveting tyrannical power.

But what exactly are Thrasymachus' motivations for engaging in the display we have seen so far? With the *Histories* as background, we may make a stipulation based on his contributions in the *Republic*. Whether we believe that Herodotus was critical of tyranny or not,¹³⁵ I think a reasonable take-home message from the *Histories* is that there is reason to fear others' power over you, lest the tyrant chops off any of your body parts or has your sons castrated or any of the like. This also corresponds to the psychological point I made in the preceding section about advocating for tyranny as a reaction to being a victim of it. Thrasymachus, I suggest, recognizes a lesson that was perhaps familiar to Athens' neighbors and which may also be learned from the story of Gyges, which we will now delve into, namely that the only way to avoid being at the mercy of some (potentially) irrational, cruel or harsh ruler, is to seize the power for oneself. One either has the power to act upon others, or one is acted upon. Or, as Socrates echoes a little later: The greatest punishment, if one isn't willing to rule, is to be ruled by someone worse than oneself. "It is because they *fear (deido)* this, in my opinion, that decent men rule" (347c). In the context, this is given as a positive reason for good men to seek power, but the implicit meaning, I think, is that Socrates recognizes the underlying motivation for Thrasymachus' position: For power to be a good in itself, fear must be the main motivation.¹³⁶ Thus, Thrasymachus' position is the second instantiation of fear as a powerful motivational factor in the

¹³⁵ As argues Carolyn Dewald, "Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus."

¹³⁶ I will develop this notion further in chapters 2 and 5. See: "The Other Side: What Fears Do", "The Fear of the Free".

dialogue, which, together with bodily desires, is relentlessly thematized throughout the *Republic*.¹³⁷

I have also argued above that Thrasymachus' position can be seen as representing both the inter-city-state level of politics and to argue for a pure power-political approach to human relations on every level. But in order to come to a satisfying conclusion about both the character and the dramatic function of Thrasymachus, and to adequately state the case that Book I contribute a function which is not served by Book II it is necessary to include a comparative reading of Glaucon's contribution to the challenge. For, Thrasymachus has, interestingly, *not* provided any kind of particular content of the desires of the unashamedly unjust man. Rather, Thrasymachus seems to say that power is a goal worth pursuing in and of itself, so that a desire for power is what a rational and self-interested agent *should* pursue if that agent is strong enough to pursue his interests without fear of social repercussions, although Thrasymachus sees it as beyond doubt that any rational individual would seek to maximize his power over others: the position he sees as most clearly free from constraints, or furthest from being "overpowered". It is only when Glaucon takes the lead, in Book II, that desires are made particular, and power is subordinated as an intrinsic good in order to obtain other goods.

The tendency to equate Thrasymachus' position with that of Glaucon, with the only difference that Glaucon (and Adeimantus) 'does it better', is unfortunate,¹³⁸ for it does not aid us in seeing the full complexity of Socrates' answer to his challenge. In order to understand the answer, i.e., the *Republic*, we must first know the question. Thrasymachus' contribution to the challenge of the *Republic*, which is not represented within the argument that Glaucon makes, is that i) injustice is what is really justice (the benefit of the stronger) and ii) ascribing to i) will allow you to seek power over others, lest they gain power over you (normative claim.)

In contrast, what Glaucon's views will amount to is that i) injustice is more pleasurable and profitable than justice (which is toilsome) and ii) one should seek power over others in order to gain pleasure and profit. While it is true that Thrasymachus' craftsman of self-interest and the just and the unjust men of Glaucon's story both end up in the same place, as 'happy tyrants', they do so for different reasons: Thrasymachus seems to argue that power over others is a good in itself, something worth having for its own sake. He, notably, never provides any specific content for the desires of his unjust craftsman. Power, on this account, seems for Thrasymachus to be an inherent good.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ The first one is Kephalus, and he may also be taken as the first reference to Herodotus: I will substantiate this claim in the final chapter: "Looking and Seeing Oneself: Modes of Self-Gazing and Investigation"

¹³⁸ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. p.14., Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 59.

¹³⁹ An inherent good needs no further explanation, in this regard it is like health or happiness, undisputed goods that are universally agreed upon to be a state of well-being. Thrasymachus

Glaucon, on the other hand, who insists that Socrates praise justice as an inherent good, in his own argument praises power and injustice as instrumental goods, worthy of pursuit because of their ability to deliver other goods, namely sex and money. This is often taken to mean that Glaucon's intentions are good, that his heart is in the right place, and that he is basically good.¹⁴⁰ But one of the benefits of Howland's reading of Glaucon as much closer to the tyrannical nature than the usual idealized portrayals, is that it allows us to break the spell of Strauss, and de-activate an automated view of Glaucon as basically good solely on the grounds that he is the interlocutor of "the highest themes".¹⁴¹ As Plato will later have Socrates point out, 'philosophical' does not mean 'good'.¹⁴²

Thrasymachus does not provide any justification for his claim that power over others is a good in itself, worth having for its own sake. I will suggest that the answer is that he is motivated primarily by fear, but the evidence for this remains to be put forth, and so I will have to return to this issue.¹⁴³

Rational Choice in a Game of Thrones

Continuing on the current track of the context supplied by Herodotus *Histories*, I will now turn to Glaucon's contribution. He comes up with a story about an 'ancestor of Gyges' in order to enhance on (in his own interpretation (358c)) the challenge from Thrasymachus. This I understand as a road sign pointing directly to Herodotus.¹⁴⁴ Glaucon states that he wants to rehabilitate Thrasymachus' argument, and the explicit challenge he poses to Socrates is to praise justice for itself, that is, as an intrinsic good (358d). But first, he wants

seems to place power as such a good. That his motive for doing so is fear is not to say that power is thus rendered a mean. We also have motives for pursuing happiness and health, for their contribution to our well-being. Absence of fear also feels good. There is a difference between treating something as a "means to" and to having motives for pursuing that something. See also Aristotle on this, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1904a.

¹⁴⁰ Strauss, *The City and Man*. pp. 85-7. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, (pp. 21, 22, 26). Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 59 Roslyn Weiss, "Wise Guys and Smart Alecks in Republic 1 and 2." p. 92.

¹⁴¹ Strauss *The City and Man*, p. 100. See also G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, p. 14.

¹⁴² Book VI. I will argue for this point in chapter 5.

¹⁴³ See: chapters 2 and 5. "The other side: What Fears Do", "The Fear of the Free".

¹⁴⁴ Another piece of evidence which I interpret as to strengthen this claim is that Socrates apparently makes the mistake of leaving out the ancestral part, – he just refers to it as the "Ring of Gyges" in Book X (612b). This point I have from Ober, but it is mentioned by many others. E.g., Chris Emlyn Jones and William Preddy' footnote in the Loeb edition p. 126-7. Plato, *Republic Books 1-5, Edited and Translated by Chris Emlyn Jones and William Preddy*, vol. 237, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013). Some others, like Cicero simply refers to the tale of Gyges, ignoring, or overlooking the ancestral part. Cicero, *On Duties* 3.38. (Translated by Walter Miller, *On Duties (De Officiis)*, vol. Cicero Volume XXI, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1913).)

to make the challenge as difficult as he can and provide his best defense of injustice.

The defense turns out to be a strong one, and it involves several steps. First, he says that justice is usually praised as an instrumental good. It is because people come to realize that the consequences of suffering injustice are worse than the potential consequences of doing injustice are good, that people come to accept a social agreement to justice. But, Glaucon claims, had one had the power (*dunamis*) to pursue one's wants without any repercussions, that is, to "do injustice with impunity" every rational person, that is every true man (*alethôs andra*), not in a state of madness (*mania*) would choose to do so (359b). From this I infer that the benefits of injustice are still benefits, regardless of how beneficial justice may turn out to be, or how severe the punishment for injustice is. It is the social repercussions of unjust actions that make injustice a risky endeavor. But if a person could somehow reap the benefits of injustice with impunity, each would "follow the same path" (359c, 360c). The proof for this postulate comes in the form of a thought-experiment, the 'Ring Myth' which Glaucon imaginatively devices:

Once upon a time, an ancestor of Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the ruler of Lydia. One day there was a violent thunderstorm, and an earthquake broke open the ground and created a chasm (*chasma*) at the place where he was tending his sheep. Seeing this, he was filled with amazement, or wonder (*thaumá*), and he went down into it. And there, in addition to many other wonders "of which we're told" – told of by the poets we must assume – he sees a hollow bronze horse. It had windowlike openings in it, and, peering inside, he sees a corpse, which seemed to be of more than human size, or larger than life, naked, but for a gold ring on its finger. Ancestral Gyges takes the ring and exits the chasm. Before long, he discovers that the ring has the power to render its wearer invisible. Upon discovering this, he arranges to become a messenger to the King, and by the aid of the ring, he is able to seduce the Queen, and secure her help in killing the King. Thus, ancestral Gyges gains control of the kingdom for himself.

This story has a strong *motif* of sight and vision which will be important for my interpretation. The story is after all about a man who gains invisibility given the specific powers of the ring, and the most basic philosophical question that the story raises is of course "what would you do if no one saw you?". While most of us would concede that we do some things in private that we would not like to do in public, the dialogue asks us, uncomfortably, how far we would go. Would we steal? Kill, or rape? But the question remains whether this ethical reflection should be taken to reveal some insight about human nature, crucial to understanding how we should construct society. Julia Annas' answer is a realist's flat-out 'no': She judges an ethical theory built upon contra-factual events to be of little use:

We live in a world where we have to take into account the natural and artificial consequences of injustice and it is merely silly to ask what we would do if we escaped these by having magic rings. It isn't a fault in a defence of justice that it doesn't apply to someone who *ex hypothesi* escapes all those features of the human condition that make justice important to us. A realistic moral theory doesn't have to cope with fantastic examples. They fall outside the area that it purports to cover. Further, a theory that *is* designed to cope with them is likely for that very reason to be unrealistic, and not give the answer in central everyday examples.¹⁴⁵

Unless we are in a social situation, which we always are, in one way or another, the question of justice does not come in to play. And I agree, that to ask what humans would be like if no society existed is useless; the question itself presupposes the existence of the societies it tries to conjure away.¹⁴⁶ Constructing a political or ethical theory on this basis seems rash. But I think Annas, although she further claims that Plato is aware of this type of response, only answers the most superficial interpretation of Glaucon's story and its role in the overall argument of the *Republic*. Human nature is fundamental to all political and ethical theory, in that every political ideology has at its core a view, a hypothesis, about human nature. Ober's interpretation helps us see what the anthropology of the *Republic* amounts to. By removing the 'background noise' of social conventions, laws, and norms, we may read Glaucon's myth as about revealed preferences.¹⁴⁷ This gives us a clear formulation of what Glaucon thinks rational behavior is. The unjust and the (ostensibly) just person's choice would be the same, that is if he is "not mad, and a true man." (359b). A sane man would seek to maximize advantage to himself. In lieu of social conventions and the expectation of social repercussions, our preferences are revealed to be the satisfaction of desire, and our desires are for power, wealth, and sex.

From the account so far, we can extract the following three claims that Glaucon makes about human nature:

- 1) Human desires (for sex, wealth, and power) are universal.
- 2) Human nature is pleonexic (wants more and more) (359c).
- 3) Human rationality is instrumental.

¹⁴⁵ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 69. Quoted in Laird, "Ring the Changes on Gyges." p. 22

¹⁴⁶ This is what Cicero calls a "boorish reply", one which refuses to see the meaning of the ethical challenge posed by the "what if". Cicero *On Duties* 3.39.

¹⁴⁷ This is contrary to the assertion by Gabriel Richardson Lear, who asserts that it is a point of the myth that it is a phantasy of "hiddenness". I follow Ober here, and rather think the point is what it reveals. Gabriel Richardson Lear, "Plato On Learning to Love Beauty," in *The Blackwell's Guide to Plato's Republic*, ed. Gerasimos Santas, Blackwell Guides to Great Works (Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2006), 104–24. p. 124.

Through Glaucon's thought experiment, we are provided with an anthropology, which the argument of the *Republic* takes as its premise, and a notion of human nature which Socrates accepts as part of his challenge, at least until the next instance of corpse-gazing takes place, in Book IV. This is consistent with the general Greek idea about both rationality and justice as instrumental. Furthermore, it is compatible with the notions from Glaucon's 'Ring Myth' and, as will become clear, Glaucon's story has this notion of rationality in common with that of Herodotus:

Herodotus begins to say that he will tell of the marvelous deeds of men, and especially of the reason why the Greeks and the Persians are at war with each other.¹⁴⁸ I take this brief introduction seriously, as one should, and make note, as e.g., Dewald has done before me, of Herodotus' focus on individual choices and their consequences: How do individual choices lead to events of all-encompassing magnitude, like war? Herodotus points to Croesus as the first of the foreigners to inflict harm on the Greeks, and the story of how Croesus came to be in a position to do this begins with Gyges (1.6). This is his story:

The King of Lydia, the *lawful* king, as Herodotus spends quite some time pointing out, is a man who is in love with his wife. This King has a bodyguard, Gyges, to whom he entrusts all his secrets, and Gyges is also on the recipient end of King Candeules' relentless gushing over his wife. Then one day, Candeules says to Gyges that he doesn't think Gyges believes him, "for a man trusts his ears less than his eyes" (1.8.2). And so, he wants Gyges to contrive some way to be able to gaze upon the naked body of the Queen without he himself being seen in return. Gyges opposes the suggestion and answers that he truly does believe the King. Further, he argues that the laws should be respected, for they were wisely thought out, and finally that a woman without her dress is without her virtue. The King is not persuaded, but persists, and Gyges, though "fearful that some great evil will befall him» if he does comply with the King's wishes, is more afraid of *not* complying. So, Gyges, under the implicit threat of violence (and wholly motivated by fear) does as he is told and hides behind the door in the royal bedchamber, after which, having witnessed the Queen's undressing, he is supposed to slip out the door as she gets into bed with Candeules. The plan, rather predictably, goes bad. It backfires, and spectacularly, so on the part of the King: The Queen does see Gyges, and she has a quick mind: She immediately surmises that the King is to blame, and she does not cry out, nor confront her husband. But the next day, Gyges is called to her quarters, and is given the choice: Either he will kill the King and marry the Queen and take the throne for himself, or else he is to be killed immediately. Again, Gyges pleads and reasons, again to no avail: He is once more offered the choice; comply or be killed. Gyges kills the King, marries the Queen and after some initial confusion, is made king.

¹⁴⁸ Herod. *Hist.* 1.1. Laird, "Ringling the Changes on Gyges."

When analyzed from the perspective of the ‘Folk Theory of Rationality’, it becomes clear that Gyges is a rational agent by the definitions of what we initially said belonged to this ‘Folk Theory’: Herodotus’ Gyges’ top ranked preference is to stay alive.¹⁴⁹ His preference is confirmed in that he is consistently willing to set aside other motivations and considerations for the sake of fear. In the end, this leads him to choose an unethical life over no life. The decisive principle, the ruling principle, for his actions is self-interest, and the in revealed preferences of Gyges, death is placed at the bottom, and clearly below doing just deeds. Gyges’ preferences can be summed up in the following list of possibilities, ranked most preferable to least preferable:

- I. Live a just and lawful life
- II. Live an unjust life
- III. Death (also as a result of following through on i)

It is likely that Gyges shares this preference ranking with other Ancient Greeks,¹⁵⁰ and indeed with contemporary readers. The Homeric hero Achilles ranks death just below slavery, as Plato reminds us shortly after (386c). Given that Gyges preference is to stay alive, and that he has reasonable beliefs about the world, i.e., of what he can expect given his situation – that he is facing a credible threat of violence – Gyges acts in a perfectly rational way. It is rational to violate a woman's, even a Queen's, honor and to kill a king who trusts you under the particular set of circumstances that Gyges is faced with. But what are, then, the limits for permissible actions on this reasoning? Are there any? This problem is what the kind of reasoning provided by Thrasymachus will eventually run into, but which is left in the background of the discussion between him and Socrates. This is a potential problem for the principle of instrumental rationality: It is *per se* amoral.

Metaphors of Vision: The Corruptive Gaze

Herodotus’ story has more in common with Plato’s story than identical proper names. The kingdom is Lydia and the name Gyges appears in both. Likewise, in both stories, the protagonist kills the King, marries the Queen and gains control of the kingdom. One very notable difference between these two stories will become important, so I will point it out right away: While Herodotus’ Gyges were provided with all his choices by others, ancestral Gyges seems to be driven only by internal motivation. His preferences are made clearer to us

¹⁴⁹ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. See the section on “Herodotus’ Gyges narrative”.

¹⁵⁰ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. See section on “Plato on rationality of means and ends”.

because of the removal of external factors and obstacles. So, while ancestral Gyges ends up in the same position as Herodotus' Gyges, the circumstances that lead them there must be said to be very different. But there are also commonalities. In Herodotus story too, as also shown by Laird, vision has a prominent place: For example, Candeules says that "men find their ears less reliable than their eyes" (1.8.2).¹⁵¹ And Gyges, in response to the suggestion that he should see (theêseai) his master's wife naked, argues that one should only look upon (*skopeein*) what is one's own. Gyges *sees* (*theaomai*) the Queen, and she catches *sight* (*eporai*) of him, etc.¹⁵² Furthermore, Gyges is instructed to hide behind the open door, but more than that he is to be "made to stand" (*histêmi*) behind the "door" (*thura*) which also happens to be a term for a woman's uterus and vagina.¹⁵³ It seems it would not be going too far to say that what the King wants is visible proof on the part of Gyges that his wife's loveliness – especially the one part of it seen from behind, to be very explicit – has had the desired effect on Gyges – whether this be for the King's own sexual pleasure or for more obscure reasons of ego-satisfaction shall remain unresolved.

The ancestral Gyges of Glaucon seems to also be a 'lover of sights': The chasm that opens in front of him must also be recognized as a potential allegory for the female parts, while in this particular context, it is perhaps more of a nod towards the sexual innuendo of Herodotus' story – an aspect which at first (but only at first) seems to be left out of Glaucon's story. Ancestral Gyges sees (*idonta*) the chasm and it makes him wonder, or it fascinates him (359d5): In it, he sees various wonders not described, and the bronze horse into which he peeps. What does he peep in through? The windows, or (*thuridas*), or in other words, just to really drive the point home: "The small doors", since *thuridas* is a diminutive plural form of *thura*.

As we saw in the case of Thrasymachus, the motivations that he attributed to others turned out to be those that perhaps held the most force within himself. Deploying a similar logic to Glaucon's tale might give rise to concern about Glaucon's motivations. Above, I have argued that Thrasymachus underlying motivation, fear, is exposed through an unravelling of the threads that links his position to Herodotus' story about the King of the Medes and his reason for loving tyranny. In the following sections, I will engage in a comparative analysis of Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's views and provide support the following

¹⁵¹ ὅτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἔοντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν

¹⁵² There are many more instances of the mentioning of vision and seeing, but this will suffice for my purposes, and for more examples I refer you to Laird's article, or to the text itself.

¹⁵³ David D. Leitao disseminates this useful piece of information in an analysis of Aristophanes' *The Assemblywomen*. In Aristophanes play in which gender roles are reversed the man Blepurus is portrayed in an emasculated sense: His constipation is related in terms of a pregnancy and he refers to his anus as "thura", also used of the opening of the uterus and of the vagina in general. David D. Leitao, *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). p. 148.

arguments: First, I argue that the story of Ancestral Gyges is a story about corruption. The meaning of the metaphors of vision is to convey to us that this corruption has to do with where our gaze is directed. This in turn alerts us to the corruptive force that words, the like of those uttered by Thrasymachus, have on young souls. In order to make this argument I will draw on the ‘parable of the lion’, which is implicated through Thrasymachus, and explore how the lion-image can be an indicator of a story of corruption. Further I will argue that ‘vision’ here points to a lesson which Herodotus’ story of Gyges should alert us to – but which both Thrasymachus and Glaucon have overlooked (pun intended) – namely that we are often blind to others’ motivations, and that there are particular powerful drives within us which make this so.

Thieves of Justice: Knowledge of Self, Knowledge of Others as Success Criteria for Political Actors

Thrasymachus and Glaucon both assume that their motivations are universal: They attribute to others the motivations they themselves harbor. For Thrasymachus it is lucky that he is wrong. During the course of Book I Socrates demonstrates that he is able to outmaneuver Thrasymachus in a game of strategy. Despite Thrasymachus’ many claims to knowledge about Socrates,¹⁵⁴ he seems unable to utilize this knowledge to beat him at his game. On the contrary, Socrates, who makes no claims about knowledge of Thrasymachus, except as narrator (337d- 338b, 350d) is able to get his way, that is, to make Thrasymachus give a definition and then to agree to be refuted, which Thrasymachus seemed to know was coming and wanted to avoid, but which Socrates was able to bring about anyway. Thrasymachus is, according to Glaucon at the beginning of Book II, charmed “as if he was a snake” (358b). If we pause to consider this particular turn of phrase for a moment, we might realize that the snake moves when the snake charmer moves, and as such is in the snake charmers’ power, but this is reciprocal: they are both bound by the movements of the other, while it may be the case that the snake charmer leads.¹⁵⁵ There is a further point to be made: The snake is charmed by the snake charmer’s music, and Socrates words might have that effect. But what happens when the music stops? The charm is temporary. Socrates may seemingly have won a victory over Thrasymachus, but he has not won his autonomy, his freedom in argument. By his refutation, Socrates unwillingly also proves

¹⁵⁴ 337a, 338d, 340c-d.

¹⁵⁵ I develop this point in chapter 4. And Ober should get the credit for pointing it out (private conversation, 17.10.19.)

Thrasymachus point: Either one is acted upon by another, or the other is acted upon by you.¹⁵⁶

What he has further demonstrated, though, is that in a game of strategy, it pays to be the better judge of character. The reason, I suggest, that Thrasymachus is not able to beat Socrates (even though he *can* anticipate his moves, evidently having suffered, or witnessed someone else suffering his refutations on some previous occasion) is because he is unable to correctly identify or guess Socrates motivations, that is, his desires and preferences. Glaucon makes this failure into a premise for his argument: Every rational (that is, self-interested) agent has the same desires for wealth, power, and sex, so that when an agent acts rationally self-interestedly, they would subscribe to justice, but only as a compromise and only in so far as the most desirable option is too risky or unavailable. For ancestral Gyges, the risk is virtually eliminated with the powers of the ring. Socrates will, during the course of the conversation which follows, not contradict Glaucon as much as build on to his ideas. While Glaucon's anthropology cannot account for human diversity in choosing their ends and means, the tripartite soul can. Furthermore, Glaucon's blindness will cause him to make a series of questionable judgements which will culminate in Book IX, when he is asked to judge between the king and the tyrant, a point which will be elaborated upon in the final chapter of this thesis.

In the following, my interpretation that Thrasymachus and Glaucon both err in judging others' motives, and more importantly, the explanation for *why* this occurs, will be supported by going back to the story of Gyges in Herodotus in which an error of judgement of character proved fatal. As noted initially, and as Dewald also underlines, a noteworthy aspect of Herodotus' method is that it paints individuals and their choices and actions as central to his portrayal of the tyrants as political agents. But Herodotus' Gyges does not strike me as a particular active agent. Rather, he is helplessly in the throes of other, more powerful, actors. The Queen, who remains unnamed, turns out to be the most influential player in the game. And this forces us to ask the pressing question: how could the King underestimate her so? After all, he was married to the woman. A woman, who in the eyes of her own husband was nothing but a beautiful but empty shape, a statue perhaps, to be gazed upon with desire, turns out to be nothing of the sorts. This faulty judgement of character turns out to be fatal for the King, and it leaves a puzzle for us. But, then again, since other people's mental states are always hidden from us, we should perhaps rather regard it as some sort of miracle that we do not all go around and misjudge each other even more profoundly than we already do, all the time. After all, we have no way of knowing whether the Queen, for some reasons of her own, had intentionally given the King the impression of an

¹⁵⁶ This point will become relevant when analyzing the relationship between demos and demagogue in chapter 4.

empty vase or bronze statue, causing him to make this fatal error of judgement. Either way, it is clear that the King is completely and utterly oblivious to the potential repercussions of his ruse. Gyges the bodyguard turns out to have much better instincts than does the King, both regarding justice and the characters of others: Gyges, Herodotus tells us, is afraid that “some ill will come of it for him”. Explicitly, he seeks refuge in the arguments of justice, and he might be sincere in his appeal to *nomos* and virtue, but certainly not so sincere as to be willing to die for them. The King, I think, judges Gyges’ apprehension correctly when he answers: “Courage, Gyges! Do not be afraid of me, that I say this to test you, or of my wife, that you will have any harm from her. I will arrange it so that she shall never know that you have seen her.” (1.9) Why is the King able to judge correctly his bodyguard’s motives and intentions, but not that of his own wife? I find that Plato answers this question in Glaucon’s myth if we consider the power of the ring from a different perspective:

Ancestral Gyges gazes at the chasm with wonder; he makes his *katabasis* to the underworld of mythological wonders and sees among them a statue: Peeping inside the little doors, ancestral Gyges sees a naked corpse, larger than a man, with a gold ring. As boldly as our author steals from the myths, Gyges steals the ring and makes his way to the surface again. It is when he turns the ring towards himself, to the inside of his hand, that the powers of the ring are revealed. In Glaucon’s story the ring renders its wearer invisible. But as it does this, the ring must make ancestral Gyges very visible to himself. Before this, we have no indication that ancestral Gyges is not satisfied being a ruler of sheep: The ring acts as a spotlight. Dimming the lights on everyone else, his own desires are evidently made clear to him, and he contrives to go about satisfying them. Turning the ring towards himself, he also turns his gaze inwards, towards his own desires. At the same time, Gyges, or Glaucon, loses the ability to properly acknowledge other people’s inner lives, treating them only as surfaces, as pointed out by Howland, through directing his gaze away from the others.¹⁵⁷ Like in the case of Gyges, corruption starts with gazing at a naked body; as Paris’s corruption is spurred on by inspecting the naked body of Aphrodite, so too is ancestral Gyges corrupted from the very moment he lays eyes on the naked body buried in the ground. Any openings in these bodies are only to please, to look *at*, not *into*. As such, Glaucon have more in common with the shepherd princes than he would like to admit.¹⁵⁸ Blinded by his own desires, brought about by imagining the potential uses of the ring, among them rape, Glaucon is incapable of identifying the feelings and psychologies of his potential victims,¹⁵⁹ but he is also incapable of imagining

¹⁵⁷ Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. p.157.

¹⁵⁸ The story of Paris is that of another shepherd- prince who was corrupted by the sight of a naked body (Aphrodite) and turned out as a “Prince of ruin”.

¹⁵⁹ As Howland rightly points out. p. 157.

that anyone's desires could truly differ from his own. For Glaucon, it is desire brought on by a love of sights that blinds him to the diversity of character that surrounds him. For Thrasymachus, it is fear and suspicion that clouds his judgement. In the *Republic*, notably, Socrates will go to great lengths to explain how to minimize both of these two powerful influences. Finally, a last point can be made: The arguments that Thrasymachus has furthered are of the kind that, like the ring, will act as a spotlight on certain inner drives in that they invite an awareness to, as the lion, shed the shackles of social constraint and, at least imagine what one would do with unbridled power and lack of constraints. As such, Thrasymachus' arguments are untamed, even though the man himself is not. And, having awakened such desires, albeit forcibly holding them down with "some decent part of himself" (554d), it is no wonder that Glaucon sees justice as such toilsome work. In the next chapter, I will flesh out this picture by analyzing how the partite soul does this and how Socrates accounts for the experience of motivational conflict.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the drama of Book I contextualized within the *corpus platonium* and its contemporary cultural and historical settings, sheds new light on the conversation between Thrasymachus and Socrates. In particular, I have argued that the topic of motivations and our ability to judge the motivations of others are brought to the fore. This topic is part of what makes up the *Republic's* political ideas. According to my analysis, both Thrasymachus and Glaucon assume that other agents share their own motivations. For Thrasymachus, fear of being at the mercy of others drives him to suspect others to try to exercise their will on him. This short-sightedness, or perhaps one-dimensional rationality of suspicion, is precisely what causes him to miss the point, and be left impotent in the face of Socrates' strategic conversation. Glaucon, on the other hand, is blinded by his own appetite for love and beautiful sights to the psychologies of others, and thereby also their motivations. A corollary of identifying a difference between Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's positions on the motivational level, is that it allows us to read Book I as something more than a false start of the *Republic*.

As I have shown, the anthropology that the argument of the *Republic* presents itself as being predicated on in that Socrates agrees to the premises set up by Glaucon's, is itself challenged from the outside by either dramatic characters acting contrary to it (Thrasymachus staying), by the dramatic staging which by reminding us about bonds of friendship and kinship and by the existence of other, competing, or alternative, anthropologies, within the *Republic* and the corpus. This ties to the notion of trust and grounds for cooperation; while we might appeal to our bonds and shared humanity when refuting the arguments of a Thrasymachus or a Callicles, the *Republic* does

not explicitly address this in argument, although it is shown in drama. Instead, what Socrates must now show, is that it is in our self-interest, in the narrow way depicted by Thrasymachus, to cooperate, at that, with the added difficulty of Glaucon's anthropology: that human nature naturally seeks more and more, and pursues sex, wealth, and power.

Chapter 2

The tripartite soul in the *Republic*: Motivation and Decision-Making

Introduction

So far, I have discussed individuals' motivations and their relation to power dynamics. In Book IV, the conversation turns to the powers we have over ourselves. Through the story of Leontius, another of the *Republic*'s central stories, the predicament of *akrasia* is made recognizable for us. Vision takes a prominent place also in this story: Leontius too is corrupted by gazing upon naked bodies, or bodies that are corpses, that is, empty shapes, devoid of agency.¹⁶⁰ This story is central to the argument for the tripartite soul, and it is also central to questions of rationality and irrationality as Leontius embodies the philosophical problem of *akrasia* – the breakdown of rationality, so to speak.¹⁶¹

The question of *akrasia* is often depicted as follows: Agent X believes that, all things considered, alternative A is a better course of action than alternative B in a given situation, but X *still* chooses to go with B. With the case of Leontius a third layer is introduced to the anthropology upon which the *Republic* is predicated: the social dimension that was largely missing from the picture we got from Book II, is reintroduced. This addition to the anthropology which I have previously construed from the arguments made by Thrasymachus and Glaucon is what will allow Socrates to introduce the kind of flexibility he needs in order to claim that the soul is plastic and moldable – and ultimately that the democratic cultural values mold souls in the direction of tyranny. The grounds for this have been prepared through the mimesis-analysis in Books II-III, but is now presented in the form of a theory of human nature.

¹⁶⁰ The word *soma* used for body after Plato but for corpses before, more or less.

¹⁶¹ This seems to be agreed upon by most scholars, although it should be noted that the word *akrasia* is never attributed to the situation in the *Republic*. Thanks are owed to Franco Trivigno for pointing this out in my final seminar, Dec. 17, 2020. In fact, *akrasia* is never once used by Plato, as pointed out by Bobonich and Destreé in the introduction to Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destreé, eds., *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy: From Socrates to Plotinus*, *Philosophia Antiqua*, v. 106 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007). Nevertheless, it is a commonplace to apply the name *akrasia* for the phenomena described both in the *Republic* and the *Protagoras*.

The main purposes of the present chapter are to come to clarity about how we should understand the tripartite soul and to examine its implications for how we should conceive of individual decision-making in the *Republic*. I will explore the implications of this for collective decision-making for the subsequent chapters; for now, it will suffice to say that to be able to say anything about the quality of decisions or decision-making processes (i.e. whether they are rational) we must establish what rationality would mean in the context of the *Republic*. What does rationality look like, given the anthropology of the tripartite soul? What threatens it and how? The answers to these questions will provide much of the answer to this thesis' main question about the *Republic* as a critique of democracy, since I will argue that the democratic values, as Socrates identifies them, and the democratic institutions of Athens, are designed to shape these plastic souls in such a way as to become susceptible to tyranny. That which threatens rationality (good decisions) is as such a highly relevant question for the political analysis I argue that the *Republic* represents in the following sense: First, because the social nature of democratic decision-making makes it vulnerable, and second, because of the close relationship between democracy and tyranny.¹⁶²

While the framework of the tripartite soul might explain how motivational conflicts make just action into such 'toilsome work', it also gives rise to new questions. Most central among them – at least when it comes to the discussion of rational decision-making – is the question of unity. How can a composite soul act as a unit? What in us, in the end, decides? To this question, Christine M. Korsgaard has provided what I consider to be an important contribution, namely a model for decision-making that accounts for how the aligned harmony and cooperation of the parts is a prerequisite for true action. However, while this is a helpful theoretical suggestion, it becomes overly simplistic when faced with the complexity of Plato's text: For one thing, it does not differentiate between reasons' different roles in the decision-making processes. By investigating the examples and arguments related to the issue of *akrasia* and failures of rationality as they are presented to us in the *Republic*, I think it is possible to improve on Korsgaard's model. My suggested solution is to build on the model provided by Korsgaard so as to include the full complexity of the *Republic*'s theory of human motivation in a way that retains the solution to the question of unity but is also able to explain how motivations and aversions are differently involved in each particular case of individual decision-making.

This will in turn also contribute to the clarification of problems that arise from arguments for the tripartite soul: What causes *akrasia*, or lapses in judgement about motivational conflicts, is in this account a range of situational and individual conditions, which nevertheless can be sorted into some main categories. Since *akrasia*, in my view, does not have a single cause, neither

¹⁶² These issues are expounded on in chapter 4 and 5.

does it have a single cure, like ‘knowledge’ or ‘self-knowledge’.¹⁶³ Knowledge, or the lack of such, has been seen as central to Plato’s critique of democracy and of his political philosophy in general, but I suggest here that what I call an ‘anthropological reading’ can explain what the knowledge-readings aim to explain, and that it can additionally account for what I claim the knowledge-readings fail to explain, namely *akrasia*. I argue that *akrasia* raises the question of why we act contrary to our better judgements – *despite* having the relevant knowledge.¹⁶⁴ That is what makes it also a political problem, since politics is concerned with judgements, both on issues and of agents.

One might question the importance of making a taxonomy of failures of rationality. After all, one might think that the important thing is that they are failures, and that we should rather focus on what requirements Socrates places on rational decisions, and strive to abide by them. To this I would reply that it is through failures of rationality, *akrasia*, that the *Republic* approaches the question of rationality. Further, the ways in which we fail are only irrelevant if we either think that there is no cure, or that we know that the failure and hence the solution are always the same: lack of knowledge.¹⁶⁵ Finally, I hold that the ways in which we fail matter because I do not conceive of Plato’s rationality as a threshold-achievement, but rather as a life-long practice of aspiration. That involves continuous combating and learning from failures.

The taxonomy of failures becomes interesting for a political analysis when one takes into consideration that also the ways in which one fails can be regarded as stable dispositions in the soul over time. The understanding of the dispositions of the different character types to fail is the relevant knowledge needed in order to construct societal institutions that minimize the forms of failure. Failure comes in different guises and for a variety of reasons and

¹⁶³ Both Bobonich and Agnes Callard argue for different variants of a self-knowledge account. Christopher Bobonich, “Plato on Akrasia and Knowing Your Own Mind,” in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy: From Socrates to Plotinus*, Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destreé (Eds.). (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007). Agnes Callard, *Aspiration: The Agency of Becoming* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹⁶⁴ And knowledge in the relevant sense, as justified, true beliefs. For example, Pierre Destreé argues, albeit drawing on the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, that *akrasia* is a character flaw, imbibing the agent’s formation of practical knowledge and Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith argue that strong desires place the agent in an unfortunate epistemic position, p. 17. This view is contested by the *Republic* itself where it is said that the rulers rule, partly because they have *better* desires, not because they do not desire: The desires of the many are controlled by the “wisdom *and* desires of the superior few” (431d) (my italics). See Pierre Destreé, “Aristotle on the Causes of Akrasia,” in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy: From Socrates to Plotinus*, ed. Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destreé (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007). Nicholas D. Smith and Thomas C Brickhouse, “Socrates on Akrasia,” in *Akrasia in Greek Philosophy: From Socrates to Plotinus*, ed. Christopher Bobonich and Pierre Destreé (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007).

¹⁶⁵ The latter explanatory models may or may not be combined with an elitist argument i.e. “only those born reasonable can obtain knowledge”, a possible reading of some passages of Plato’s dialogues.

coming to terms with ‘how’ and ‘why’ is therefore vital. For the purposes of political analysis, it will turn out that the dispositions of a particular character-type will be much more susceptible than those of some other character-types to the detrimental influences that threaten good decision-making in a democracy. This psycho-political argument allows us to make a much more nuanced and accurate reading of the argument against democracy in the *Republic*. Applying this analytical framework to concrete individuals and their decision-making actions makes the claims about decision-making and its fallacies more substantial. By investigating the choices made by Leontius and Glaucon, respectively, I will show how The *Republic* carries a subtle, but forceful, critique of the cultural values of Athens through showcasing Glaucon’s choices. These choices, I argue, make clear that our desires only make up part of our motivational range, and that equally important in the psycho-political analysis are the aversions of the different character-types.

This chapter has three main parts: The first part accounts for the arguments of the relevant passages that pertain to the tripartite soul and the issue of *akrasia*. Here, I account for the arguments that led the group of discussants from where we last left them, in the beginning of Book II, to where we meet them now, in Book III, at the cusp of Socrates’ famous argument for the partition of the soul. In this part, I will also briefly outline the arguments made in favor of the first, partite, and later, tripartite soul in which the story of Leontius is central. The second part introduces the problems related to the understanding of the soul as composite and explains why the question of unity of action is a political one. Here, I argue that the question of unity relates to the political issue of cooperation. In this section I draw on the action theory of Korsgaard and argue that her Constitutional Model for action solves the question of unity, but that it leaves out an important aspect of reason as motivator from its account. I suggest that by expanding Korsgaard’s model, it becomes possible to retain the solution to the question of unity without leaving out part of the story, and I develop what I call the Complex Constitutional Model.

In the third section, I will apply this framework in order to analyze some deliberative situations that Plato has showcased for us. The choices made by Leontius and Glaucon, respectively, will help us fill out the picture of individual decision-making and its threats in the *Republic*. Building on the premise from the previous chapter that the choices made by individuals reveal their preferences, I will here show how individual choices, understood as revealed preferences, expose a layer of meaning embedded in the dialogue, which questions Glaucon’s proclivity to war and ultimately also questions the evaluative standards of the Athenian democracy. This line of interpretation opens for an analysis of also Leontius’ actions as revealed preferences. Finally, I argue that Glaucon’s preferences are also shaped by his fears, not only his desires. Comparing the preferences and aversions of Leontius and Glaucon, respectively, allows me to answer the question of how their

psychological make-ups differ, and hence why the same factors would be attributed different weight in their respective decision-making deliberations, something which in turn sheds light on their respective rational vulnerabilities. In the final sections, I complete the picture of motivations so as to also include fears and aversions.

The Path to the City-Soul Analogy

In this section, I offer a brief reminder of the most important arguments that lead from Book II to the argument of the tripartite soul. After Glaucon's vigorous defense of injustice in Book II, Socrates agrees to argue for justice, to try and truly convince Glaucon and Adeimantus that it is better to live a life of justice. Adeimantus takes over as the main interlocutor, and he adds to Glaucon's argument a refutation of the arguments often used in favor of justice. They agree to investigate justice in a city, and thereafter in the individual, on the assumption that justice will be written with bigger, and easier to spot, letters in the city (369). They immediately undertake the construction of such a "city in speech" (369c), and from this endeavor we may note that what brings people together to form cities are first of all necessity, and a lack of self-sufficiency (369c).¹⁶⁶ In order to provide sufficiently for each member, the principle of division of labor is installed, and artisans and more occupations are added to the farmer, housebuilder, weaver, and shoemaker. These people of «the city of bare necessities» (373a) will work the outsides, they will make wine, bread, and clothing, cook, and prepare grains to eat. Glaucon is appalled by the austerity and calls this a city "fit for pigs" (372d). Socrates agrees to make the city "luxurious", and war comes about as a consequence of this. Necessitated by the decision to overstep their resources and become a threat to their neighboring states, the guardians come into existence: the soldier class which should ideally have the nature of well-bread dogs (375a-c).¹⁶⁷ The next task is to identify and determine what kind of education they should receive.

In the discussion of their educational program, music is treated first, including stories that are told of the gods. Musical education and its contents are the main topics, and it is agreed that stories and musical modes should be heavily regulated as to promote the kind of character desirable in a guardian. The material conditions of the guardians are also thoroughly discussed and

¹⁶⁶ Comparing this anthropology of the foundation of communities with the *Laws* (678c), where people (again shepherds) are basically just happy to see each other, or the *Protagoras* (322d) tells us that Plato has a specific aim in mind for his anthropologies, namely what aspect of community he wants to examine, and not that "Plato thinks that societies are formed from necessity".

¹⁶⁷ Note also that no 'breeding' was required in the "healthy city" – not only did it allow for heterogeneity, it requires it, since everyone will perform different tasks.

regulated: they are not allowed to own valuables, nor do they have private houses, but live their lives in common. Book IV begins with an accusation, posed by Adeimantus this time, that Socrates is not making the guardians very happy. On the contrary, they seem most unfree because of the regulations imposed on them. Socrates gives a detailed defense (apology) (419a) of why the guardians should not own property or valuables, and of why no one in the city should be particularly rich or poor.

At 427d Socrates declares their city founded. If the city has been correctly founded it should be perfectly good: wise, courageous, moderate, and just. Therefore, they should now be able to identify all of these traits, justice among them, in this city, *if* it has been correctly founded (427e). And this is where we will pick up the thread again, as the company embark on their search for justice and further investigate the relationship between rationality, desires, and fears, and how these work together in the individual soul. If and only if they find these same divisions to be the case in the soul, will they accept as the definition of justice that each class does its own work and does not meddle (434c-d). Because the city has within it the same three kinds of traits as does the individual: love of money, spirit, and love of learning, they assume that the soul has these same characteristics, and is “sensitive to all these kinds of motive”.¹⁶⁸ The issue of motives and their relations is precisely what I shall pursue in the subsequent sections, after having come to clarity about the arguments for the tripartite soul.

The Principle of Non-Contradiction as Proof of Partition

The phenomenon of *akrasia*, insofar as it carries the experience of a motivational conflict, is fundamental to the argument for the partition of the soul in the *Republic*. The argument of the tripartite soul has two steps, first for partition, and next, a separate argument for tripartition. In the passages related to this, Socrates, at 436b, for the first time in known history, formulates the principle of non-contradiction:¹⁶⁹ “It is plain that the same thing won’t be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing”. He illustrates his point through two examples: One, a man who is standing still but at the same time is moving his head and his arms, is not both standing still and moving, but correctly expressed, one part of him is standing still, while other parts move (spinning man) (436 c-d). The second example is that of the archer, who, in poising to

¹⁶⁸ Hendrik Lorenz, *The Brute within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford Philosophical Monographs (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 2006). p. 19. Although Socrates expresses some doubts about the standards of argument.

¹⁶⁹ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*. p. 475.

shoot, is pushing away with one arm, while drawing back with the other (439b).¹⁷⁰

What have logical contradictions got to do with desires? Logical error arises from predicating opposites of the same subject. Yet, this is what the experience of wanting to have something, yet holding back from that same thing, at least generically construed, would indicate.¹⁷¹ But, applying the logic from the ‘spinning man’ and the archer, what is drawing towards, and what is holding back must be different parts, as in the case of the archer’s two arms performing different movements. Likewise, Socrates thinks, if the soul both longs for drink and draws back from it, there must be at least two parts to it. Socrates ascribes the ‘compelling towards’ to the appetitive side of the soul, while the aversion, or holding back, is ascribed to reason (439c-d).

Akrasia as the Proof of Tripartition

Having decided that reason and the appetites are two distinct parts of the soul, Socrates now wants to know at which side, if any, we should place spirit. The phenomenon of *akrasia* is presented to us, in the *Republic*, in the form of an anecdote. I will quote it in full, since these few lines will become very important for my analysis below:

But I’ve heard something relevant to this, and I believe it. Leontius, the son of Aglaion, was going up from the Piraeus along the outside of the North Wall when he saw some corpses lying at the executioner’s feet. He had an appetite to look at them but at the same time he was disgusted and turned away. For a time he struggled with himself and covered his face, but, finally, overpowered by the appetite, he pushed his eyes wide open and rushed towards the corpses, saying, “Look for yourselves, you evil wretches, take your fill of the beautiful sight!”¹⁷²

Socrates takes the story of Leontius to prove that “anger sometimes makes war against the desires, as one thing against something else.” (*Rep.* 440a). Leontius’ *akrasia* thus demonstrates that the soul has three parts, and that spirit belongs (most often) to the side of reason. Let us note that Socrates

¹⁷⁰ My account draws on that of Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p 25.

¹⁷¹ This paradox is what makes Socrates state that “no one errs willingly” or “no one does wrong willingly” as formulated in both the *Protagoras* and in the *Meno* (*Meno*, 77b6-78b2, *Prot.* 358c), a view on *akrasia* that has been dismissed by many later philosophers, among them the influential paper on *akrasia* by Donald Davidson, as founded a “naïve approach to action theory”. See Agnes Callard informative chapter on *akrasia* in Callard, *Aspiration*. 2018, p. 150. Donald Davidson, *How Is Weakness of the Will Possible? Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford University Press), accessed May 7, 2021, <http://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0199246270.001.0001/acprof-9780199246274-chapter-2>.

¹⁷² Trans: G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve

explicitly states that it is *anger (thumos)* which makes war against the desires, not, as one might expect from the previous discussion within the dialogue itself (429e), moderation (*sôphrosunê*).¹⁷³

A Closer Look at Akrasia

The issue of *akrasia* is a complex one, with a certain longevity as a philosophical paradox, also independently of Plato's works. It has often been translated as "weakness of will". This is, as amongst others, Michael Frede has pointed out, problematic since the Greeks did not have, in his view, a notion of 'will'. What they did have, however, is what he calls a notion of willing, which denotes a *specific desire of reason*, and which differs from another widespread notion of 'will' that more or less equates 'to will' with 'to want'.¹⁷⁴ This notion of 'willing' includes an ethical dimension in that it requires an additional qualification, namely a faculty of deeming something as 'good' or 'bad'. The take-away from Frede and, and to some extent from Bernard Williams' discussions about ancient agency, is, for our present purposes, that the discussion of *akrasia* in Plato must include an ethical dimension insofar as making good decisions in this view relies upon our ability to discern between good and bad.¹⁷⁵

The discussion of *akrasia* often takes the paradox as it is formulated in the *Protagoras* as its point of departure.¹⁷⁶ Here it is said that most people maintain that most people (*sic*) are unwilling to do what is best, even though they know

¹⁷³ This also alerts us to the fact that moderation evidently cannot be what holds back, or what wages war on desires – moderation's role seems thus to be to aid us in *shaping* the kind of desires that we have, and so moderation's role in the question of *akrasia* is a minor one, or at least a different one. Here moderation is said to be "the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires. This is a topic I intend to pursue at a later time.

¹⁷⁴ Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought, A Free Will* (University of California Press, 2011), <http://www.degruyter.com/view/title/555088>. The verb is *boulêsis* which bears a close etymological relation to the Latin *voluntas*, the German *wollen*, and the English *will*, but which, despite this relation, has a different content, see p. 29. Bernard Arthur Owen Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, New ed., A Centennial Book (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁵ See Williams, *Shame and Necessity*. p. 23.

¹⁷⁶ A paradox is an *aporia*, a philosophical puzzle, and is fundamental to the philosophical enquiry. An *aporia* presents itself to us in terms of a puzzle, like the paradox of *akrasia* and it does seem to have what Vasilis Politis calls a *zetetic* function in the philosophical investigations, – it is the beginning and an intrinsic part of the investigations themselves. Vasilis Politis, "Aporia and Searching in Early Plato," in *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Judson, Lindsay and Karasmanis, Vassilis (Oxford University Press, 2006), 88–109. Mary Margaret McCabe, *Platonic Conversations*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), accessed April 16, 2021, <http://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198732884.001.0001/acprof-9780198732884-chapter-1>.; See also on paradoxes, Mary Margaret Macenzie, "Paradox in Plato's 'Phaedrus,'" *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, no. 28 (208) (1982): 64–76.

what it is and are able to do it.¹⁷⁷ This, they call “being overcome by pleasure” (*Prot.*353a). A rendition of the form of the argument is the following: Agent X believes that, all things considered, alternative A is a better course of action than alternative B in a given situation, but X *still* chooses to go with B. In contrast to in the *Protagoras*, the phenomenon of *akrasia* in the *Republic* is an integral part of the argument for the partition of the soul, and the portrayal of the paradox is informed by this function.¹⁷⁸ I contend that there is no need to assume developmentalist and/or progressionist explanations of how the *Protagoras* is a failed attempt at what the more sophisticated, i.e. more advanced (closer to our thinking) *Republic* and the more mature Plato proffer in order to account for what can otherwise be seen as an inconsistency in the arguments of the *Protagoras* and the *Republic*.¹⁷⁹ Rather, I suggest that we see these dialogues as exploring different aspects of decision-making failures. While both dialogues alert us to our epistemic vulnerabilities, they do so from different angles: The *Protagoras* investigates the role played by knowledge in the individual’s belief-formation and grounds for action, while the *Republic* rather investigates the role played by fears and desires in the same process.¹⁸⁰ That the story of Leontius makes for an instance of *akrasia*, seems to be obvious in that it clearly displays a motivational conflict. But the story, such as it is framed, also raises some important questions about how we should understand the involvement and agency of the, now differentiated, parts of the soul.

¹⁷⁷ “Able” should here be understood in the minimal sense of being physically able to, I think.

¹⁷⁸ Even though the wording might imply otherwise, I agree with Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p.19, that we would be mistaken to construe the tripartite soul as an idea that is constructed from Socrates’ dialectical needs in the *Republic*. The idea of a tripartite soul is present also in ‘earlier dialogues’, such as the *Apology* and the *Phaedo*, and even without relying on developmentalist arguments, we could still say that reading the tripartite soul as proxy-argument is reductionist and gives a way to prominent place to the issue of *akrasia*, which, as philosophically interesting as it is, nevertheless only make up a fraction of the corpus.

¹⁷⁹ See John M. Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*, First Edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1998). Cooper is following Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory*, p 182. in this.

¹⁸⁰ Cooper argues that analyzing Plato’s theory in terms of beliefs and desires, is misconstrued. Reason is, in Plato’s theory, not equivalent to the modern notion of beliefs he claims: “On Plato’s theory all three of the parts, reason as well as appetite and spirit are independent sources of motivation, the contrast between reason and the other two is really not akin to the modern theory’s distinction between inert, purely factual belief and motivating desire.” John M. Cooper, “Plato’s Theory of Human Motivation,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1984): 3–21. p. 5. Yet, I will rely on this terminology and rather seek to retain a sensitivity to this difference, since ‘belief’ can cover all kinds of commitments. This is one of the instances in which a “friendly reconstructor” might have to take some liberties to at least keep a foot in the door between past and present, ref. Rorty, “The Historiography of Philosophy.” (See also introduction, “Notes on Methodology”). I will develop the idea about the different scopes between the *Protagoras* and the *Republic* in a future article.

Desire and Motivation: Reason, *Thymos*, and Appetite

Returning to the argument for tripartition, Socrates explicitly stated that *thymos* most often sides with reason and we noted that in the example of wanting to drink, yet holding back from it, appetite was described as pulling towards, while reason was holding back. *Thymos* sways the pendulum of the soul in favor of reason, in most cases. But some further argument than the story of Leontius is needed to establish that *thymos* is not just an expression of reason, but something distinct from it, and we are presented with two such arguments: The first argument establishes that also animals and babies, agreed upon to be unreasoning, display spirit, and in the second, quoting Homer, Socrates shows that we usually assume and experience that one can also be angry without calculation (441a-b).

In this account, the spirited part is said to be a particular part of the soul, with a distinct characteristic and its own desires and aversions.¹⁸¹ *Thymos* is the part that is preoccupied with what John Cooper calls esteem, and self-esteem, and it often manifests as anger.¹⁸² However, the way in which the different forms of human motivations interact with each other is not fully clear at the at the point in the *Republic* that treats *akrasia*.¹⁸³ Particularly, the role of reason seems unclear. So far, in the account of reason as it is presented in the *Protagoras*, its role is to calculate between alternatives provided by spirit or appetite. Reason's contribution is limited to negotiating between appetitive and social desires. Further, we might ask, as Hendrik Lorenz does, what the justification for ascribing desire to appetite and aversion to reason is.

The relationship between desires and particular things contributes to filling out the picture of the desires and the good, and how the parts of the soul may be involved in reaching a decision. In the example of drink, Socrates explains the relationship between desires and particular objects: Hunger and thirst are placed among the most vivid of desires (although sexual pleasure is said to be the keenest, at 403a). If the soul is thirsting, it thirsts for drink as such, but additional conditions apply, so that when we are cold, our desire might take the specific form of a hot brew. The soul desires, in particular, *good* things: “if, then, thirst is a desire, it would be for good drink or for good whatever it is, and similarly with the other desires” (*Rep.* 438a). Socrates says that the

¹⁸¹ It should also be clear in which way the tripartite soul allows for the phenomenon of *akrasia*, in a way the story told in the *Protagoras* did not.

¹⁸² Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p. 133. Plato uses an example from Homer where Odysseus reproaches “his heart with words”. 441a, also at 390d.

¹⁸³ This, Lorenz suggests, is because the argument is not primarily directed at saying something about the desires and how beliefs are formed, but rather it is instrumental in the argument for the tripartite soul. I think it is possible to say that Plato is arguing strategically without reducing the ideas expressed as entirely instrumental in order to say something else. I take the arguments of Book IV as expressing “Plato’s theory of the tripartite soul” in the sense that this is what Plato thinks the *psyche* is, in a material sense (435c-d, 436b) but that it does express an anthropology of human nature which makes out the premise upon which the Kallipolis is construed. Lorenz, *The Brute Within*.p.19.

soul who desires, either longs for what it desires, or embraces that which it wants, giving a sort of nodding assent to itself “as in reply to a question” (*Rep.* 437c). It is worth noting that desires are not primarily depicted as bodily sensations but take the form of a consideration or evaluation. This aligns well with Frede’s point about the Greek notion of *willing*: To will something is to assent to that it is good.

There is still some ambiguity in this passage though: Does Socrates mean that all desires aim at the good, or that my desires aim at what seems best to me, and not the actual good itself?¹⁸⁴ On this, I concede with Terence Irwin’s account that the assumptions upon which Socrates grounds his argument can be summarized in the following form: All desires are rational in that they want the good. If A desires x, he wants it for its contribution to some good, y. If he does not believe, or ceases to believe, that x contributes to y, he will cease to desire x. This is based on the further assumption that every A desires happiness above all, and that particular instances of desires can be explained by this general aim.¹⁸⁵ While “thirst itself is neither for much nor little, good or bad, [...] but naturally only for drink,” a particular sort of thirst is for a particular drink (*Rep.* 439a). So far, Socrates has distinguished “thirst itself” from the desire for a particular drink. But how should we then understand that reason was said to be opposed to the desire in the example of the drink? In other words: if I am thirsty, as such, and long for drink, as such, what would cause my reason to oppose my desire, unless it was some other kind of desire, like that of staying healthy, because drinking now would for some reason be detrimental to my health? In the example of the man who wants to drink, and yet draws back from it, Cooper states that it is unclear whether Plato thinks that reason opposes the specific object of desire, or the appetite itself, but that “he better have in mind the stronger thesis if he is to have any chance of ending up with precisely three parts [of the soul] (and not indefinitely many)”.¹⁸⁶ To the extent that I take a stance on the issue I lean towards Cooper’s interpretation, but this issue does not affect the argument of this thesis in any significant way except insofar as it belongs to the relevant background for interpreting the tripartite soul.

When a soul is ruled by reason, reason is what determines the goals for the agent. In other words, it is only reason which can determine, or access if one likes, the appropriate content that belongs to the concept of the ‘good’. But, when other parts of the soul rule, they do so in accordance with *their* ‘good’. In chapter 4, I will argue that Socrates denies the idea that masses have the

¹⁸⁴ See Christopher Bobonich, “Plato on Akrasia and Knowing Your Own Mind,” p. 52, footnote 22 in particular.

¹⁸⁵ Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory*. pp. 78-79. This is part of a larger discussion, according to Bobonich.

Yet, he concludes that later debates have not provided sufficient reason for rejecting the traditional understanding of Plato’s psychological eudaimonism.

¹⁸⁶ Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p. 123.

ability to reason on the basis that they lack the ability to differentiate universal concepts from particulars, and I will assume that the same criterion applies to the parts of the soul: Only reason seems to be able to differentiate between universals and particulars, and so only reason can determine the overall good. Socrates seems to describe internal conflicts both of the kind that is more correctly construed as conflicts between appetites (*Rep.* 554d), and between appetite and reason. It is the latter kind of cases that are taken to be evidence that reason and appetite are distinct entities.¹⁸⁷

As is pointed out by Christopher Bobonich, the issue of *akrasia* is central to questions of motivation because rational explanations of why we perform an action assume that an action can be explained by a combination of desires and beliefs, and that they are in accordance with each other when accounting for a specific action.¹⁸⁸ We should thus differentiate between situations in which a desire may be satisfied by changing the course of actions, and the kind of situation in which the desire must be suppressed entirely. But in Book IX of the *Republic*, it becomes clear that each part of the soul, including reason, has its own kind of pleasure, and, as such, its own kind of desire (580 d).¹⁸⁹ What reason desires, is to know the truth (581b). Following this, we should in other words expect each part of the soul to contribute to the side of motivation. Not only does reason desire, but the other parts of the soul have some sort of commitment to beliefs, held by the relevant parts. Reason does not only calculate between desires provided by the appetitive part, but has, in Socrates' theory, its own, independent source of motivation.¹⁹⁰ The tasks specific to this part of the soul is to rule (441e), and to be wise (442c). When focusing solely on the roles played by the different parts of the soul, it is possible to say that when reason rules in the soul, reason contributes to actions in at least two ways: First, reason determines the goals for the agent. Second, reason determines whether to say 'yes' or 'no' to suggestions made by the two other parts of the soul, and it decides on the grounds of whether or not this action contributes to the overall good that it has decided upon. I will refer to these different contributions as respectively 'reason-as-motivator' and 'reason-as-judge'.

Composite or Unitary Souls – A Question of Cooperation

So far, I have argued that the Platonic soul from the *Republic* is a composite one. An interpretation of the soul in the *Republic* as at least psychologically,

¹⁸⁷ Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. pp. 121- 125.

¹⁸⁸ Bobonich, "Plato on Akrasia and Knowing Your Own Mind." p. 44.

¹⁸⁹ Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p.121.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

if not ontologically, composite, in which each part of the soul contributes its own specific motives and aversions provides us, as I will argue, with the tools to account for motivational conflict. Socrates himself brings up a question related to agency when he asks whether we make decisions and take action as one agent or with respect to a part of the soul.

The difficulties engendered by the tripartite soul, such as the question of infinite regress, have posed problems for those who have sought to reconcile the views of the *Republic* with that of other dialogues, typically the *Phaedo*. The eagerness to solve them may have given rise to a tendency to downplay the arguments of Book IV of the *Republic* in favor of a simple and unified soul.¹⁹¹ Now, this debate as such is not my issue here, and I will not enter into the debates on infinite regress. However, how we construe decision-making, individually and politically, on the account from the *Republic*, ultimately hinges on a certain interpretation of the nature of the soul. The question of the parts versus the whole is one of importance for determining what actions are, and as we shall see, for the question of cooperation.

So, are we one or are we many? Socrates himself asks these “difficult questions”, and expresses some doubts about whether they will be answered satisfactorily:

Do we act in each of these ways as a result of the same part of ourselves, or are there three parts and with a different one we act in each of the different ways? Do we learn with one, become spirited with another of the parts within us, and desire the pleasures of nourishment and generation and all their kin with a third; or do we act with the soul as a whole in each of them once we are started? This will be hard to determine in a way worthy of the argument. (*Rep.* 436a)¹⁹²

In other words, is it the soul as a whole who desires some *n*, or do we desire *n* with the relevant parts of our soul? We are here faced with two possible interpretations of the composite soul: One interpretation is that these three motivations; learning, becoming spirited, and desiring bodily pleasures, are the specific activities that belong to each part of the soul. Alternatively, we can interpret them as typical, or even exemplary, manifestations of each part.

Lorenz interprets them as rather literally expressing the specific motivational desires of each part, which prompts him to ask how we should understand the connection between money-loving and bodily desires, and also

¹⁹¹ This, at least, is what e.g. Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, argues. p. 45. And to some extent Mitchell Miller, “Platonic Provocations: Reflections on the Soul and the Good in the *Republic*,” in *Platonic Investigations*, ed. Dominic O’Meara (Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 163–93. claims. While for example Bobonich, Lorentz, and Cooper argue for the composite soul, Shields (Christopher Shields, “Simple Souls,” in *Essays on Plato’s Psychology*, ed. Ellen Wagner (Lanham, Boulder, New York Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001).) and Irwin (Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory*.) can be said to be proponents of simple, unified souls.

¹⁹² They have already agreed to a low standard for the argument, one that is “sufficient for their purposes” at 335c-d.

how learning should be understood as a motivational factor.¹⁹³ Lorenz writes that Plato continuously but inconsistently refers to ‘the soul’ as having a desire, while it should be clear that a desire can only be attributed to the soul “in virtue of the fact that it belongs specifically to the relevant part of it.”¹⁹⁴

I think this way of framing the question is in danger of exaggerating the composite-ness of the soul.¹⁹⁵ The tripartite soul is a theory of human psychology, not an ontological theory of a metaphysical phenomenon. After all, e.g., the spirited part does not only contribute anger, but a whole range of psychological and affective states like courage, feelings of what is honorable, and so on. Likewise, as we have seen, it cannot be said that because the reasoning part of us is motivated by learning, that is *all* that reason does. But neither can the act of going to the assembly to cast a vote, it seems, be accounted for solely by reason saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to suggestions from the other parts of the soul. We would expect that such a decision would at least involve some motivation from reason itself. As it turns out, the question of unity cannot be answered without reference to that elusive virtue which the interlocutors initially set out to look for: Justice. After all, only if the three parts of the soul were found to correspond with the classes of the city would they agree to the definition of justice that each part did its own work and did not meddle. It is in response to the issues surrounding the unity-question that Korsgaard has suggested her theory of decision-making based on the *Republic*, which she calls the ‘Constitutional Model’.

The Constitutional Model as an Answer to the Question of Unity

In Book I, Socrates is challenged to defend his proposition that the just life is better than the unjust life. Thrasymachus argued, as we remember, that the unjust life is the most beneficial, and that, in fact, the greater the injustice, the greater the benefits, since petty thieves will get caught, but tyrants go free. Socrates, in his refutation, asks, as mentioned in chapter 1: Will a band of thieves or robbers be able to achieve their goals if they act unjustly towards each other, even if their common aim is an unjust one? (351b). Thrasymachus cannot but answer no, and Socrates can conclude that it is injustice that produces factions, hatreds, and quarrels, and justice that produces unanimity and friendship (351d).

¹⁹³ Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p. 21

¹⁹⁴ Lorenz *The Brute Within*. p. 21.

¹⁹⁵ We should be wary lest we mistake the model for the real thing, and perhaps Plato’s ‘inconsistency’ in his terminology is not an instance of sloppy writing, but rather of keeping the boundaries between the parts of the soul deliberately vague.

Thrasymachus argues that shepherds fatten the sheep for their own sake.¹⁹⁶ With this, he counters the claim of Socrates that crafts, like virtues, aim at some ‘good’. Thrasymachus shows that this ‘good’ can equally well be money-making.¹⁹⁷ Socrates must therefore defend the thesis that knowledge is sufficient for virtue (although this is not what he will argue later on).¹⁹⁸ Socrates then argues, Irwin sums up, that injustice cannot be a craft because it “allows no coherent plan that guides action”.¹⁹⁹ The argument for this has two parts: First, a gang of thieves who treat each other unjustly, will not be able to meet their (unjust) goal, because injustice undermines collaborative activity. It is the work of injustice to cause hatred, strife, and cooperation. Second, injustice will have the same result when it is present in an individual: he will quarrel with himself and be incapable of coherent action. Irwin holds that Socrates might mean either that the injustice which makes A quarrel with B is the same that will make A quarrel with himself, or that if A quarrels with himself the way A quarrels with B, A will be incapable of coherent action.²⁰⁰ Note also the interest in functional unities of composite wholes of two types: persons and social groups.

So, while reason’s particular desire is that of figuring things out (*logizesthai*) and to know the truth,²⁰¹ it is clear that, as Thrasymachus points out, this faculty can also be used for figuring out, say, how to earn a lot of money. Does this mean that reason’s desire will be satisfied from being turned in to a calculator of maximizing goods? On the basis of my outline above, and taking into account the full picture of the *Republic*, the answer to this question is no. In virtue of having this capacity for inquiry and learning, we are naturally constituted for searching for the truth. To apply one’s reason as a tool for maximizing benefits would by this account be a corrupted state of the soul. This is what Book VIII and IX shows us, Korsgaard claims, and she reads them as a sort of taxonomy of the different stages of corruption that makes bad actions possible.²⁰²

Korsgaard interprets the above summarized discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus as pointing out that collective action requires justice so as

¹⁹⁶ Irwin, famously, holds that the *Republic* marks a shift in Plato’s views in that he, besides from in the initial discussion, abandons the craft- analogy that has been so prominent in what Irwin considers to be his earlier dialogues. In the *Republic*, through Thrasymachus’ use of his own craft-analogy to state that shepherds fatten the sheep for their own sake, the craft analogy’s weakness is exposed: it is liable to be turned around and used as an argument for the opposite view of what Socrates argues, namely that crafts, like virtues, aim at some good. Thrasymachus shows that this good can equally well be money-making. Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory*. p. 182.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p 122.

²⁰² Lorenz would agree with such a reading, and characterizes the same books as a “catalogue of corrupted souls”, *The Brute Within*, p. 33.

to avoid rendering us impotent for action – as in the case of the band of unjust robbers. This is what the principle of justice, understood as division of labor, does in the soul: It enables the soul to act as a unified whole. Like an unjust city, if it falls into civil war and different groups and interests fight for power, is rendered incapable of action as a unified being, so is the soul if it is in a state of injustice.

When justice breaks down, the city falls into civil war, as the rulers, the soldiers, and the people all struggle for control. The deliberative procedures that unify the city into a single agent break down, and the city as such cannot act. The individual citizens and classes in it may still perform various actions, but the city cannot act as a unit.²⁰³

This is not to say that the soul cannot function, or still produce desires and aversions, but that the person *as such* cannot act, Korsgaard writes: “Desires and impulses may operate within the unjust person, as the individual citizens may operate within the unjust state.”²⁰⁴ Theorists of action seek to theoretically distinguish between actions that can be attributed to an agent *per se*, and actions that can or should be attributed to external influences. Korsgaard’s aim is to say something about what constitutes an action at all. In this account, the unjust person cannot accomplish anything because it cannot act as a person at all. With this interpretation, it becomes clear how Socrates’ account of justice should be seen as an argument made against the more simplistic version of instrumental rationality that we were left with in Book I: Action, in the sense of ‘true action’, requires collaboration – internally in the case of the soul, and with others in the case of collective action.

In her seminal paper, Korsgaard proposes the following model for decision-making in terms of the tripartite soul of the Republic:

Appetite makes a proposal.
Reason decides whether to act on it or not.
Spirit carries reason’s decision out.²⁰⁵

On this model, which she calls the Constitutional Model of action, and which I rather refer to as the Constitutional Model of decision-making, a deliberative process goes on in the soul, and only an action in which all three parts of the soul are aligned can truly be called an action and attributed to an agent, *per se*. Deliberative action *is* self-constitution in this account.²⁰⁶ Following the city/soul analogy, – or in this case the soul/city analogy – we should assume

²⁰³ Christine M. Korsgaard, “Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant,” *The Journal of Ethics* 3, no. 1 (1999): 1–29. p. 10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Korsgaard “Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant”. p. 22. This is an improvement, she finds, on what she calls the “combat theory” of action.

that this pattern for decision-making is analogous to the political sphere. According to Korsgaard, a democratic city is also engaged in deliberative actions, in a way that mirrors that of the individuals: “The people of a city make a proposal, the rulers say either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the people, and the auxiliaries carries the ruler’s decisions out.”²⁰⁷

This account is clarifying with regard to understanding Socrates’ response to Thrasymachus’ challenge of cooperation and the unity of the composite soul, but it also gives rise to some new issues. The argument on the role of reason that I have presented so far, shows that this model limits reasons’ role in decision-making to a yes/no response. Furthermore, it cannot account for irrationality, or motivational conflict, in the way that I interpret the argument of the *Republic* as aiming at. Thirdly, regarding collective decisions, the Constitutional Model only covers *some* instances of democratic decision-making, namely decisions about suggestions from the money-making class, whether in the Kallipolis, or in a democracy: from the *ekklesia*. But there must surely also be some actions that cannot be said to arise from the kinds of suggestions that we would expect from the appetitive part. In the following section, I will elaborate on exactly what I think is wrong with the Constitutional Model of decision-making before I go on to suggest a solution for these issues.

The Constitutional Model Revisited

Based on the finding that reason contributes to decision-making in two ways: by judging something as contributing to the good (or not) and by providing its own kinds of motivations, we should expect at least two different models when accounting for the process. But since the other parts of the soul can also make suggestions, we get no less than 3 different processes accounting for the instances in which reason rules (RR) in the soul. (See Figure 1).²⁰⁸ RR2 and RR3 below show that when Reason functions as judge for suggestions made by the other parts of the soul, Appetite and Spirit are differently involved, depending on which part makes the suggestion. Reasons’ role as a judge of good and bad, calculating between suggestions made (RR2, RR3) accounts for a great part of decision making.

²⁰⁷ Korsgaard “Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant”. p. 7. This is my paraphrase of the arguments.

²⁰⁸ A disclaimer regarding the use of tables here: I do not believe that Plato argues that this is exactly how decision-making happens in the soul. Like all models, they are simplifications, expressing something clearly, often at the expense of nuance. Plato himself puts in enough disclaimers (335c-d, 436a) that I think that in the spirit of investigation this will be allowed. But surely there are murky in-between waters, and since neither condition of ruling seems to be permanent, but rather a disposition, perhaps amounting to a character-trait, these models only express what a still-photo of a fluid process would look like, as close as the experience of watching the Northern Lights is to a photograph is of the real thing.

RR1	RR2	RR3
Reason makes a suggestion	Reason says yes or no	Reason says yes or no
Spirit obeys/agrees	Spirit carries out	Spirit makes suggestion
Appetite subdued/agrees	Appetite makes suggestion	Appetite subdued

Figure 1.

While Korsgaard’s analysis seems to sit well with Socrates’ account of the relationship between reason, justice, and action in a soul, it sits less well with the *Republic*’s account of decision-making in general. It is hard to see how RR3 could account for e.g., a decision to go cast a vote in the assembly. Unless one wants to reduce all political decision-making to a need for being esteemed socially, I do not see how the argument can be made that a desire of Appetite or Spirit should provide the impulse to go vote.²⁰⁹ My criticism towards Korsgaard’s argument is that it reduces all decision-making in the *Republic* to RR2. The Constitutional Model of decision-making account of decision-making thus excludes decisions that are made when reason itself suggests a course of action. When looking at the module in Figure 1, it is clear that Reason’s role in RR2 does not account for reason’s own motivation. RR1 is the only category in this model in which Reason executes its full potential as ruler, as this is also what gives motivational cause for the action, and thus, it is perhaps the only constellation that deserves the to be called ‘true rationality’. RR1 also instantiates all varieties when all the parts of the soul agree or comply. That the Constitutional Model as suggested by Korsgaard’s definition of “true actions” does not include what we on my account can call ‘true rationality’ on the basis of the *Republic*’s arguments. This must surely be a weakness of the model. This weakness is what I hope to remedy in the next sections. I will expand on the model so as to make it more representative of the sensitivity the that the text of the *Republic* demonstrates towards the complexity of individual differences and the different kind of decision-making situations we find ourselves in in. My expansion of the Constitutional Model aims to make it possible to demonstrate this complexity while also isolating the different decision-making processes.

²⁰⁹ I do not think that is Korsgaard’s aim. For one thing, it would severely challenge her conception of “true actions”, if external social pressure could fully account for political actions.

The Complexity of Action

As we have seen, Korsgaard's account has the virtue of solving the unity-problem, but it leaves one wanting in other ways: Simply making the highly theoretical distinction between actions in the generic sense of 'things people do or say' and 'true action' may not convince the Thrasymachuses of this world to abandon the path of egoistic, unreflected ambition. Let us, however, bear in mind that Plato does not have Socrates approach rationality from the ideal perspective. Rather, he approaches it from a for most of us, much more familiar outlook: from that of failure. Despite the theoretically sophisticated argument for justice as necessary for true action, this depiction might lead us astray in the sense that it portrays the rational and non-rational as a binary opposition. While this chapter is mainly focused on the internal threats to good decision-making, the sensitivity to the interplay between internal and external influences is precisely what makes the political analysis of the *Republic* so compelling: It may be a lot of different things, but simple is not one of them. For instance, as Lorenz points out, even if reason is in an enslaved state, it would be wrong to think of it as motivationally inert:

Even in cases where reason's overall goals and attachments are set, as they can but should not be, by non-rational desire (e.g., for wealth or bodily pleasure), it does not follow that reason could not form desires or aversions of its own, based in part on reasoning or calculation (e.g. about how to maximize wealth or pleasure).²¹⁰

For the purposes of capturing the complexity of the *Republic's* analysis, I suggest we expand Korsgaard's model so as to adequately represent all the various ways in which we make decisions, even if only RR represents rationality in the sense of being ruled by Reason. This means that what I call the Complex Constitutional Model need at least three modules in order to account for decision-making.²¹¹ Each of these three modules accounts for what happens when one of the parts are in charge. Because even when Reason rules in a soul, it does not follow that all desires or all motivations arise out of Reason. The same would be true in accounting for decision-making when either Appetite (AR) or Spirit rules (SR) in the soul (figures 2 and 3).

Appetite rules (AR)

AR1	AR2	AR3
Appetite makes a suggestion	Appetite says yes or no	Appetite says yes or no

²¹⁰ Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p. 33.

²¹¹ With this I diverge from Korsgaard's teleological use of the term 'constitutional'. On my account there is rather an array of 'constitutions' not all of them good, or unified in the proper sense.

Spirit obeys	Spirit obeys	Spirit makes suggestion
Reason subdued	Reason makes suggestion	Reason subdued

Figure 2.

Spirit rules (SR)

SR1	SR2	SR3
Spirit makes a suggestion	Spirit says yes or no	Spirit says yes or no
Reason obeys	Reason subdued	Reason makes suggestion
Appetite subdued	Appetite makes suggestion	Appetite subdued

Figure 3.

Reason Rules (RR)

RR1	RR2	RR3
Reason makes a suggestion	Reason says yes or no	Reason says yes or no
Spirit obeys / carries out	Spirit carries out	Spirit makes suggestion
Appetite subdued	Appetite makes suggestion	Appetite subdued

Figure 1.

Looking at the Complex Constitutional Model, it is striking that out of nine possible ways in which a decision can be reached by a soul, only three of them portray rational decision making, and only one represents ‘true rationality’. What is more, the models show that there are various types of *akrasia*. AR1, AR3 and SR2 all represent clear cases of *akrasia* although the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ will differ.²¹² The cases where Reason is what makes the suggestion,

²¹² On an internal consistency-requirement of rationality, this would not hold true, seeing as if Spirit determines the goals and Spirit rules in accordance with its own goals that would satisfy the requirement.

and respectively Spirit or Appetite answers (SR3 and AR2) are more complicated to determine. In the cases where Spirit or Appetite answers ‘yes’, the outcomes will be the same as if Reason ruled in the soul. While this might not be ‘rationality’ *per se*, neither does it seem to fit the account of the *akratic*, for whom, as we remember, it was a condition that she needed to know what was best and still not do it.²¹³ While both Appetite and Spirit can ‘rule in the soul’ they cannot ‘know what is the best’ and so their ‘ruling’ would be arbitrary. But it is worth noting here that there is no principled opposition between being ‘ruled by Appetite’ and Appetite nodding its assent to a suggestion made by Reason, given that the suggestion aligns with the good as it is determined by Appetite.

An *akratic* action may, on the Complex Constitutional Model, be caused by six different states in the soul, depending on whether Spirit or Appetite answers ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to Reason’s suggestion. An instantiation of *akrasia* is always particular and context-dependent, although some main types are recognizable and can be categorized. On this note we might suggest an answer to the question posed by Lorenz: what is the justification for ascribing desire to Appetite and aversion to Reason, as Socrates does in the example of drink? In the example, both the compelling and the aversion seem to be characterized by a non-vocal “pulling”, and so it would seem that the two sides are engaged very much in the same kind of activity. In the example, the reasoning part wins out, but there is nothing in the argument to prevent the outcome from being reversed in the next instance, Lorenz writes.²¹⁴ On the basis of the Complex Constitutional Model, I can now propose the following answer: It is the nature of that which is desired which determines the relationship between the object and the desire. ‘Thirst’ is always an appetitive desire and will indiscriminately desire itself to be satisfied. There are few cases in which ‘drinking to quell one’s thirst’ would be considered an issue for the *thymotic* part of the soul, so the justification for ascribing aversion to drinking to Reason must be that the reasoning part has some reason to think that it would be detrimental to drink. But, if we rather construed the example so that drinking some substance *n* were to be considered a social matter (e.g. drinking not to not insult the host or abstaining from drinking because of some social custom prescribing that the host drink first etc.) then *thymos* would be what opposed or encouraged drinking, overruling Appetite’s sentiments. This shows that the motivations with which one engages in actions is crucial when determining the following: One, how the decision-making process should be construed given the

²¹³ I mean “know” in the relevant sense as “justified, true belief” here.

²¹⁴ Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p. 31. It should be noted, in fairness, that Lorenz has a suggestion of his own, namely that the example of drink should be construed as to include only those cases in which my desire would not directly elicit a response from spirit: “If spirit is concerned with honor or, more broadly, recognition by others, then there are going to be countless desires, and actions, that spirit regards as altogether indifferent, and ordinary bodily desires for food, drink, and sex will be among them.” p. 32.

Republic's account of the soul, and two, it shows that the motivation with which one enters into an action is central to its moral value. Whether or not the soul 'nods assent' to the action as 'good' is almost entirely dependent on the motivation with which one engages in said action. This point is perfectly illustrated by Socrates account of the 'seemingly just man'.

The seemingly just man, we may remember, was part of Thrasymachus' veiled accusations against Socrates. Thrasymachus claimed that the seemingly just man was either a coward, fearing others' injustice against him, or else he was out to get some benefit from being thought just. In Book VIII, Socrates paints a picture of the seemingly just man that agrees with Thrasymachus that fear (and necessity) is a major motivation for the seemingly just man to not let loose his desires. By connecting this man so strongly to the oligarch, however, Socrates re-directs Thrasymachus' challenge and points his finger at someone else. Like in a crime novel, when the detective finally points her finger and reveals the wrongdoer, so in Book VIII is it revealed to us that this seemingly just man is the oligarch. It is he who gives the highest place to money and honors it above all else, while at the same time "dronelike desires come to be in him" (554b). These desires are held down by his general diligence. As he is seemingly just, he has a good reputation in contractual relations (554d). This should remind us of the company Socrates is addressing: The wealthy metics who hosts the party and who surely has a good reputation for dealing fairly in business has now become the accused. Recall the business-savvy definition of justice from Kephalus: "Justice is speaking the truth and giving back what one has borrowed" (331d).²¹⁵ But, in reality, Socrates says, he is "forcibly holding down bad desires, which are there, with some decent part of himself" (554d).

The Non-Ideality of the Ideal

The following example may clarify the difference between being just because one is holding down bad desires and being just because one is ruled by reason, and reason has nodded assent: Let us say that I experience a motivational conflict in which I, on the one hand, want to join my friends for beer and on the other hand, I want to get up early tomorrow morning to write my philosophy thesis. Let us further say that I do not think I can have it both ways. In this case, I have two options: I either abstain from drinking, or I indulge. Let us for the sake of argument assume that that my all-things-considered-judgement at this time is that it is better to stay home and write in the morning. Three scenarios could ensue: Either, I still go out, but with a guilty conscience and blaming myself for my weakness, Leontius-style. Or, I stay in, but my desire to go out has not gone away. I am able to suppress that desire, my reason

²¹⁵ The point about the business and contractual focus of Kephalus' definition I owe to Ober, personal conversation 2019.

forcibly holding it down, while I am at the same time still feeling miserable and like I am missing out. Also, in this case I am at odds with myself, although perhaps less so than in the first case since I have the comfort of ‘doing the right thing’. But in a third scenario, the only one I think is what could reasonably be described as ‘reason ruling in the soul’, my all-things-considered-judgement makes up my mind and I am at peace with my decision because there is no part of me that secretly disagrees or whispers that maybe I could still have it both ways or other delusions. While these different decision-making states alternate within a person, one might develop a relatively stable disposition towards one of these states, in which case one might say that a person has a certain character.

The oligarchic man’s motivations for suppressing his bad desires may illuminate this issue. He is, as noted, wholly motivated by fear and necessity (554d). But what would being ruled by reason mean in this context? It seems we have two possible interpretations. Either, we say that if reason truly rules in a soul, it follows that bad desires do not arise at all. Alternatively, we must say that the motivation for choosing to suppress the bad desires is of the kind that all the parts of the soul is aligned in, and that the parts cooperate and persuade each other rather than relying on a power struggle to resolve the issue. From this perspective, we might say that when reason rules in the soul, all the parts of the soul are aligned.

So, a strict interpretation of the *Republic*’s view on reason would be that in a person ruled by reason, the desire to party all night instead of seeking the truth through philosophy would simply not occur at all. This would mean that the bar for Plato’s life of reason has been set impossibly high, so high as to not be of much interest to many of us. A less strict interpretation, and the one that I favor, would entail that whether one is rational or not relies only on the basis of the motives with which one engages in an action. Rationality in the above example would then be this: When deliberating between a late night of pleasurable intoxication and writing my thesis, I decided on the latter because of knowing the ‘good’ and on the further condition that I think seeking truth through philosophy is in alignment with, in the sense of contributing too, the ‘good’ itself. Both acting from fear and acting on another desire (for honor, like in SR3) would fall outside the scope of rationality on this account.

The bar for rationality is still high, and one might reasonably ask if the second scenario (forcibly holding down desires) is not ‘good enough’ or at least the best-case scenario that we could reasonably hope for or expect. But consider an example in which I all, or most of the time, made the ‘right’ decisions, but was miserable about it all, or most of the time. From a eudaemonist perspective, this could hardly be said to be the best, or even a good life, no matter how many ‘boxes’ I checked. One thing that might modify and make more realistic Socrates’ high bar for rationality, is that, as many

commentators have pointed out, rationality is not a one-time achievement, nor something that we are or are not, but rather something that we aspire to.²¹⁶

Note, too that this should then also be a picture of rule or ruling in a city: when a decision has been made, by some ruler *n* in the true sense, then making this decision into action should not be a matter of imposing *n*'s judgement against the will of others, or of other classes, but more of an *alignment*, even though this alignment perhaps is in the case of the lower classes based on a loyalty towards the rulers, than on actual insight into the deliberations: The all-things-considered-judgement for a guardian; or a farmer; or an artisan, would be that it is best that the rulers make decisions – as is many peoples' attitude towards politics.

Interestingly, the 'alignment-account' has very little to do with power, at least in the way it was portrayed by Thrasymachus: To rule is not to have the power to have your will happen against the will of others, but in Socrates' account, when ruling in the "true sense" we can now say, with reference to Thrasymachus' own distinction (340c) that power is no longer the issue. In this account, brute force is the crude tool of the irrational.

To sum up where we have come thus far: I have argued for a composite view of the soul. This view admittedly leads to some issues, most importantly that of accounting for the unity of the agent. I have then argued that Korsgaard's account of deliberative action explains why justice in the soul is what enables us to act as a unitary agent, and not as a collection of parts. This way of framing the action-theory-contribution of Korsgaard's reading of the *Republic*, brings out clearly how the tripartite soul and the city/soul analogy is 'political' in that Socrates' account of justice is designed to answer the political question of cooperation, posited by Thrasymachus in Book I. Furthermore, I have argued that while the Constitutional Model of decision-making exemplifies one definition of rationality in the *Republic*, it does not account for all instances of RR, and most importantly not what I would call 'true rationality' – the cases where reason both contributed the motivations and nods assent. Instead, I have, on the basis of Korsgaard's Constitutional Model for decision-making, developed what I take to be a more accurate model for decision-making: the Complex Constitutional Model for decision-making, which includes the premise that all parts of the soul can rule, even though they should not, and which accounts for both the reason-as-judge and reason-as-motivator kinds of decisions in a soul. Further it enabled us to get a clearer view on what happens when reason does not rule: Most importantly this enabled us to differentiate between different varieties of *akrasia*, contributing as a side-effect to clarifying issues of both what it is and what are its origins. Further, the Complex Constitutional Model demonstrated that one does not necessarily have to be 'ruled by reason' in order to act on reason's

²¹⁶ Most recently and clearly, Callard, *Aspiration.*, see e.g. pp. 175-6, 201, but *sic passim*.

motivations (SR3, AR2). Finally, the Complex Constitutional Model engendered a clear conclusion about what rationality is in the *Republic* and the differentiated ways in which it works. In the next chapters, these insights will be applied in a reading of the *Republic*'s analysis of how social and political institutions influence political decision-making. The richer understanding of the moral psychological theory of Plato will later allow for an in-depth analysis of some problems for political decision-making. Now, I will apply the theoretical decision-making framework to an analysis of some specific decision-making actions that Plato makes available for us within the *Republic* itself.

Vision and Place in the Story of Leontius

In this third section, I turn to the decision-making actions that the *Republic* showcases for us. Here, I aim to show primarily three things. Firstly, I aim to show that the choices made by Glaucon are directed at showing us the particular kinds of breakdowns of rationality character-types with Glaucon's moral-psychological make-up are liable to. These failures are brought out more clearly when compared to the failures of those with a different psychology. The *Republic* presents us with such a person in the story of Leontius. Furthermore, in my analysis, this will shed new light on the reason why Glaucon is such a central character in the *Republic*. I will eventually argue that the moral-psychology of the honor lover is particularly vulnerable to some threats to a good decision-making process inherent to democracy. Secondly, I want to show how the choices of Glaucon and Leontius support the arguments and reading already offered within this chapter. Thirdly, this analysis will prepare the ground for my claim that the practice and ability to judge correctly about others' motives is posited as a crucial topic in the *Republic*, not only in the sense of being able to make moral judgements, but also as a political issue.²¹⁷

Against this background, let us revisit the story of Leontius once more, this time in a close-up. Leontius, Socrates narrates, was walking along the North Wall outside of Athens when he noticed corpses lying by the public executioner. He desired to look (*idein epithumoi*, 439e) at the corpses (*nekrous*), and was at the same time disgusted. He turned away, covering his eyes, but after a brief struggle, succumbed to desire, and, opening his eyes wide, ran towards the corpses and said: "Look you damned wretches, take your fill of the fair sight!" (439e-440a). When Leontius damns his eyes for wanting to look, for looking, he is not suffering from a rapid-cycling loss of

²¹⁷ For an explanation of what is meant by political, see chapter 3 "*Polis: Oikos, Politeia* and *Koinônia*" and 4 "Introduction". For the argument see chapter 5 "Freedom, Fear and Tyrants Everywhere".

memory about what his reason concluded in this matter (a problem of self-knowledge), nor does he suffer from ignorance – momentarily or otherwise. Leontius knows (in the relevant sense of being committed to a belief) that what he is doing is wrong, he himself agrees with himself that it is wrong, at the very same time as he is doing it. He suffers from a lack of the ability to enforce his all-things-considered-judgement upon himself. It is not so long ago that we left the ancestral Gyges in the cave, where he was staring at (or into) corpses, that we have forgotten it: Just like in the story that Glaucon told us, in this anecdote too, vision and the eyes take a prominent position. In the case of ancestral Gyges, I said that the metaphors of vision/visibility and seeing was used to illustrate the agent looking inwards, highlighting his own desires to himself. Now, with the story of Leontius, the social world is reinstalled, and so the metaphor is evolving: It can now be taken to signify others' eyes on us, so that the esteem/self-esteem responses come in to play. Continuing on the interpretational vein from chapter 1, we might say that Leontius, when he covers his eyes, looks into himself. But looking inwards, into his soul, he finds not reason, but only appetites, demanding to be satisfied by some engagement with the external world.

The story of Leontius is the only example we get from Plato on an instance of *akrasia*. But the example is perhaps not as lucid as one would wish. For what is the exact nature of Leontius' desires in this case? Since the sources pair his desire with that of an *erastés*' desire for boys, the picture that is painted is that he is desiring to look at the corpses of young men.²¹⁸ There is historical evidence to support that Leontius was in fact a known necrophile, so that his desire would have been sexual in nature and not merely a common fascination with the horrible.²¹⁹

I do not share Cooper's worry that this might reduce the example's relevance for those of us who do not share this inclination of Leontius', and besides, as I will suggest, I think the example is chosen for reasons other than its relatability. That aside, no matter what is the exact source of Leontius' pleasure here, I agree with Cooper that it seems reasonable to assume his imagination in some way is involved.²²⁰ Different people find certain imaginings thrilling or interesting, but we are nonetheless talking about some kind of appetitive pleasure, derived from the physical world which by means of his imagination gives him bodily pleasure.²²¹ The story of Leontius does not require us to share his inclination in order to convey the paradoxical and I dare say, universal, experience of being attracted or drawn to something one knows one should not be. Whether this experience is of eating when trying to lose weight, smoking while desperately trying to quit, being tempted by extra-

²¹⁸ This according to the contemporary comedy by Theopompus. See Nails, *The People of Plato*. p. 186, and Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p.152.

²¹⁹ Lorenz, *The Brute Within*. p. 152.

²²⁰ Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p. 129.

²²¹ Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation." p. 11.

marital prospects – in all of these cases, the conflict that makes out akrasia is at play.

Here is another reason why Plato might have chosen such an outlandish example. First of all, the Greek adult men were undisputed sexual subjects in a world consisting of potential and legitimate objects for their desires. Women; children of both genders to some extent, younger men, and slaves were all more or less available sexual targets for the so inclined free men of Athens.²²² Additionally, concubines and prostitutes were available.²²³ While some of these practices were problematic, and problematized (especially the pederastic practice), none of them would have been a clear transgression of the cultural practices, in the way attraction to dead bodies seems to be.²²⁴ For the example to work as intended, to show clearly the thymos opposing appetite, the desire in question must be one immediately recognized as shameful and repulsive by the interlocutors and most readers. As we remember, from the stories of the Gyges, the violation of marriage, although obviously ‘wrong’ in the eyes of both Gyges himself and Glaucon, was not of the kind to cause aversion or repulsion among the listeners. This interpretation is confirmed by Glaucon freely speculating about the uses of the invisibility ring for precisely the purpose of expanding the legitimate sexual realm of the wearer to that of married women (360b-c).²²⁵

Important for the example, and for this discussion, is that Leontius knows that it is shameful for him to take pleasure in gazing at corpses – he agrees with this assessment of his inclination; he is disgusted by himself. The assessment that corpse gazing is a shameful proclivity is a social one. It involves the awareness of others’ eyes on him, and the meta-awareness of self-consciousness, and that is why, in this part, it is thymos that opposes his desire, since thymos is the part of the soul occupied with the social realm – esteeming

²²² The other examples of transgressions would be violating a married woman, incest, and sexual desire/acts towards animals. See Michel Foucault for a numeration and problematization, as well as Songe-Møllers response to Foucault. See J. Roy for a substantiation that Greek girls were married as in their earliest teenage years, if not sooner, and Rebecca Hague for an argument that marriage and the young brides were seen as erotic, and not, as sometimes interpreted, as solely a necessity for procreation. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Reissue edition (New York: Vintage, 1990). pp. 146-47, Rebecca Hague, ‘Marriage Athenian Style’, *Archaeology* 41, no. 3 (1988), 32–36 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41730004>>., J. Roy, “‘Polis’ and ‘Oikos’ in Classical Athens,” *Greece & Rome* 46, no. 1 (1999): 1–18. pp. 6-7. Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. ch. 7, pp. 129-152.

²²³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2*. pp. 146-47.

²²⁴ The first violation of the order of desires is thematized in the story of ancestral Gyges, and is implicated through Herodotus’ Gyges as well. The third transgression is mentioned in relation to the regression of the democratic man into the tyrant, when the “beastly and wild part” will awaken and attempt intercourse with “a mother, [...] or anyone at all, – humans, gods or beasts” (571 c).

²²⁵ We might imagine if and how the responses, our own, or the interlocutors had differed if Glaucon had rather speculated in using the ring’s power to have intercourse with corpses – with impunity.

and being esteemed by others. And yet, this knowledge of social repercussions is not sufficient to keep Leontius from giving in to his desire.

Another important feature of the Leontius-example is related to place. Leontius was walking “up from Piraeus”. This is a strange echo from the beginning of the dialogue, which famously opens with Socrates stating that he “went down to Piraeus” (327a). As thoroughly pointed out by other scholars, Piraeus is significant in that it is the scene of the democratic uprising against the Thirty.²²⁶ Piraeus is the harbor of Athens and as such it is also significant in and of itself, as it represents the center of Athens’ success as a warring nation. Athens held its power in part because of its naval power, and these ships were manned by the unwashed masses. Thirdly, it represents Athens’ interactions with the outside world and their influences, and in the Platonic corpus, the sea is often connected with change, instability, and external threats.²²⁷ Leontius is on his way up, not down.²²⁸ The place is carefully described— a feature that in and of itself might enhance the impression of authenticity (after all Socrates insists that he believes this story (439e)), but might also have a more subtle meaning: As mentioned, the Piraeus is a significant place. The North Wall surrounding the Acropolis is another such place. After the Persians were able to take the Acropolis in 480-79, large parts were destroyed: Temples and statues and were decimated, bronze treasures stolen, and marble statues shattered. And while the Athenians did not immediately resurrect or restore what had been broken,²²⁹ they did undertake restorative efforts as well as clearing the rubble left behind. Yet, not all of the debris was cleared away at once, and Jeffery M. Hurwit writes that it would have had a powerful moral effect upon the Athenians, igniting vigorous efforts in the next battles against the Persians.²³⁰ But the Persians seems to have knocked down stretches of the old North Wall as well, and when the Athenians rebuilt it, they “put on display scores of pieces from the two main temples destroyed by the Persians” and the conspicuous placement of old ruins into a new wall was “precisely to prevent such destruction in the future”.^{231 232}

²²⁶ As pointed out by everyone, but see for example Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Strauss, *The City and Man*. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. Jacob Howland, “Xenophon’s Philosophic Odyssey: On the Anabasis and Plato’s Republic,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (2000): 875–89, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586213>. Howland, “Re-Reading Plato.”

²²⁷ See *Laws* 704d-705b for a very explicit passage.

²²⁸ The theme of going up, and going down, (*anabasis/katabasis*) has also been thoroughly commented upon by amongst others, Howland, “Xenophon’s Philosophic Odyssey.”

²²⁹ See “oath of Plataia”, Jeffrey M. Hurwit, *The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present* (CUP Archive, 1999).

²³⁰ *Ibid.* 142.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² While the *Republic* itself does not give us a dramatic date to structure our analysis around, as already pointed out, in this reading I employ a strategy of reading the *Republic* as part of a broader Athenian political conversation. And, in Athens, politics often meant war. While several scholars, like Gro Rørstadbotten and Henrik Syse regard the Peloponnesian war as

What are the implications of my interpretation of the story of Leontius? By the specification of the place where the incident of Leontius takes place, Leontius' desire is tied to the death of young men in more than one way: Not only is he drawn to dead bodies, most likely in a sexual way; by placing this incident at the scene of a war memorial, the Republic is implicating a broader, thematic connection between desires, death and war.

I mentioned this theme earlier, and it has often been commented on: Glaucon is the one who asks for the opson, the luxuries, the desire for which Socrates explicitly states leads to war (372c, 373e).²³³ Like Leontius, Socrates is figuratively on the way up, constructing as he is, a healthy city, when he, like Leontius, is distracted and pulled off course by powerful desires, albeit belonging not to himself, but to Glaucon. After a discussion with Adeimantus (369a-372c), in which they construct what Socrates calls a "true" and "healthy" city, Glaucon interrupts and asks what happened to the relishes. He wants the inhabitants to have couches, relishes, and tables to eat them from, and from this, the city and the various roles and needs within it, grow, as does its need for land to fatten the beasts on. "After that, won't we go to war as a consequence, Glaucon? Or how will it be?" Socrates asks (373 e). "Like that," Glaucon confirms.

It is quite striking, in my view, that Glaucon unhesitatingly accepts war, and the loss of human lives, as a price worth paying for his luxuries. One line of interpretation might see this as an expression of an Athenian mindset, and of a culture that was undoubtedly more used to living in a state of war than what western moderns have become used to. But I think that if we do not take this for granted, a picture emerges where the ideas conveyed by the *Republic* do not take the reality of war for granted. Let us review the passages of Glaucon's demand for opson again:

Socrates concurs to exploring the idea of the "feverish" city (372e) and says the following: "Let's not say whether it works evil or good [...] but only this much, that we have in its turn found the origin of war (polemou au genesis)" (373e). From this we might conclude that Socrates suspends judgement on the nature of war, whether it is good or bad, but in reality, he has already passed judgement, dramatically speaking, just a minute ago, when he said of the men of the healthy city that they will "keep an eye out against poverty or war" (372b-c). This is the point where Glaucon interrupts, and the judgement about the nature of war is abandoned for the sake of providing his luxuries.

belonging to the context of the *Republic*, I do not think Plato's historical consciousness stops at his *polis*' immediate past: As already established, the *Histories* of Herodotus are also considered as background information to the *Republic* by this thesis. *Gro Rørstadbotten, Plato - A Voice for Peace. Political Accountability and Dramatic Staging.*; Henrik Syse, "The Platonic roots of just war doctrine: a reading of Plato's Republic," *Diametros* 23 (March 1, 2010): 104–23, <https://doi.org/10.13153/diam.23.2010.384>.

²³³ Pointed out by Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational*.

A consequence of war is loss of lives. Loss of, primarily, the lives of young men, like the ones lying at the wall by the executioners. In this way, I suggest, it is revealed to the reader, that Glaucon's character perhaps is more seriously flawed than an innocent appetite for relishes might otherwise lead us to believe. As it turns out, desires have a very real and very human cost in the form of young men's lives, and that is only if you win. Even when he gets the connection between luxuries and war spelled out, Glaucon has no reservations in accepting the consequences of his choice.²³⁴

By implication, this reading exposes a cultural criticism in the form of a double standard: While Leontius' desire for death – or dead bodies – is shameful, despicable, even to himself, Glaucon's desires on the other hand – for sex; for nice things to eat; for recognition and honor in war – are considered legitimate desires by his fellow men. More than that, they are things that a man would have to be mad not to desire and are thus even admirable in being expressions of manhood. But these desires too, have as their natural outcome dead boys and men as a consequence of war. The chilling truth that the Republic seems to remind us of, is that all desires, if they are allowed to go unchecked, have a human cost, and for men like Glaucon, and Leontius – free, resourceful, strong, and with real power over others – it is a cost often paid by other people.²³⁵ If death is indeed thought a horrible thing, with or without necrophilia, the judgement of the one desire as legitimate and the other as illegitimate reveals a flaw in the democratic reasoning about ethics. This double standard can be read as criticism of the cultural standards of Athens in that what is regarded as ethical (good and esteem-worthy actions) is constructed on the basis of what is the cultural practice, and not the other way around. It thus becomes interesting to note that what the *Republic* itself seems to suggest as the cure for akrasia is courage in matters of ethics.

Dying Cloth is a Manly Art: Glaucon's' Deliberations

Preceding the story of Leontius is a discussion about virtue in the guardian classes which will be an important piece of the puzzle to identify the threats to good decision-making, according to the *Republic*. Socrates initiates the discussion with a somewhat surprising statement, at least to anyone familiar with the general meaning of the Greek *andreia*, – that “courage is a kind of preserving” (429a). It is perhaps less surprising for readers familiar with the

²³⁴ But of course, also the loss of children, women and elderly if the war goes badly, costs that Glaucon also shows willing to accept.

²³⁵ I think there is reason to think that Leontius himself is “men like Glaucon” in the significant sense: He is presented as “the son of Aglaion” and the fact that he is mentioned in a satirical play, *and* the fact that Glaucon says he has “also heard the story” implies that he was not a nobody, but a free man of the same leisurely class as Glaucon, and with a similar kind of education.

Protagoras – also in that dialogue the discussion of *akrasia* is preceded by a discussion about courage (349d- 351a).²³⁶ Glaucon, it seems, is not familiar with the *Protagoras*, for he is genuinely puzzled by this notion, and asks for an explanation. A city is courageous by the part of it that “through everything” will preserve the opinion about which things are terrible, and courage by definition is preserving the opinion produced by the education in law, of which things and sort of things are to be feared, Socrates says (429c-d).²³⁷ And what is this ‘everything’ that the imparted by education lawful opinions must hold fast against? Particularly, the following: “Pains, pleasures, and desires and fears” (429d).

Socrates offers Glaucon a simile since he is not able to quite wrap his head around this conception of courage (*andreia*). He explains that courage is to virtue like a good dying job is to color: it makes it colorfast. It is worth noting here that the Greek virtue *andreia*, courage, also denotes manliness and is specifically tied to courage in battle.²³⁸ To be a man, to embody the manliest virtue of all, is to go to the battlefield without showing fear, ready to embark on heroic deeds worthy to be sung of by the likes of Homer. This kind of courage Glaucon can feel pretty assured that he has mastered (see 368a). We can understand his puzzlement then, when he now learns that courage is to be steadfast in one’s opinions about right and wrong, despite affective states.

After all, courage in battle is often portrayed as itself an affective state: Rage, vindictiveness, bloodthirst, and pride, all these emotional states are descriptive of the warrior’s internal workings. Calm deliberation about right and wrong *per se* seems more far-fetched.²³⁹ Working with cloth is woman’s work, and Socrates compiles feminine and masculine concepts here – a move which is no doubt strange to Glaucon’s ears.²⁴⁰ Socrates may well be preparing the ground for the “third wave” in Book V, but for now, he succeeds in gaining consent from a slightly perplexed Glaucon. He, who evidently thinks himself as manly as anyone, ready to fight and to have others fight too, is now told that what he thinks of as most honorable and manly is like dying cloth, albeit dying cloth really well, and that it entails thinking about matters of ethics – for Socrates’ depiction of courage here is as an ethical-political one. And, when Socrates says that it is an account of *civic* courage (430c), this is made explicit. But he never comes back to the rest of courage, in this dialogue,

²³⁶ Protagoras argues that courage is something completely different from the rest of the virtues, and that courage is not knowledge (350b-351a). Socrates does not contradict him. The same conclusion is made in *Laches* (199b-e). Since Plato does not take up the discussion about virtues’ relation to knowledge in the context of the *Republic*, then neither shall we.

²³⁷ This passage does not run so smoothly in translation. I am basing this paraphrase on both Grube (rev. Reeve) (1997) and Bloom (1991).

²³⁸ Both the *Laches*, where courage is the main theme, and the *Protagoras* where courage is investigated seem to be relevant if the question is what Plato thought about courage, which is not where I think the *Republic* account is headed.

²³⁹ Think of Achilles’ portrayal in the *Iliad* here.

²⁴⁰ Even if Socrates also mentions a man that is a weaver in relation to the healthy city.

although he does have a fair amount to say about moral conduct in war. It seems that the notion of civic, or ethical, courage is sufficient for the discussion in the *Republic*.

Socrates is saying that courage is the glue that binds virtue to the soul as fast as a good dying job binds color to the fibers of a piece of cloth. This he does right before telling the anecdote of a man who has a desire for dead bodies. What is the purpose of this? This, I suggest, indicates that Glaucon is, when push comes to shove, unwilling to give up some things for the sake of the justice he claims he would like to see happen.²⁴¹ Let us review the choices that Glaucon has actually made in this dialogue: He agrees to give up sexual relations with boys for the sake of avoiding a public scolding (403b-c), but he does not want to relinquish riches for the sake of avoiding war. And, later on, he will immediately agree to relinquish gold and treasures as a reward for heroic effort in war, as long as this is replaced by a different public display of acknowledgement – kissing and being kissed by whomever he wants (468b-c). If “calculating pleasures and pains” (*Prot.* 354e-d) are to be considered a part of ethical deliberations, as they are in the *Protagoras*, Glaucon is in the first examples surely giving up a larger pleasure for a minor pain, while retaining a minor pleasure, compared to the pains it might give.²⁴²

He does not consider that his own desires are at odds with the kind of just society he wants to see realized. But more than revealing his lack of mathematical skills, Glaucon’s choices tell a story that his words do not.²⁴³ Through Glaucon’s revealed preferences, and his above-mentioned priorities, we learn something about his nature which will in turn inform our picture of the *Republic*’s theory of moral psychology. Despite being an *erastés*, Glaucon is first and foremost an *erastés* of honor.²⁴⁴ Within the *Republic*, *thymos* is said to be the driver of competition, of the wish to excel, to stand out, and, most importantly in our present context, to be esteemed. It is also with what we can

²⁴¹ As Glaucon in the dialogue never seems to realize that this has got anything to do with him, at least not in any way that gives him cause for some serious self-reflection and ethical pondering, this is a case of the dialogue communicating to the reader something apart from what Socrates communicates to the interlocutors within the *Republic*.

²⁴² In the *Protagoras*, the right measurement of pleasures and pains would involve 1) an acknowledgment that pleasures that in consequence leads to a pain that is greater in size than the size of the pleasure experienced is not a pleasure at all, and vice versa for pains, and 2) an ability to rightly measure the pains and pleasures in terms of size and adjusting for the time-horizon. (*Prot.* 354d-e).

²⁴³ I think a crucial difference between interpretations like mine, which sees Glaucon as more of a potential tyrant and interpretations that sees him closer to an aspiring philosopher-king, like G. R. F. Ferrari’s argument does, is whether one believes Glaucon’s own words about himself, or not. In this thesis I have chosen to have his actions weigh heavier than his words, as is befitting for a thesis in political philosophy.

²⁴⁴ Not to be confused with the timocrat, – at least not necessarily, because, according to Cooper at least, the timocrat is the result of a particularly strong disposition towards honor “without training and being directed towards subordination to other values” Cooper, *Reason and Emotion*. p.133.

be courageous.²⁴⁵ I have also so far said much about how desires work in a decision-making process. What is still missing from my analysis then, is not what pushes us forward, but what pulls us back.

We have already established that each part of the soul has its own motivation, a pulling towards something, and that these motivations can come into conflict with each other. But, as mentioned in the context of both the *Republic* and the *Protagoras*, there are other contenders for ‘what rules in a man’, and the one that I will now attempt to come to clarity about, is fear. Fear and aversion are a sort of pulling away, but as with desires, we should expect fear to take different forms and report itself with varying strength in response to different external factors for different people. For given that fears or aversions work in roughly the same way as desires, we are pulled towards some things, and are averse to others, depending on our psychological make-up.

In my reading, Glaucon’s moral psychology, and also factoring in his fears, or aversions, account for his otherwise seemingly absurd choices in the following way: Giving up sexual relations with boys for the sake of avoiding a public scolding, but not relishes for the sake of war might be rational, if one applies a strict consistency-definition²⁴⁶ of rationality, given that although the desire for sexual pleasure is a strong one for Glaucon, even stronger is his fear of losing esteem. On this he seems to have self-knowledge. On a similar reasoning, war has a formidable human cost, but on the other hand there is no other arena better suited to gain honors and a reputation. This is what it means to be ruled by spirit, in practice, then: In all choice situations, Glaucon’s reveals that his top preference is to gain esteem and honor, and that his deepest fear is to be publicly reprimanded or ridiculed. For Glaucon, the pleasure of a good reputation and the esteem of his fellow citizens as well as the competitive situation outweighs the costs of war. That is why he is not willing to accept the loss of relishes – according to the rationale ruling his soul, he would only be exchanging a small pain for a greater one.

The Other Side: What Fears Do

Glaucon’s preferences are thus revealed not only through his desires, but also through his fears, or aversions.²⁴⁷ Furthermore we should note that his fears are intimately connected to his desires: what Glaucon is afraid of is that which most opposes his desire. Granted the premise that this is the case for each of the parts of the soul, a taxonomy of fears and desires could look like this:

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ As in Aristotle’s practical syllogism. On this, see Charron, “Greeks and Games.”, p. 2.

²⁴⁷ For further discussion on this, see chapter 5 in this thesis, under ‘Rational Fear and Democratic Values’.

	Desires	Fears
Reason	Truth	Falsehoods and lies
Spirit	Honor	Dishonor
Appetite	Sex, food, drink, power	Restraints/pains

The table also explains why Leontius chooses differently than would have Glaucon. Why does not *thymos* win out in his case, no matter how despicable his actions are to him, or to anyone else? He is simply not ruled by neither spirit nor reason. He acts in accordance with his ‘good’ which is to satisfy desires. His aversion to loss of public esteem is simply not strong enough, or does not have a high enough score on his preference ranking, as to be decisive for action. As an appetitive (AR)-archetype he has a different preference ranking altogether. Leontius’ case makes out a clear instance of *akrasia*, and according to the Complex Constitutional Model, it is a clear case of AR, in which Appetite is what makes the suggestion, and Reason and Spirit are subdued. The consequence of being ruled by appetite is that ethical reasoning is suspended in favor of something that is stronger – in this case appetite.

Looking back to Book I, and my analysis, it becomes clear that it is possible to reveal yet another thread in the layers of possible interpretations of the *Republic*. While both Herodotus’ Gyges and ancestral Gyges were willing to set aside their ethical judgements, there is one important difference. While Herodotus’ Gyges might set aside his ethical considerations because of fear, Glaucon’s Gyges does so because of desires. These character-traits are, incidentally, embodied by Thrasymachus and Glaucon, as we saw in chapter 1. The example of Leontius reveals to us that, unlike what Glaucon seemed to assume, social repercussions are not a sufficient requirement for abstaining from unjust actions, at least not for everyone. As I concluded in the first chapter, Glaucon thinks that his motivations are universal. The story of ancestral Gyges is intended to show that people value justice as an instrumental good, for the sake of the esteem it earns them. This entails an assumption that they abstain from doing wrong (acting unjust) following the same reasoning – because they would lose the esteem of their fellow citizens. The case of Leontius challenges this assumption. Leontius knows that it is shameful for him to do what he does, but this realization is not sufficient to stop him from doing it. Evidently, he must not share Glaucon’s motivations – neither his desires nor his aversions.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the notion of *akrasia* in the *Republic* on the notion of our epistemic vulnerabilities. Given that one grants the premise that ‘rationality’ on the account of the Republic is not a threshold concept but rather a practice of aspiration the nuances of failure become interesting in: The individual dispositions are vulnerable to different kinds of pitfalls and errors in different kind of situations, but, as individual and complex as these situations are, they are still not entirely unpredictable. In the course of this chapter, I have suggested a model for decision- making as I interpret it to be presented in the *Republic*. The Complex Constitutional Model is an expansion on Korsgaard’s Constitutional Model, and the main analytical advantages gained from my model is to illuminate how the compositive soul can be construed to make decision, depending on the soul’s internal organization. Further, this model, when applied to concrete cases of individual decision-making allowed us to see clearly how a case of Spirit Ruling and a case of Appetite Ruling differ in that they attributed different weight to the same reasons. This, in turn, allowed me to extrapolate a taxonomy of fears as well, so as to complete the picture of motivations.

To conclude, I will indicate what implications this reading has for my further analysis. The insight that different factors will be attributed different weight in the individual’s decision making-processes is a premise for the construction of the social and political institutions of the Kallipolis. They are constructed so as to minimize for each psychological type the kind of influence that are most detrimental to them given their vulnerabilities. The political insight we might extract from this procedure is that the *Republic* posits institutions as central to the issue of good political decision-making, in that the way in which institutions are crafted, in most cases, solves some issues while creating others instead. But the most important insight conveyed in this chapter’s analysis this analysis is that each person, and each character-type, is prone to various vulnerabilities which challenge their abilities to act rationally in the minimal sense of consistency. Only for those ruled by reason would epistemic errors become the major threat. For those with a different disposition, other factors, like desires and fears come in to play. These are the forces within us which the analysis of social (chapter 3) and political (chapter 4) institutions in the *Republic* will show are moldable and vulnerable to external influences.

Chapter 3

Private Life and Politics: Why the *oikos* Must be Dissolved

Introduction

In Book VIII of the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates explain Kallipolis' inevitable demise through a *mythos*: Despite their thorough education in mathematics, the guardians now make what must be characterized as an error of calculation, thus failing to keep up the regime's intricate breeding program. Degeneration leads to the birth of less worthy inhabitants, and thus begins the end of Kallipolis. Kallipolis' reproductive program, and the organization of private life has been painstakingly accounted for in Book V, and Book VIII, which accounts for its demise, begins with a summary of the conclusion from Book V:

This much has been agreed, Glaucon: for a city that is going to be governed on a high level, women must be in common (*koinas*), children and their entire education must be in common (*koinous*), and similarly the practices in war and peace must be in common (*koina*) and their kings must be those among them who have proved best in philosophy and with respect to war [...] Furthermore, we also accepted that when the rulers are once established, they must take the lead and settle the soldiers in houses (*oikêseis*) – such as we spoke of before – that have nothing in private (*idion*) for anyone but are common (*koinas*) for all. (*Rep.* 543a–b)

By this argument, the *Republic* directly ties the organization of private life to the success of the city state, and in this way the text may be said to invite the reader to reflect on the connection between the organization of private life in a state, and its political institutions. This reading is further strengthened by the fact that Plato has Socrates give private life, more precisely, the *oikos*, a prominent role in the genealogy of the state's demise.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the tripartite soul constitutes a particular anthropology and that this anthropology helps us to understand how human nature is plastic and moldable and how different factors are weighed differently, thus yielding different results in each individual. Through the Complex Constitutional Model, I identified various threats to rationality in individual decision-making processes, thus showing why the same factors are

weighed differently by different agents. For the present chapter, the previous analysis provides the grounds for understanding precisely why the *Republic* presents the immediate surroundings of the individual citizen as so important. While this chapter will investigate the *Republic* on social institutions, the subsequent one will be occupied with political institutions.

The anthropology established in chapter 2 determined humans as first and foremost *different* from each other. This view makes for an individualistic take on human nature. Notwithstanding, humans are not different in an unlimited set of ways. On the contrary, my reading identified some general categories or main types, showing that within the *Republic*, human nature is individual but on a certain spectrum of individualities. This is the view that generates the class-divisions of the Kallipolis. While retaining Glaucon's premise that it belongs to human nature to (greedily) seek desire-satisfaction, in my reading the tripartite soul explains why humans, despite the basic similarity pointed out by Glaucon, still seem to be widely divergent in their desires. In the set-up of the Kallipolis, it is no coincidence that different goods must be restricted for each group. For the rulers, a pure 'love of wisdom' is the desire that needs to be limited because it would cause them to withdraw from the needs of the *polis*. For the guardians, the rule is that great power and earthly goods must be kept strictly separated lest it leads to a "fierce love" for gold, and for the productive class, what is restricted is primarily power and influence. Common for all these restrictions is that in the *Republic*, Socrates demonstrates a belief that these restrictions should come in the form of societal institutions.

In this context, the meaning of the term 'institutions' is a rather inclusive one. For political science, it makes sense to define institutions by stressing the organizational aspect, an example of which may be Sarah Gilad's definition as "a set of formal rules (including constitutions), informal norms, or shared understandings that constrain and prescribe political actors' interactions with one another."²⁴⁸ For an analysis of the social organization of the Athenian polis, it is more pertinent to define institutions in terms of activities. In my view, Samuel P. Huntington's definition comes closer to picking out the relevant aspects for this chapter's analysis when he states that: "Institutions are stable, valued, recurring patterns of behaviour"²⁴⁹ We might add, as Jean

²⁴⁸ "Institution | Political Science," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed May 11, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/institution>. This definition can certainly be problematized, although, as Jean Blondel point out, this has traditionally been only been done to an extremely limited extent within political theory itself. Furthermore, different disciplines tend to stress different aspects when defining institutions. In general, sociology includes activities while political science stress organization. Economics defines them in terms of procedures. Jean Blondel, "About Institutions, Mainly, but Not Exclusively, Political," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, June 12, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.003.0036>, p 721.

²⁴⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1968). p.29.

Blondel does, that this process requires a certain length in time.²⁵⁰ From this perspective, the values that Socrates claims that democracy imposes on the citizens becomes clearly linked to his conception of the individual's relationship to the institutions.

In this chapter I will show that the argument for re-structuring the private lives of the guardians in the *Republic* is motivated by the assumption that the private institutions of Athens, particularly the *oikos*, contributes in a significant sense to influencing and shaping the citizens that inhabit these institutions. Furthermore, the shaping is not neutral in kind, but is detrimental to the citizens. Particularly, the *oikos*, set in the democratic freedom-culture of Athens, stimulates and encourages pleonexia – greed. Ultimately, my analysis challenges Glaucon's anthropology (humans are by nature inclined to be greedy for (want more and more of) sex, wealth, and power. Hence, I argue that it is rather the *democratic* anthropology that Glaucon has identified. This argument is based on the premise that the radical suggestions for reorganizing the private life of the guardian classes is a criticism of the *status quo* of Socrates' and Plato's contemporary surroundings. This premise requires me to employ a method of historical contextualization in order to bring out clearly see what it is that Socrates is arguing against. By examining the *oikos* of ancient Athens, I will be able to show how the *oikos* might present itself as problematic, as it certainly seems to do for Socrates. It should also become clearer to us exactly what problems Socrates imagines that he is addressing by his radical suggestions.

The *Republic's* suggestions for re-structuring the private lives of the guardian classes have received attention mainly from two parties: Feminist philosophy has debated whether the dissolution of the nuclear family is a feminist idea or an eradication of the female sex,²⁵¹ while political theorists seem to unite in moral condemnation of this totalitarian approach.²⁵² In this thesis, I rather seek to investigate how the re-structuring of the private life

²⁵⁰ Blondel, "About Institutions, Mainly, but Not Exclusively, Political." p. 724.

²⁵¹ See Bruce Rosenstock, "Athena's Cloak: Plato's Critique of the Democratic City in the *Republic*," *Political Theory* 22, no. 3 (August 1994): 363–90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591794022003001>. And for examples of the former kind, see Catherine Gardner, "The Remnants of the Family: The Role of Women and Eugenics in *Republic V*," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (2000): 217–35. See Arlene Saxenhouse, who is both a feminist philosopher and a political scientist for an argument that Plato eradicates women in order to obtain unity within the state. Saxenhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato." Annas also argues that unity is the ultimate aim in: Julia Annas, "Plato's 'Republic' and Feminism," *Philosophy* 51, no. 197 (1976): 307–21. I have argued at length against the view that Plato eradicates women qua women in my MA-thesis, see Oda Elisabeth Wiese Tvedt, "Fødselens Ontologi: Kjønnsforskjellen i Platons og Batailles tenkning om det erotiske begjær" "The Ontology of Birth: Gender Difference in Plato's and Bataille's Philosophy of Erotic Desire" (The University of Bergen, 2015), <https://hdl.handle.net/1956/10016>.

²⁵² E.g. both Danielle Allen and Melissa Lane mark their distance from Plato on this point. Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*. p 22; Melissa Lane, *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue and Sustainable Living*. Saxenhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. p.96

functions in the political analysis that the arguments of the *Republic* can be said to amount to.

This chapter is structured as follows: In the first part of this chapter, I will account for how the *oikos*, in the mindset of the ancients, relates to the city-state, the *polis*. My claim is that we should regard the Greek city-state as tripartite, rather than as divided between a political, masculine public sphere on the one hand, and an *a*-political, feminine *oikos*-sphere on the other. Furthermore, I argue that identifying a third sphere, *koinônia*, which designates non-political interaction between private individuals, but is not confined to the *oikos*, provides a more accurate and nuanced picture of the Greek societal organization. In the second part of this chapter, I argue that such a tripartite organization is also the picture which is painted in the *Republic*, not only of the Kallipolis, but of the contemporary Athens and that Socrates, as such, can be said to exchange one tripartite organization of the city-state for another in the Kallipolis. Against this background, I argue in the third section that Socrates' arguments for abolishing the *oikos*-sphere and the guardians' family life are based on the two following premises: First, that we in the *Republic* find an explicit link between *oikos* and the desire for private wealth. Secondly, that the *oikos*, by contributing to establishing a competitive relationship between the citizens, is both cause and condition for factions and hidden alliances: Both aspects stand in opposition to the explicit aim of a just, and thereby virtuous, society. In the fourth and final section, I argue that an annihilation of the *oikos*, seen in connection with the fact that political decision-making will become the prerogative of the Guardian Queens and Kings, by default will make the political sphere, *politeia*, redundant. This will leave only the *koinônia*-sphere.

Polis: Oikos, Politeia and Koinonia

I begin by answering the basic question of 'what is *oikos*?' In its primary meaning, the word means residence. Secondary meanings include, depending on context, 'house', 'household' and 'family'²⁵³; when Xenophon writes his *Oeconomicus*, he is not addressing the building of houses, but the management of household affairs (hence, the connotation to the modern word 'economy'). The word *oikos* did not only point to the private residences of the Greeks, but also to private life at large, in the sense of household and family-sphere. The *oikos* is understood as belonging to the sphere of *idion* – 'what pertains to private life'.

The distinction between the public and the private marks a line of demarcation within political theory, and it is a central point around which ideological debates revolve. When we moderns engage with these concepts

²⁵³ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*.pp. 13, 141.

with regard to antiquity, the private versus the public is often understood simply as a division between the non-political and the political, and the terms private/non-political, and public/political are associated to the point of becoming conflated.²⁵⁴ The identification of the public with the political relies on an often implicit premise that the Athenians all the time and everywhere were deeply engaged in political activity, and that they, as such, were a prime example of a deliberative democracy.

My claim here is that the sharp distinctions between the public and the private, the political and the non-political, often assumed in modern-day descriptions of antiquity, draw a too simplistic picture of the ancients' social and political organization, and, thus, by default, of the *Republic's* political philosophy. When Plato lets Socrates discuss the *oikos*, he does not, like Xenophon, discuss how the master of the household should best manage his affairs.²⁵⁵ Rather he focuses on the *oikos* as an ideological notion and as a spatial turning point as well as the framework for private life where the lives of women were lived.

As I will argue in section two, Plato also draws a connection between *oikos* and private wealth. Moses Finley's analyses of the ancient economy might be said to oppose my reading. He determines that the *oikos* cannot be understood as a financial enterprise in a modern-day sense, and observes that Xenophon does not mention "one single economical principle" in the *Oeconomicus*.²⁵⁶ To this objection, I would reply that the *Republic* posits the *oikos's* connections to private wealth as a threat to the community. More recent archeological research further supports my reading: Bradley A. Ault draws on both Lisa Nevett and Ian Morris in his research and argues that the *oikos* was engaged in a range of productive activities that had the potential of "exceeding what was required for sustenance".²⁵⁷ The ancient *polis* differs from a modern society in many regards, but for the purposes of this chapter, I specifically want to point out that while we in modern times have come to include social

²⁵⁴ Max Weber famously traces the modern understanding of this division back to reformation and the rise of protestant ethics. See Jean-Pierre Vernant and Hannah Arendt for examples of the use of this division in an ancient context. Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013). J.-P. Vernant, "Hestia - Hermes : The Religious Expression of Space and Movement among the Greeks," *Social Science Information* 8, no. 4 (August 1, 1969): 131–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901846900800407>. Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

²⁵⁵ Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*.

²⁵⁶ M. I. Finley and Ian Morris, *The Ancient Economy*, First Edition, Updated with a new foreword by Ian Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). p. 19. More recent archaeological research nuances this picture somewhat, as pointed out by Bradley A. Ault, "Oikos and Oikonomia: Greek Houses, Households and the Domestic Economy," *British School at Athens Studies* 15 (2007): 259–65. p.259. Joseph Manning and Ian Morris, eds., *The Ancient Economy: Evidence and Models* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

²⁵⁷ Ault, "Oikos and Oikonomia: Greek Houses, Households, and the Domestic Economy." p. 259.

and economic affairs into the public realm, the ancients would have defined these as belonging to the *oikos*. In other words, they were private affairs. By this we should understand, as Gregory Cameron writes, that despite the obvious importance of economic affairs, the Greeks never devoted their attention to economic enterprises *per se*.²⁵⁸ Only in modern times has economy become regarded as a crucial part of the affairs of the state.²⁵⁹

Oikos is most often portrayed and explained by its relation to the *polis*.²⁶⁰ The literature routinely adopts the private/public-distinction, where the one is defined by its relationship to the other. The concepts of *oikos/polis* are semantically interdependent and have been regarded as mutually exclusive: While *oikos* is described as the private family-sphere, the *polis* is often regarded as the political sphere, “that in which collective action was taken”.²⁶¹ At the same time, *oikos* has been given strong feminine connotations, while *polis* has been appointed as the masculine domain.²⁶² Through a closer examination of these conceptual notions, we might find reason to question the seductive simplicity of this picture, especially when it comes to any reading of the *Republic*. For, if we take into account how Plato, in multiple dialogues, including the *Republic*, proffers sharp criticism of Athens’s political life, it seems unlikely that the function of the eradication of the *oikos*-sphere in the *Republic* should be to let the *polis*-sphere be all-encompassing.²⁶³ In what follows, I will elaborate on and provide support for the claims I have made so far, but first I will account briefly for the history of the *oikos* and the mindset and ideas that surround it, in so far as it is relevant to understanding what the *Republic* is targeting.

It has been pointed out that in Plato’s days political, ideological, and economic changes also affected ideas about the *oikos*, especially in Athens.²⁶⁴ The change that perhaps gave rise to the most direct ramifications for the status

²⁵⁸ Gregory Cameron, “Oikos and Economy: The Greek Legacy in Economic Thought,” *PhaenEx* 3 (2008): 112–33. pp. 113–4. See also Paul Cartledge, “The Economy (Economies) of Ancient Greece,” in *The Ancient Economy*, ed. Walter Scheidel and Sitta von Reden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002). pp. 14–16.

²⁵⁹ Cameron follows M. F. Finley, and identifies this demarcation line with Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018). Cameron, “Oikos and Economy: The Greek Legacy in Economic Thought.” p. 114. Finley and Morris, *The Ancient Economy*. p. 20.

²⁶⁰ Lisa C. Nevet, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*, 1st edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p. 5 Cameron, “Oikos and Economy: The Greek Legacy in Economic Thought.” p. 4. Hannah Arendt’s portrayal in *Vita Activa* is perhaps the clearest example of this. She describes *oikos* as *polis*’ opposite, even as it’s negation, when she designates *oikos* as the place for rest and necessity and *polis* as freedom and action. See especially Arendt, *The Human Condition*. chapter 2.

²⁶¹ Nevet, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*. p. 4.

²⁶² See e.g. Vernant, “Hestia - Hermes.”, p. 137.

²⁶³ See e. g. *Apol.*, 22a, 31e–32a; *Theat.* 172d–e; the *Prot.*, 318a–e.

²⁶⁴ See Page duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago, Ill.: University Of Chicago Press, 1991). p. 62. Nevet, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*. p. 5.

of the *oikos* was the Periclean law from 450 BCE, which restricted citizen rights to apply exclusively for those born of two Athenian citizens. This law led to a greater need, real or imagined, for obtaining and enforcing masculine control over women's bodies – especially concerning sexuality and reproduction.²⁶⁵ Below, I will question whether this portrayal reflects the reality of Athenian women's lives. For now, it is safe to claim at least that *oikos*' institutional function was unambiguously directed at its role as a reproductive unit, ideologically, politically and economically: First, *the oikos* would secure the city-state's self-reproduction of itself as self-same and carry on the family lineage.²⁶⁶ Secondly, the Athenian foreign politics demanded a steady supply of fighting-fit young men for the *hoplite*-army.²⁶⁷ Finally, the need for eligible heirs to the family fortune was also of importance, and within a particular *oikos*, the male was the stable element who secured the family continuity and identity through his lineage:²⁶⁸ Despite these patriarchic structures, the *oikos* was often given strong feminine connotations, and was, or has come to be, regarded to contrast the public, and masculine, sphere. For instance, Jean-Pierre Vernant writes:

In Greek the domestic sphere, the enclosed space roofed over (protected), has a feminine connotation; the exterior, the open air, a masculine one. The woman's domain is the house. That is her place and as a rule she should not leave it. In contrast, in the *oikos*, the man represents the centrifugal element. It is for him to leave the reassuring enclosure of the home, to confront the fatigues and dangers of the outside, world, to brave the unforeseen; for him to establish contacts with the outside, to enter into negotiations with strangers. Whether engaged in work, war or trade, social contacts or public life, be he in the country or the *agora*, on sea or land, man's activities carry him into the great outside.²⁶⁹

This story is in need of some nuances. I will point to four lines of reasoning that contradict the 'simple picture' which Vernant here represents. First, scholars are still debating how restricted the Athenian woman really was.²⁷⁰ For one thing, it should be pointed out that her presence was an integrated and

²⁶⁵ duBois, *Sowing the Body*. pp. 62, 63.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 27.

²⁶⁷ See e. g. Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511627354>. See also Roy, "'Polis' and 'Oikos' in Classical Athens.", especially p. 5.

²⁶⁸ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. p. 42.

²⁶⁹ Vernant, "Hestia - Hermes." p. 137. To be fair to Vernant it should be pointed out that he cannot be said to unambiguously be a representative of a pure dichotomy between *polis* and *oikos*, but here rather serves as an example that *oikos* and what is indoors has been given feminine connotations and opposite: that the outdoors has been given masculine ones.

²⁷⁰ It should also be noted that the likelihood of a heavily restricted life is considerably smaller when including women from the lower class and financial status in one's analysis. See Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*. p.9; Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 6.

expected part of the many religious festivals that the Athenians so conscientiously celebrated, and there is also a fair possibility that she was present in the theater.²⁷¹

Secondly, the following might further contribute to disturb the picture of the *oikos* as an exclusively feminine sphere within the polis: Athenian women from the upper classes were confined to the safety of their homes and even segregated from the men within their household (which included slaves) by that their areas of residence were placed at the upper floor while the men's were located on the ground floor. Notwithstanding, it should be obvious by the mere fact that men lived there, that men surely also played a role within the *oikos*.²⁷² Men also, as mentioned, secured the continuity and stability of the lineage: the female was in each generation the newcomer.²⁷³ The woman was confined to a life as a "guest at her husband's fireplace" in the closed environment of the *oikos*.²⁷⁴ This was a necessary arrangement insofar as the Greek inheritance law followed a primogenitor order and excluded women as heirs. Morris follows Nevett, and suggests that we, rather than seeing the spatial organization in terms of feminine and masculine, should see it as divided in male and non-male.²⁷⁵ That the Athenians ascribed gender to spatial entities may, according to Morris, rather be explained by reference to ideology than to reality, seeing as there are no substantial evidence for the claim that females did not use the rest of the house as well as their designated areas.²⁷⁶ Still, the specifically female domain of the *oikos* was what marked the demarcation line between the family space and the polis – at least ideologically.

Thirdly, the *oikos* was the scene of the symposiums, drinking parties where men entertained other men, and in that respect, must be said to bring the outer world inside, to the heart of the household. Further supporting the argument that the hermetic seals we imagine between the masculine and the feminine spheres, corresponding to the division between polis and *oikos*, indeed have some notable cracks, is the observation that inter-*oikos* collaboration was an important political factor, at least in early Athens.²⁷⁷ The relationship between the *oikos* and the polis was as such an ambivalent one, at times marked by a

²⁷¹ M. H. Hansen argues that she probably was present. M. H. Hansen, "Review: Athenian Democracy Reviewed Work(s): Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People by Josiah Ober," *The Classical Review, New Series* 40, no. 2 (1990): 348–56. p. 350. M. H. Hansen, "Athenian Democracy", in *The Classical Review, New Series*, 40: 2, 1990, 350. See also Angela M. H. Schuster, "A Woman's Place," *Archaeology* 48, no. 6 (1995): 78–80, 82–83, 86.

²⁷² Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*. p. 7.

²⁷³ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. p. 42.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 42.

²⁷⁵ Ian Morris, "Archaeology and Gender Ideologies in Early Archaic Greece," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (1974-) 129 (1999): <https://doi.org/10.2307/284433>. p. 305,307.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 56.

conflict of interests, and as a “battle to keep the balance between the power of the polis and the interests of the oikos.”²⁷⁸

My fourth and final argument in this regard, is that while the political arenas of the polis were an exclusively male domain, several aspects of life in ancient Athens are left unaccounted for in the two-fold distinction between oikos/polis. While the oikos accounts for the family-life, the home, polis is claimed to have mainly a political meaning. Such a division of life fits well with our own narrative about Athens as the antecedent of democracy, which is described as both origin and ideal reality.²⁷⁹ The picture drawn of the Athenian citizen is that of The Political Man, who only in the intimate home-sphere of the oikos for a while pauses his relentless engagement in deliberative democratic activity.²⁸⁰ But what then of the other common arenas like the theatre, the gymnasium, or the market place? It is only by applying a very wide definition of the term that it makes sense to think of these arenas as ‘primarily political’, or even as political.²⁸¹

For the purposes of this thesis, I will make use of a narrower definition where political activity is limited to mean the activity that directly or indirectly is concerned with decision-making processes in the city state, either by taking place at the appropriate institutions designated for this activity (such as the council, *boulê*, the *ekklesia*, or at the law courts) or by being preoperational work for activity in these designated arenas. This definition does not exclude the possibility that, say, a political discussion could have, or was even likely to have taken place at e.g., a sports event or after a religious procedure, but it does prevent the categorization of all out-of-doors interaction between Athenian citizens as ‘political’ without further qualification. A wider definition of the political obviously has the benefit of also encompassing the ideological and identity-building aspect of for example the religious festivals and the pan-hellenic sports events. The point here, however, is that such a definition does not distinguish clearly between community-building actions

²⁷⁸ Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World*. p. 5. See also Arendt, *The Human Condition*. pp. 27-9

²⁷⁹ Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses*. p. 58.

²⁸⁰ In the *Human Condition* Arendt traces the understanding of ‘the social’ as synonymous to ‘the political’ back to Seneca, and later to Thomas Aquinas’ interpretation of Aristotle’s determination of human as *zôon politikon*. Obviously, exceptions from this understanding exist: Paul Veyne, ties the political life in the classical Athens to the wealth elites’ activities. This picture is challenged by Ober, who is supported by Cartledge, when he claims that poor and elderly citizen’s likely was overrepresented in the *ekklesia*, the council and on the jury’s. Paul Veyne, “Did the Greeks Know Democracy?” *Economy and Society* 34, no. 2 (May 2005): 322–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0308514052000343903>; Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 136; Paul Cartledge, *Democracy: A Life* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). p. 118.

²⁸¹ M. H. Hansen makes a similar point in “Athenian Democracy”, He underlines that perhaps as few as every third inhabitant had civic and political rights. On account of this we should be careful by assuming that all arenas in classical Athens were political. Hansen, “Review: Athenian Democracy Reviewed Work(s): Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People by Josiah Ober.” p. 350.

on the one hand, and political institutions and formal state organization on the other.

So, having clarified these terms, let us look anew at the relationship between the polis and the political. Reviewing all 11 000 instances of the word *polis* in archaic and classical sources, Mogens Herman-Hansen provides the following useful clarification: *Polis* is primarily used in two meanings. Meaning 1) denotes a settlement, in other words the houses that physically made up a city of a certain size, while meaning 2) denotes a community, primarily an “institutionalized political community, in other words a state.”²⁸² It is meaning 2) that is of direct interest to the discussion of this chapter. Hansen further writes that polis in meaning 2) is used both as a) a synonym for the *politai* (male citizens of age), and b) as synonym for *ekklesia* or the demos as it functioned in the *ekklesia* or in other political institutions, and finally as c) synonymously to *koinônia* the political community in a more abstract sense.²⁸³

Taking the multiple meanings of the word polis into consideration makes it clearer why we should take care not to draw a too sharp distinction between polis and oikos. At the very least, we should be careful in explicating in which sense we refer to the *polis*. For, despite the fact that male Athenian citizens of a certain financial standing were expected to devote a large portion of their time to the city’s political rule, the city itself was not comprised by free, male citizens from the leisurely classes. *Polis*, in the sense of meaning 1) settlement, that is, the geographical place of the Athenian society, also includes women, children, slaves and foreign *metoics* – all of whom were denied the status as ‘citizen’ and thus excluded from the city’s political life. Notably, meaning 1) also includes the houses, *oikoi*. These are well-known facts, but my main point here is that the *polis* cannot be said to stand in opposition to the *oikos*, private life, at the same time as the polis is to be taken to be a synonym for ‘the political’, which is said to stand in opposition to that same oikos that is included in the term polis. The *oikos/polis* model blurs the terms and leaves large parts of the societal structure out of the picture.

Following Aristotle’s terminology *politeia* is the ruling body of the city state, or what we might call its political organization.²⁸⁴ For these reasons I will in the following distinguish between the different uses of polis by referring to meaning 2a) (male citizens of age) as the *politai*, and 2b) (political institutions) as *politeia*, while 2c) (the political community as a whole, understood as all who are affected or subjected to the political rule of the *politai*) as *koinônia*.

²⁸² Mogens Herman Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). p. 56.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 57.

²⁸⁴ *Politics*, 1279a25; See Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*. p. 431, note 1.

To sum up: what is left out by the simple *oikos/polis* distinction is a concept and a term that covers the areas of the ancient community that were common, and public in a modern sense by being out-of-doors, but private in a Greek sense by not directly having anything to do with *politeia*. This is the segment, or sphere, of society that I want to target by using the term *koinônia*. By this we have identified three distinctive, but continuously exchanging, spheres within the polis: *oikos*, *politeia* and *koinônia*.

A Contextualization of Morality

The identification and definition of three different spheres, *oikos*, *koinônia*, and *politeia*, constitute the premises for the following assessment: We should understand Socrates' suggestion for re-organizing the societal structures in the *Republic* as a transmutation of these spheres directed at eradicating inner factions and disagreement in the city-state in order to promote true unity. In this assessment I agree with Julia Annas and with Arlene Saxonhouse. I differ from them, though, in how I see the private life as related to the question of internal division within the *Republic*. Rather than being an expression of a misogynistic identification of woman as Other, my claim is that the *oikos*' relation to wealth and accusation is at the core of the reasoning behind the radical restructuring of the living arrangements for the guardians. That private life is more or less eradicated in Kallipolis – which is often assumed to be Plato's ideal state is, along with the 'Noble Lie' and the differentiation among classes, one of the more controversial aspects of this work, also for otherwise benevolent readers.²⁸⁵ Concluding that the differences between men and women are irrelevant for their abilities to be guardians in the state, Plato has Socrates dissolve the institution of marriage and absolve the women from their duties as mothers to take up their place next to the men of the guardian- and ruler-classes. Conventional marriages are in Kallipolis abandoned in favor of the breeding-program of the *polis*. Thus, the individual is completely subjugated to the needs of the state, and this, more than anything else, the argument goes, shows Plato's dangerous and totalitarian ideas.²⁸⁶

But before condemning Plato on this, let us take the following into consideration: Regardless of whether we agree with the *Republic*'s suggestions, and regardless of whether Plato himself was serious about them, his writings on private life challenge the reader to reconsider the relationship between public and private and between the individual and the community in

²⁸⁵ See Melissa Lane, *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue and Sustainable Living*, p. 96.

²⁸⁶ This is e.g., Annas' attitude in "Plato's *Republic* and Feminism". See also Saxonhouse (1994) for an essentialist critique of the *Republic*. She argues that Plato in reality has Socrates eradicate woman, since the guardian class is dominated by masculine values. See also next note. Saxonhouse, "The Philosopher and the Female in the Political Thought of Plato."

a way that is still of political relevance. Therefore, we should try to extract the value of his argumentation, rather than getting derailed by moral indignation.²⁸⁷ It is my claim that the functions of the extinguishing or drastically reshaping the private sphere in Kallipolis are more complex, and also more fundamental to the ideas in the Republic, than is often portrayed, – hence, we cannot skip over them lightly, nor should we reduce them to a desire for control or a disregard for the value of the individual on behalf of Plato.

First of all, for context, I propose that we again turn to Herodotus. In the very opening passages of his *Histories*, we read that he will account, not only for the great deeds belonging to both parties in the Persian Wars, but also for the “causes (*aitios*) of their waging war on each other” (1.1.0).²⁸⁸ Herodotus dives right in: The first wrong is struck by the Phoenicians who abducted Io, the daughter of Inachus, and brought her to Egypt. Next, the Greeks, most likely the Cretans, went to Phoenice and carried off the King’s daughter Europe, thus restoring balance. Then, the Greeks committed the second wrong by abducting Medea, and, citing as their reason that no reparation was given for Io, they refused to pay any to the Colchians. This was reputedly the inspiration for why Alexandrus, son of Priam, resolved to get himself a wife by ravishing her from Hellas, and he carried off Helen. When the Greeks demanded compensation for this, they were in turn declined with reference to Medea (1.2.0-1.3.2). Up until this point, Herodotus claims, the wrongs in question had been mere robberies, and he cites an interesting analysis on account of the Persians: They think “that it is wrong to carry women off: but to be zealous to avenge the rape is foolish: wise men take no account of such things: for plainly the women would never have been carried away, had not they themselves wished it.” That the Greeks destroyed the power of Priam for the sake of a woman, is the reason why they now regard the Greeks as their enemies, for: “we of Asia regarded the rape of our women not at all”. (1.4.3-4.) In Herodotus we get, in other words, an analysis that makes first, men’s desire and unlawful abduction of women, then the Greeks’ particular relationship to their women the original culprit of the wars. Herodotus does not claim truth to this story, but neither does he offer an alternative account. While the Asians are said to be not over-zealous in avenging the abduction of their women, on account of attributing women’s autonomy a strong

²⁸⁷ Contrary to what George Klosko (2006) seems to think, I hold that it is possible to take Plato seriously as a political thinker without ignoring the literary and dramatic aspects of his dialogues, thereby reducing his dialogues to a political manifesto. Klosko, “Politics and Method in Plato’s Political Theory,” *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 23, no. 2 (2006): 238–349, <https://doi.org/10.1163/20512996-90000100>. See also Annas, who claims that Plato’s authoritarian aims are incompatible with feminism. She, in other words, ties feminism to the specifically liberal tradition which sees feminism as a fight for individual freedom of choice, rather than equity. Annas, “Plato’s ‘Republic’ and Feminism.”, p. 312.

²⁸⁸ “Causes” must be understood in the widest possible sense, – to Herodotus particular historical sensibilities so wide as to justifying not getting to the wars themselves before Book V.

argumentative weight, the culture of ownership over their women seems to give cause for a different tradition within Greece – women’s autonomy is a side-track in a discussion that centers first and foremost on the insult to the women’s ward.²⁸⁹

Given Herodotus’ relative popularity,²⁹⁰ it would be strange not to read the Republic’s abolishment of the practice of ownership of women (and children) into the context of this analysis. The Greek possessiveness of women is on the Histories’ account what caused the longstanding Persian Wars. “If this is so, if this is what you all believe, let us remove that potential cause”, the Republic seems to reply. But there is a further context to the re-organization, which is not only literary, but a practical and historical reality.

Marriages in antiquity were, to begin with, hardly based on romantic love and free choices in the first place. They were marriages of convenience, they were arranged, and they had multiple strategic aims, as mentioned in the first section of this chapter.²⁹¹ The fact that marriages were based on reason, not sensibilities, is further underlined by the widespread practice among the Athenian men of engaging in sexual and romantic relations outside of marriage. The pederastic practice was only one example of this.²⁹² In Athens, women, or girls, were married off so early as to have hardly reached puberty, in general to men twice their age.²⁹³ This should serve as a reminder that the moral value of Socrates’s suggestions should (also) be seen in relation to its authors own time. The suggestion to limit the women’s reproductive, that is ‘marriageable’ years to the age between twenty and forty years, should be seen as a marked improvement on the actual conditions of Athenian women (and would, indeed, be so in many places yet today).²⁹⁴ In considering marriage and reproduction as matters of political interest, Socrates does not differ from his contemporaries. But his reasons for why it should be, does: The marriage was

²⁸⁹ Recall also the *Illiad*, and the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon and further Clytemnestra’s’ defense for avenging her daughter by killing Agamemnon in the Oresteia, making explicit that the daughter also belonged to her, not only to her father. Homer, *The Illiad*. (1.59-1.187) Aeschylus, *Oresteia* (1525) See also Kathleen Morgan, “‘Agamemnon’ 1391-1392: Clytemnestra’s Defense Foreshadowed,” *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica* 42, no. 3 (1992): 25–27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20547156>.

²⁹⁰ Which should not be overstated, according to Stewart Flory, “Who Read Herodotus’ Histories?,” *The American Journal of Philology* 101, no. 1 (1980): 12–28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/294167>. Flory cites the length of the corpus. But these, the very first paragraphs of the very first book, were probably fairly well known either way. Additionally, Helens’ role in her own abduction was debated among the Greeks. Recall Gorgias’ *Encomium of Helen*.

²⁹¹ J. Roy, “‘Polis’ and ‘Oikos’ in Classical Athens”, *Greece & Rome*, 46.1 (1999), 1–18 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/643032>>. pp. 2-7.

²⁹² See e.g., Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 2. Songe-Møller embellishes on and problematizes Foucault’s analysis. Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. pp. 129-130. For an in-depth study of the meaning of the institution of marriage, see also Cynthia B. Patterson, “Marriage and the Married Woman in the Athenian Law,” in *Woman’s History and Ancient History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

²⁹³ Roy, “‘Polis’ and ‘Oikos’ in Classical Athens.” p. 2-7.

²⁹⁴ *Rep.*, 460e.

an institution of public interest, not least due to its status as production unit for legitimate offspring, but Socrates' suggestion for organizing private life is closely related to his analysis of why this is an area of the citizens' life of great political importance. This will be the subject of the following section.

In the *Republic*, Socrates argues that sexual life and reproduction should be under state control, based on the over-arching principle that the state should make its inhabitants as good as possible. His suggestion does not stand in opposition to subjecting individuals' private lives and marriages to political ideology, but rather opposes the premise that the ideological guidelines should be directed at personal alliances and gain. We could say that Socrates exchanges one form of arranged marriages, the ones for private gain, with another, the one that serves the polis and the community. Socrates' suggestion is in part the logical conclusion drawn from the following premises:

- a) The best city cannot come to be without its inhabitants being the best possible.
- b) Wealth does not make the inhabitants good, neither as private individuals nor as citizens.

More weight must be added to the claims stated above, and the connection between the *oikos* and private wealth must be proven in Plato's writings for these premises to be valid as Socrates reasons to extinguish the family sphere. This, together with establishing how the *Republic* portrays the *oikos* as a scene for hidden execution of power, will be the main enterprise of the next section.

Oikos, politeia and koinônia: To be Found in the Republic?

So to what extent does the *Republic* support and justify my analysis? Within the Platonic corpus a distinction between the private and the public, or perhaps we should rather say the private and the political, is maintained: When Socrates in the *Apology* accounts for his controversial decision to abstain from the political life of Athens, he says that he instead "went to each of [them] [...] privately and conferred upon him what I say is the greatest benefit [...]" (*Apol.* 36c), this should clearly not be taken to mean that Socrates confined his doings to the enclosure of the home, in the sense of *oikos*. The Socrates that Plato has brought to life for us is relentlessly engaged in philosophical dialogue, most often out in the public. We see him in the agora, in the gymnasium, or as a guest at a symposium or another gathering, but never as a speaker in the assembly, and in court only under the force of necessity.²⁹⁵ Neither do we see

²⁹⁵ Despite Socrates also having executed his duty as a citizen and served his time in the *boulé*. *Apol.* (32a-c)

him conspiring behind closed doors, but always out and about, conversing with friends and adversaries, boldly and unafraid. The Socrates that we know from Plato, lives his life in the in-between spaces, on the arenas held in common among the Greeks, that which was *koinônia*. This certainly holds true of the *Republic*, like the *Protagoras* and the *Symposium*, it is set at private *oikos* but one at the time of the dialogue populated by a variety of guests, some of whom are of very prominent social or political standing. In these dialogues, Socrates definitely engages in discourse of things that have or would have a considerable impact on politics if he were to succeed in his endeavors, but we should note that Plato's Socrates himself does not define this as a political activity. Rather, he says explicitly that he has *abstained* from politics. In the *Apology*, Plato has Socrates explicitly address this issue: "Perhaps it may seem strange that while I go around and give this advice privately and interfere in private affairs and interfere in other people's affairs to give this advice in private, I do not venture to come before your assembly and advise the state" (*Apol.* 31c). As the dialogues seems to take the distinction seriously, and so should we. The reason Socrates gives for abstaining from politics, is quite plain, although not very clarifying: his *daimonion* forbade it.²⁹⁶ He also says that had he engaged in politics, he would have "been put to death long ago, and done no good either to you or to myself".²⁹⁷ Placing the philosopher firmly in the private realm, that of the *idiotés*, Plato also gives us occasion to consider the ambivalence in the relationship between philosophy and politics, so starkly contrasted in the *Apology*.²⁹⁸ The philosopher, as far as he can be said to be engaged in politics, is located in this in-between sphere, which is private in the Greek sense because of being non-political (not to *politeia*), and thereby belonging to the sphere of the *idiôtês*, and public in the modern sense because of being located outside of the home and in the shared space of the public, or in the semi-public event of a symposium.

We should therefore not see the spheres of *oikos* and *politeia* as dividing the city state between them, thus leaving us no concept for this in-between space. Rather, I contend that we also in Plato's dialogues can trace the outline of a third sphere, *koinônia*, which overlaps with both the *oikos* and the *politeia*-sphere but is reducible to neither of them. This is the designated arena for the philosopher and philosophy, as it is portrayed in the *Apology* and in the *Republic*.²⁹⁹ From this, it looks like a definition of the 'political' in the *Republic* must be restrained to the political institutions, *politeia*. At least if we

²⁹⁶ *Apol.* 31c. Socrates also says that he simply did not have the "leisure" to do so, on account of his service to the God (Apollo), *Apology* (23b8).

²⁹⁷ *Apol.* 31d.

²⁹⁸ I pursue this line of reasoning more in-depth in Oda E. Wiese Tvedt, "Philosophy, Democracy and Poverty: The Philosopher as Political Agent in Plato's *Apology*," in *Readings of Plato's Apology of Socrates* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2018).

²⁹⁹ I have partially argued this elsewhere. Tvedt, "Philosophy, Democracy and Poverty".

should take Socrates' claim from the *Apology* seriously. I will come back to this point in the final section of this chapter.

Oikos: Private Wealth and Hidden Power

In Book II we read that one of the most important tasks for the guardians is to guard the city against the emergence of both wealth and poverty. Socrates insists that the guardians must, above all, guard against wealth and poverty:

“So, as it seems we’ve found other things for the guardians to guard against in every way so that these things never slip into the city without their awareness” [. . .] ‘Wealth and poverty’, [...] “since the one produce luxury, idleness and innovation, and the latter produces illiberality, wrongdoing as well as innovation (*neoterismos*)” (421e-422a)

Failing this task will not only lead the citizens and the city as a whole to deteriorate, but a city in which wealth and poverty is allowed to grow will no longer be one city at all:

For each of them is very many cities but not a city as those who play say. There are two, in any case, warring with each other, one of the poor, the other of the rich. And within each of these there are very many. (422e-423a)

As long as wealth and poverty exist within the city, the city-state and thereby its inhabitants, will not be as good as possible. In other words, it is clear that private wealth, in other words *economy* in a modern sense, is in the *Republic* portrayed as being of interest to a political rule, contrary to the common ideology of ancient Athens.

This claim needs some clarification: As mentioned, economic affairs belong, according to the Athenians, to the *oikos*, and not to public and state-affairs. The Athenians never sought to equalize economic differences, even though only a minority of the Athenians part-taking in the public rule belonged to the monetary elite. Demosthenes, for example, argues explicitly for the right of the wealthy to keep, and enjoy, the benefits of their wealth.³⁰⁰ But he also argues that wealth should be kept on private hands until such a time when the state need finances for warfare. Then, he assumes, they will generously contribute their riches for the common good.³⁰¹

The question of from where the city would acquire the money for warfare is also raised in the *Republic*. When Adeimantus hears that the guardians must guard against riches with all their might, this is at the forefront of his mind: If

³⁰⁰ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 198. Demosthenes, *On the Navy (On the Symmories)* 14. 24-27.

³⁰¹ Demosthenes, *On the Navy (On the Symmories)* 14. 24-27.

no one possesses any money, how will wars be financed? (422a). It is safe to say that the question is not entirely satisfyingly answered.³⁰² That said, the overall relation between wealth and virtue in general is not always entirely clear in the Platonic corpus. Some passages leave it to interpretation to decide whether wealth in itself is a bad thing or something that is of no relevance to virtue.³⁰³ In the *Republic* though, there is little room for doubt:

Or isn't virtue in tension with wealth, as though each were lying in the scale of a balance, always inclining in opposite directions? [. . .] Surely, when wealth and the wealthy are honored in a city, virtue and the good men are less honorable. (550e–551a).

Even if we employ a reading which subscribes to the weaker claim and allows for the theoretical possibility that there might be someone who was wealthy and virtuous at the same time, Plato's political work in my reading seem to carry a judgment that this is such an unlikely combination that practical politics should be based on the stronger version of the claim: That virtue and wealth are incommensurable. It is clear, on account of what has been said so far, that for Socrates, proving that it is possible to abolish money for the guardians and ruling classes is less important than it is to establish that wealth and poverty are the cause of factions and dissent in the city-state. Let me just briefly remind the reader of the setting of this dialogue: Book I is well-known and has been thoroughly commentated, so I suffice myself to point out that the conversation of the *Republic* in its entirety takes place in a private home. They are in the home of Cephalus, the wealthy metic who has inherited large parts of his wealth, and whose sons will lose both their wealth and their lives in the democratic uprising that follows the regime of the "thirty tyrants".³⁰⁴

It is further worth noting that the conversation revolves around wealth and inheritance, as well as the fact that the participants are gathered at a symposium, which, as I have argued, represented a in-between-position, in between the public and the private realm. The metics also find themselves in a sort of middle-position: They were inhabitants of the city-state; male and

³⁰² And involves a rather lengthy exposition relying on tropes such as "rich and complacent" and "poor and lean".

³⁰³ See M. F. Burnyeat, "Apology 30b2-4: Socrates, Money, and the Grammar of Γίγνεσθαι," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 123 (November 2003): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3246257>; Drew E. Griffin, "Socrates' Poverty: Virtue and Money in Plato's Apology of Socrates," *Ancient Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (1995): 1–16, <https://doi.org/ancientphil199515133>. S. R. Slings and E. Strycker, *Plato's Apology of Socrates: A Literary and Philosophical Study with a Running Commentary. Edited and Completed from the Papers of the Late E. De .* (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1994). Their discussions are centered on the notoriously ambiguous sentence of the *Apology* 30b, but Burnyeat also refers to the passage of the *Republic* 550e in support of his view, which is that money and virtue are mutually exclusive in Plato.

³⁰⁴ See e.g. Nicholas Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995). p.16; or Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 18.

free, but without the citizen rights that were the prerogative of the Athenian-born only, – hence, Annas remarks that their contribution in the initial conversation is markedly non-political.³⁰⁵

Private property and the *oikos*-sphere constitute a prominent *motif* when Socrates lets a miscalculation be the cause of the inevitable demise of Kallipolis. With a tip of the hat in the direction of Hesiod, Plato has Socrates give a genealogical account of the city-state's demise. Socrates invokes the muses, and they refer to a general law for what is: “[...] for everything that has come into being there is decay” – and so also the beautiful city of Kallipolis (546a). Everything that lives has a cyclic pattern of growth and fertility, both for body and soul, and this is true also for mankind. Despite of being well trained in mathematics, the guardians will at some point miscalculate. Children will be begotten when they should not, and these offspring will become “unmusical” (546e). The creation of more unworthy offspring will lead to classes mixing in a chaotic manner, and this in turn leads to factions and disunity in the city (*stasis*) (546a–547b).

Now, the individuals from the lower classes will pull the regime in the direction of money-love, while the nobler classes will pull in the direction of virtue. This form of regime is called a timocracy, an honor-loving regime, and it is a mixture between good and bad impulses (547d–547e). When the lower classes now pull in the direction of pecuniary values, and the two better classes in the direction of virtue and justice, the solution to this basic form of *stasis* is to (re)instate private property. The middle way is in other words to redistribute land and houses (*oikoi*) into private (*idios*) hands. The central question seems therefore to be whether the connection between private households and the citizens worshipping wealth is a necessary or contingent one.

In the following, I will argue that the relation is a necessary one. This analytic claim relies on two separate, yet closely related lines of arguments which may be elucidated from the *Republic*. i) *Oikos* is a condition for the possibility for desiring, and accumulating wealth. ii) *Oikos* is a condition for executing hidden power, fractionating, division and building of political alliances that threaten the city-state's stability and unity.

To take on i) first: Let us review what Socrates says about the citizens living under the timocratic constitution, the one that arises just after the perfect one:

And such men, I said, will desire money just as those in oligarchies do and under cover of darkness pay fierce honor to gold and silver, because they possess storehouses and domestic (*oikeious*) treasuries where they can deposit and hide them; and they will have walls around their houses (*oikêseôn*), exactly like private nest (*neottias idias*), where they can make lavish expenditures on women and whomever else they might wish. (548a.)

³⁰⁵ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. p. 18.

The private *oikoi* are here described as «private nests».³⁰⁶ It is also clear, from the discussion in Book V, that whether or not it is a good thing to forbid private households and traditional family structures they, by abolishing the *oikos* as a central unit for organizing family life, will avoid “one man dragging off to his own house whatever he can get his hands on apart from the others, another being separate in his own house with his separate women and children, introducing private pleasures and griefs of things that are separate” (464c–d.).

This point substantiates my claim i): *Oikos* provides the possibility and the condition for accumulating wealth. It is the house itself, enclosed by four walls, that creates the division between the private, what is one’s own, and the public and common, what is *koinônia*. The private life can further be said to be a *cause* for the desire to gather earthly goods, by nourishing the wish to fill these private nests with riches. Without a family and descendants that one wishes to see flourish and grow, the incentive to enrich oneself disappears.³⁰⁷ The nuclear family and the *oikos* entraps the citizens in a vicious circle where they gather riches for the family’s upkeep, at the same time as the need to acquire a family grows out of, among other things, the need for an heir to the riches one at the outset gathered to entertain said family. This opens for the claim that there is in the *Republic* a connection between the desire for private goods and the desire to keep a woman to oneself, as in to possess her. This is the very first custom that is disposed of on behalf of the guardians in Book V.³⁰⁸

Private life gives cause for the desire to hoard wealth also in this way: Based on the earlier quote, it is clear that the private household and the nuclear family place the singular *oikos* in a competitive relationship to every other singular *oikos* and family. This is further underlined by the following passage:

Won’t lawsuits and complaints against one another virtually vanish from among them thanks to their possessing nothing private but the body, while the rest is common? On this basis they will then be free from faction, to the extent at any rate that human beings divide into factions over the possession of money, children and relatives? (464d–e)

From this we may ascertain that competitiveness is a factor that plays into the *pleonectic* desire for *more*. But this quote is also relevant for another aspect of the *oikos*, taken up again in Socrates discussion of the demise of the state

³⁰⁶ *Neottia* literally means “young birds nest”.

³⁰⁷ For why a prolonged status as an affluent bachelor was not really a viable alternative for Greek men, see Goldhills excellent analysis of Hippolytus in Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy*.

³⁰⁸ Despite the fact that Greek men had extra-marital sources for pleasure we should not assume that marriages were non-erotic and solely directed at reproduction. As Rebecca Hague describes, in vase painting the bride was almost always portrayed as desirable, and her seductive attributes drawn attention to. Rebecca Hague, “Marriage Athenian Style,” *Archaeology* 41, no. 3 (1988): 32–36. p. 36.

when he describes how the souls' demise in the individual happens in the Kallipolis, and this brings us to claim ii), that the *oikos* is also a condition for the type of hidden power that leads to *stasis*. The individual, represented by "the young man", is corrupted by his mother's whispered words in his ear. Unsatisfied by the family's status, she tells him that his father, a man who stays away from conflict, and prefers to spend his time consumed by his own thoughts, is "is unmanly, too easy-going, and all the other things that women repeat over and over again in such cases" (549d.).

In this passage, several points deserve our attention regarding the relationship between woman and the *oikos*: First of all, it is clear that the nuclear family follows immediately from private property:

Struggling and straining against one another (the gold and silver towards virtue and the iron and bronze toward money making and the possession of land) they agree on a middle way: They distributed land and houses (*oikos*) to be held privately (*idóomai*), while those who previously were guarded by them as free friends and supporters they then enslaved and held as serfs and domestics: and they occupied themselves with war and guarding against these men (547b-c).

With the reinstatement of the *oikos*, women are removed from the political rule of the city. This is not pointed out explicitly, but the next time women are mentioned in the *Republic* (the former being the summary of Book V at 543a–b) she has become the mother of a timocrat's son, whispering corrupting words in his ear. With private property, the need for heirs arises yet again, and in turn leads to the need to control women's bodies. Women have again been relegated to the homely sphere, ideologically or physically. To reestablish the private sphere, *oikos*, is to reestablish the feminine sphere.

Women's power, as mothers or mistresses or wives, with access to men's ears and whose clandestine power and influence are executed in the private homes, out of the public's eye, is clearly a threat to the unity of the city state in the *Republic*. This take can further be interpreted in the following way: By relegating women to the home and robbing her of political influence, women are at the same time robbed of their agency and opportunities to influence their own lives. This confines them to a world behind closed doors where *only* covert influence can take place. This suggestion stands in opposition to Annas' claim that Plato, by asserting that the existing organization of society was contrary to nature (*para phusin*) (456c) should not be understood to mean that women's natures were crippled by being confined to the home, but that the aim of the reorganization was to liberate the man from the influence of woman. But Annas can only assert this if she, as Catherine Gardner points out, treats the dissolution of the nuclear family as separate from the argument for why women should be guardians of the city.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Annas, "Plato's 'Republic' and Feminism." p. 314.; Gardner, "The Remnants of the Family." p. 222.

My suggested interpretation also contradicts that of Bruce Rosenstock's reading of the same passage. Rosenstock claims that Plato attributes ambition to women as something essentially tied to their psychology and/or anatomy – something he claims it is the goal of the educational program to eradicate.³¹⁰ But at the same time, he admits that these traits, in Plato's thinking, are tied to her stagnant position,³¹¹ and when he also claims that Plato's suggestion for equality is an eradication of woman as gender, it must, as far as I can understand, mean that Rosenstock's own position demands that he attributes these traits to women as essentially female. In the reading proposed by this thesis it is rather conspicuous that women's exercise of their influence for colluding and intrigues is not seen as a trait of woman qua gender, but rather as a result of her societal position.³¹²

The above discussion substantiates my claim ii). The *oikos*, not woman herself, is a condition and a prerequisite for the exercise of clandestine power and contributes to fractions and alliances in the *polis*. This development comes as a result of the *oikos* placing the singular families in an antagonistic relationship *vis à vis* each other, as argued in relation to my claim i). *Oikos* thereby becomes a breeding ground for the development of dissent among the citizens, in that the private and the public sphere now have diverging interests – a situation that ultimately undermines both spheres. Besides this, a further point must be acknowledged: *oikos* is the condition for *stasis* and factions by denying women other outlets for her abilities than to set her sons and husbands up against other sons and husbands. *Oikos* must in other words also be said to be the cause for the division of *polis*, at least imaginatively, into a masculine and a feminine domain.

The claim that the *oikos* in itself is the root cause of the demise of the *polis* is further supported by a passage in the *Laws*, where the old Athenian suggests that meals should be communal (*koina*), for women and men alike. If anyone would protest this, the answer should be that anyone who excludes private life from legislation, and thereafter expects the citizens to be law-abiding, is making a big mistake (*Laws*, 780b–781c). This line of reasoning is not unique to Plato. Aeschines, a rhetorician, and in other words a professional politician, asserts that “no one can be a rascal in his private life, but an excellent man in his public life.”³¹³ In this regard, the Ancient Greeks differ from what Niklas Luhman argues is an essential trait of modern societies, namely role

³¹⁰ Rosenstock, “Athena's Cloak.” p. 373.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* 375.

³¹² Considering Plato's radical position, it is perhaps not to wonder at that Leonardo Bruni, the man who originally translated most of Plato's dialogues and letters into Latin, and so made them available for a wider audience, refrained from translating the *Republic* because of its radical and subversive content. This point I owe to Bluestone, “Why Women Cannot Rule: Sexism in Plato Scholarship.”

³¹³ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 127; Jeffrey Henderson, “The Speeches of Aeschines,” Loeb Classical Library, accessed May 18, 2021, http://www.loebclassics.com/view/aeschines-timarchus/1919/pb_LCL106.3.xml.

differentiation.³¹⁴ What a person chooses to do in private life, is, in a modern view, and at least ideally, of small or no consequence for their professional and public life. In antiquity we know from for example trials, that the individual's character as a whole was attributed considerably greater importance.

In sum, I argue that i) and ii) establishes why it is necessary, according to Socrates in the *Republic*, to extinguish the *oikos* and the private sphere in Kallipolis. When Plato has Socrates exchanging one form of arranged marriages (for private benefit) for another (for the common good) this should be seen as consistent with the premise that private wealth must be abolished, or at least that power and wealth should never be coinciding, in order for the just state to come to be. In the final section of this chapter, I will point to some consequences that the eradication of the *oikos* can be said to have for the political critique of the *Republic*.

Is to Eradicate the *oikos* Also to Eradicate *politeia*?

To eradicate the institutionalized private life would doubtlessly relieve the Athenians from the private lawsuits in which they incessantly engaged each other. But would it also eradicate politics in general? Let us take a look at the connections between private life and the political life of Athens in Plato's time. Ober writes that when democracy was instated in Athens for the second time, in 403 BCE, the level of internal tensions between the poor masses and the wealthy elite was higher than before. He points to several causes for this. First of all, the city-state's financial situation was of a kind that required heavier taxation of the wealthy, who to a larger extent had to contribute to support the political participation of the poorer segments of the population, without gaining any special rights or privileges. Second, the poorer masses deeply distrusted the rich elite who had, close to unanimously, supported the oligarchic coup in 411.³¹⁵

When Book II of the *Republic* describes financial inequality as the basic cause of internal conflict and disunity in the city-state, this is based on a real political situation. In this passage, as previously mentioned, Socrates argues that what makes a city rightfully *a* city, and not in reality many cities at war with each other, is precisely the elimination of wealth and poverty (422a, 442e).

When democracy was first established in Athens, it was, contrary to popular belief, perhaps not as much a result of enlightenment, progress, and noble intentions, but rather as a consequence of considerable political prowess and maneuvering in response to an escalating crisis, as Ober has famously

³¹⁴ This point is owed to Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp. 125–126.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 99.

argued.³¹⁶ The tensions between rich and poor were rising to critical levels, and the transgression to a democratic rule presented itself as the solution to a political problem.³¹⁷ The poor masses achieved equal decision-making power; the rich got to keep their riches, and their lives as well. From my reading of the *Republic*, the insight emerges that this was a trade-off that did not remove the underlying cause of the conflict; the tension was lowered but did not disappear. Furthermore, it had the effect that anyone and everyone's opinion were attributed equal value.

Socrates criticizes the Athenians for lack of knowledge, lack of self-knowledge, and an overly optimistic belief in the transfer-value of their own fields of expertise.³¹⁸ One of the accusations directed against democracy seems to be that decision-making procedures were subjected to the "water clock" and most often was about a "fellow slave" as he phrases it in the *Theaetetus*.³¹⁹ From this we may infer that the critical stance Socrates takes on the citizens' abilities to make good political decisions when gathered in the decision-making institutions like the Assembly is not limited to the citizens' lack of knowledge or expertise, but also encompassed the prescriptions put in place by the political procedures in themselves.³²⁰ This is what will be the topic for next chapter, but for now, let me say the following to indicate the significance of this point for the *oikos* as a political factor:

The power of the assembly was limited to a 'yes' or 'no' response for propositions furthered by the smaller council. From my reading of the *Republic*, it may be suggested that Socrates sees a clear connection between wealth and power in that the real power, the power to decide which propositions should be furthered, when, and not least, by whom, or to decide which poor soul should have his life and reputation scrutinized and slandered at the public spectacle of the courts, was placed elsewhere. That kind of power was based on alliances between wealthy families, between orators and generals, and on clever political strategizing³²¹, not unlike what is the case in our own system.³²² The *oikos*, as the seat of the family, has a central position

³¹⁶ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens. sic passim*

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, and Chris Carey in Chris Carey, trans., *Aeschines (The Oratory of Classical Greece, Vol. 3; ed. Michael Gagarin, 2nd Printing edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). p. 25. Against this it may be argued that while everyone in principle could make suggestions, only a small number actually did so and so the opportunity remained a principle rather than a practical reality. More on this in chapter 4.*

³¹⁸ See e.g. *Apol.*, 30b.

³¹⁹ *Theat.*, 172d–e.

³²⁰ On this, see chapter 4.

³²¹ Ober (1989) would disagree with me on this I think. He argues that the fact that Athenian orators went through the trouble of reassuring Athenian voters that they did not in any way belong to any alliances or factions, to a large degree proves that they did not. This is a matter of rhetorical interpretation and could as well be taken to indicate the opposite, at least if we let Plato guide our interpretations. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp.122, 123.

³²² See Roslyn Fuller, *Beasts and Gods: How Democracy Changed Its Meaning and Lost Its Purpose*, Illustrated edition (London: Zed Books, 2015). See chapter 1 for an overview of

within this social network. It is in many ways significant for my reading of the *Republic* as a critique of democracy that it is in many ways significant for my reading of the *Republic* as a critique of democracy that one did not have to be rich to become a politician in Ancient Athens, but one would almost inevitably become so if successful in pursuing politics as a career path.³²³ Socrates is rarely as overtly cross as when chastising the men of Athens for exploiting their positions in order to enrich themselves, and this on the expense of the city.³²⁴

The connection between greed and the *oikos* has been established in my discussion above. I have also established that the *Republic* posits the political arenas as a location for playing out this inter-*oikoi* competition for wealth and status. On this basis, I may now, with the *Republic*, define politics as 1) *politeia*, the place where decisions regarding the *polis* are made and as 2) the public sphere where the citizens fight for private honor, wealth, and social status. In the Kallipolis, 1) will constitute the exclusive domain of the Philosopher-kings and queens, and 2) will be left redundant by status now being solely attached to merit in the educational system, and the *oikos* is no longer being a cause for greed. If the above definition of politics in the *Republic* is correct, we can conclude that the *Republic* does not argue to preserve politics, or the political sphere, in the form suggested above.

Any political practice in the city will be reserved for the select few philosophers that at any time rule the Kallipolis, and furthermore, it will be limited to the *polis*' interaction with other cities. The constitution and the internal organization of the city state will already have been established, and the guardians main mission seems to be to administer and preserve it. Whether these activities still qualify as politics, in the true meaning of the term, is doubtful. A tentative conclusion might be that politics, in the democratic sense, and understood as collective decision-making, is rendered superfluous by the eradication of both the *oikos* and the private sphere. A good state, a Kallipolis, must disparage of private life because a just and good state cannot. In the *Republic*'s line of reasoning consist of numerous non-compatible spheres and diverging interests or interest groups. These are threats to the city-

devices and methods the Athenians creatively installed against this form of exploitation of the system. When I still conclude more pessimistically regarding to which extent their efforts were successful in preventing alliances and political games of strategy, this relies to some degree on the fact that a minority de facto used their opportunity to address the Assembly. See also Anthoula Malkopoulou for a comparative analysis of election by lot vs representative democracy in: Anthoula Malkopoulou, "The Paradox of Democratic Selection: Is Sortition Better than Voting?," in *Parliamentarism and Democratic Theory. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Kari Palonen and Jose Maria Rosales (Opladen, Toronto: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2015).

³²³ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 349.

³²⁴ See especially the *Apology* where Socrates can be said to carry his poverty as an emblem of his virtue, in opposition to his co-citizens who have paid more attention to their possessions than to the development of their souls. *Apol.*, 36c.

state's unity. Without private life and opposing interests, politics is rendered superfluous.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to show that the *Republic* regards the private sphere, represented and institutionalized in the *oikos*, as a real threat to the possibility for good state management and thereby, to the best of the citizens. Further, I have argued that Socrates, by disposing of the private sphere also extinguishes the political sphere. If *koinônia* is the specifically philosophical sphere, and, after subtracting the *oikos* and the *politeia*, the *polis* will consist only of what is in common, *koinos*, this will in truth be a philosophical city. The *Republic's* politics is, in my analysis a response to *stasis*, to disunity and internal tensions. In this reading, the *Republic* can be said to admit that Herodotus has a point when he makes the desire to possess women the cause of war. However, the *Republic* takes this reasoning one step further and identifies the *oikos* as what provides the possibility to act on this desire. By removing the foundational cause of *stasis*, in this chapter identified as *oikos*, politics will become redundant and cease to be. In that case we will have transgressed from *polis* containing three different spheres, to a *polis* that is only one, *koinônia*. Only then can the city, in the rightful meaning of the term, be said to be one.

As I discussed in the preceding chapter, different moral-psychological natures respond differently to the same external factors. The *oikos* is not necessarily detrimental, or detrimental in the same way, to all types. But it does seem to be particularly threatening to the nature of the honor lover in that the 'honor' in question, namely what is deemed worthy of esteem, is re-directed towards gaining 'more and more' to the *oikos*-sphere, and, most importantly, more than one's neighbor. Let me provide some more arguments for this interpretation: In Book V, it is striking that when Plato has Socrates conscientiously account for the honors that will be bestowed upon courageous warriors, he carefully leaves out any material prizes, also the ones that would have had mainly a symbolic meaning. This move should in itself alert us to the connections between the honor-lover and the lover of money. The passage I quoted earlier that clearly ties factions to possession of "money, children and relatives" (464d-e) is also relevant for the psychology of the honor-lover. G. R. F. Ferrari, in his interpretation of Glaucon and Adeimantus as 'quietists' in that they embody the elitist's ethos of abstention from politics, draws our attention to 548d-e in which Socrates and his interlocutors investigate the demise of the 'mixed regime' (the timocracy) into oligarchy. When asked about what kind of man he would turn out to be, Adeimantus answers that he would be like Glaucon "as far as love of victory goes". And Socrates insist that he in other ways would be unlike Glaucon, in that he would be more

stubborn, less educated in music, but more so in gymnastic (548c- 549b). But we should remember that these are all traits of the type that according to Socrates are not inherent but have to do with education and social circumstances. This formative development does not end with childhood, but it is clear that they continue to evolve during life: When he is young, he despises money, but as he grows older, he “takes ever more delight” in participating in the money lover’s nature (449b). The ‘love of honor’ is therefore not a trait we can easily identify from the action it results in, because it seems to be completely compatible with taking first, in early years, the guise of strong sexual desires and, later, as age naturally decreases these motivations, to take the guise of money-loving. The difference, for some, might be entirely down to circumstances, and where in their life they are at. Following the Complex Constitutional Model from the preceding chapter, we can say that the only difference between the two might be the motivations with which they engage in acquisition. For these types of persons then, money and wealth come to be the visible proof of their esteem-worthiness, just as sexual conquests do in their youth. We should recall that Glaucon is quick to accept the replacement of material honors with that of public kisses and “marriages”, to which Glaucon himself adds that no one “should be allowed to refuse” (468b).³²⁵ This makes Glaucon a likely candidate for precisely the kind of nature that Socrates has in mind for those who despise wealth when they are young but takes ever more pleasure in it as they grow older. As much as reading 449b as a statement about who Glaucon is, we should perhaps read the statement as a warning of what he might become, if he continues on his path.

I will pick up again this thread in our final chapter, where I will also spell out the connections to Cephalus who starts off this whole discussion. But for now, I would like to summarize what these findings amount to in the context of this thesis: The reorganization of the family life is in my analysis seen as an answer to the anthropology upon which they have agreed, and to which Glaucon made his contribution. That Socrates seems to leave these restrictions for the lower classes, has been seen as proof of the author’s disregard of them. I suggest that we rather see it like this: Glaucon has provided an anthropology, based on universalizing his own rationale, his own psychology. And throughout the *Republic*, Socrates seems most preoccupied with analyzing how the social and political institutions of democratic Athens interact with those of the particular moral-psychology of Glaucon, the honor-lovers. In the next chapter we will see whether this reading applies also for the political institutions.

³²⁵ To this Socrates drily remarks that this is just as when Ajax was awarded the finest cut of the meat so that in this, at last they “follow Homer”. That no one, children, adolescents or women of the fellow guardian class are allowed to reject the sexual advances of the successful warrior, is of course nothing like being granted a nice piece of meat, which is surely what Socrates is pointing out by that unlikely comparison.

Chapter 4: Democratic Institutions for Decision-Making and their Role in Shaping the Soul

Introduction

In chapter 2, I conducted an analysis of decision-making which focused on the individual and the internal forces at work. I claimed that understanding the complexity of *akrasia*, that is, the cases in which reason does not have the final word, was salient to understanding the notion of rationality the operates with, and the forms of irrationality identified within the *Republic*. Non-rational powers in the soul, especially desires and fears, are portrayed as threats to rational decision making, not only in the individual, as we saw in chapter 2, but also in mass decision-making. The latter is portrayed through a series of comments about the masses in Book VI. Understanding how and why the *Republic* argues that mass decision-making and mass decision-making procedures are vulnerable to irrationality is the main focus of this chapter. Following up on this, it is necessary to answer the question of how non-rational powers in the soul endanger rational decision-making in democracies particularly. This task I will undertake by contextualizing the claims the *Republic* makes about the social dynamics of decision making in a democracy within a historical contextualization of what we know or have strong reasons to believe about the institutions of the Athenian democracy.

My main claim in this chapter is that the arguments posed by Socrates in the *Republic* identify the democratic institutions of decision-making in Athens as instrumental in shaping the desires and beliefs of the individual. Socrates says of the teachers, the sophists, the following:

It is as if someone were learning the moods and appetites of a huge strong beast that he's rearing – how to approach and handle it, when it is most difficult to deal with or most gentle and what makes it so, what sounds it utters in either condition, and what sounds soothe or angers it. Having learned all this [. . .] he calls this knack wisdom [. . .]. In truth, he knows nothing about which of these convictions is fine or shameful, good or bad, just or unjust, but he applies all these names in accordance with how the beast reacts – calling what it enjoys good and what angers it bad. (493a-b).

I will use this famous beast-quote as my prism-passage for interpreting the dynamics of politics as a corruptive process. Investigating Athenian political institutions and practices provides a clearer picture of the dynamics of power that Socrates is getting at here. Hence, the theoretical consequences springing from the fact that democratic decisions in ancient Athens were *social* decisions, will emerge, as I see them related in the *Republic*. The decisions made by the Athenian demos are in the above quote an expression of opinions they hold *qua* group and may thus not represent the individuals' beliefs. My argument is that the *Republic* sees the norm-building practices of the Athenian democracy as a threat to autonomous belief-formation through the faculty of reason. In my reading, the problems that the *Republic* formulates regarding mass decision-making are on the one hand problems related to group decision-making in general, and on the other, problems related to the institutional practices of direct responses within the democratic system, both in terms of the vote and through heckling. Furthermore, my reading finds that the dynamics between groups and politicians is a central feature of the critique of the corruptive practices of democracy that emerges from these passages.

The Greek practice of publicly expressing praise and blame (*thorubos*) was an important part of the education of the citizen – a way of informing and imposing the shared values of the *polis* to the individual.³²⁶ The Athenian masses gathered together and expressed themselves, not only in the *ekklesia* and in the courts, but also in religious festivities, theatres, at sports events (albeit these were often part of the same events) and in army camps. While these practices were certainly by no means confined to what may narrowly be construed as political institutions, I still choose to operate on a narrower working conception of politics than does e.g., Ryan K Balot, who suggests that the 'political' regarding the Greeks should be understood as a "broad term."³²⁷ My choice to employ a sharper distinction between the political and the non-political is partly due to the scope of this thesis but more importantly it is based on my observation that the *Republic* itself makes this distinction, as I will argue below. That said, it is worth noting that all societal institutions and practices can be seen as being encompassed in the *Republic*'s discursive attack on democratic reasoning and ideology. It should also be said that a difference between exclaiming praise and blame in what I refer to as the 'political institutions' compared to the theatre, or in a public gathering such as a religious festival and all the places where the Athenians were "gathered together (492c)," is that in the former, one had the additional feature of the centrality of *logos*. By this I mean that the political suggestions put forth in the Assembly, the political speeches for or against them, and their counter-suggestions, all had to be presented in the form of reasons – arguments – and

³²⁶ Ryan K. Balot, *Greek Political Thought*, 1st Edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006). p. 4.

³²⁷ Balot, *Greek Political Thought*. p 3.

that the underlying norms they appealed to had to be made explicit. The same holds for the law-courts. I do not here mean to deny that “the political”, *ta politika*, “encompassed both processes of public decision-making and communal self-definition, as well as various aspects of social, religious, ethical, and familial life,”³²⁸ but only that even if something is deemed to be of political interest, or perhaps even deemed to be of the sort that should be regulated by politics, that does not make that something in itself political. The distinction between ‘being of interest for’ should not be confused with ‘to be’. A consequence of what I have so far said about the difference between institutions that belong to politics proper, and the other social events of the *polis*, is that they should be treated differently, so that a further implication of a very broad definition of politics is that it might cause us to misconstrue other social practices. While it is the case, for example, that one can interpret the relentless religious festivities and especially the *pan-athenian* ones as an expression of the nationalistic propaganda machine that was Athens, this also seems like a somewhat reductive frame of interpretation, in the sense that this could hardly be expected to capture the full meaning of what the Athenians saw themselves as doing when they celebrated religious rites and festivals.

My decision to not treat all public gatherings equally finds support in the *Republic* itself: Following up on the analogy between a beast and a handler, Socrates asks if such a man, the beast handler, “seems any different from the man who believes it is wisdom to have figured out the anger and pleasures – whether in painting, music, or, *particularly, in politics (eite dê en politikê)* – of the multifarious many who assemble” (493d).³²⁹ Politics is here said to be particularly susceptible to the power dynamics of pleasures and angers.

Recent contributions show that the Athenian political institutions, practices, and legislation had a strong consensus drive. It seems the *Republic* has in common with proponents of deliberative democracy the notion that consensus is a good thing. This value it shared with the general Athenian audience.³³⁰ After all, as several scholars have pointed out, the political project of the Kallipolis is, whatever else it might be, one of unity, and, we might add,

³²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 3.

³²⁹ My Italics. The interpretation depends on the force attributed to the *dê*, but I think this gives cause to interpret politics as being distinguished from other kinds of social practices. Bloom and Rowe both translate along these lines, while Shorey and Reeve translate “for that matter, politics”. This interpretational disagreement might be, in part, what causes me to take issue with Reeve’s overall interpretation of these passages. See section in this chapter on “A Goat Stag Apology”. Thanks to my colleagues Hallvard Stette and Ekrem Çetinkaya for clarifying input on this. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*. Plato, *The Republic*, ed. Christopher Rowe, Reprint edition (Penguin Classics, 2012). Plato and Paul Shorey, *The Republic* (Andesite Press, 2015). Plato and C. D. C. Reeve, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, 2nd edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1992).

³³⁰ See Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. pp. 99-100. She writes that agreement was a democratic ideal in the 5th century, and a democratic concern: “Kallipolis’ ideal of unity and agreement was not at odds with Greek democracy, for the latter did not have liberal pluralism as its core”.

stability. The difference between the views of the *Republic* and contemporary deliberationists, not to mention a substantial amount of his fellow citizens, is that he disagrees with them on whether democracy is the best way to foster such a consensus.

I argue that Socrates in the *Republic* posits the democratic institutions as a threat to the autonomy of individual reason,³³¹ and that he pinpoints the social aspect of the decision-making procedures of the democratic state as the culprit. This is in part a feature of the democratic institutions and practices themselves. The practice of direct vote provides the opportunity to defer to others. This argument relies on the premise from the *Republic* that one imitates that which one admires but combined with the particular ordering of the soul which places honor, a particularly social concept, in a leading role, which I discussed in chapter 2, this becomes particularly pertinent. Furthermore, the dialogue makes a point, I argue, that the type of decisions that can be made is in part decided by the institutional practices themselves.

This argument relies on contextualizing the argument within the political reality it refers to. For this thesis, this means differentiating between and accounting for the respective roles played by the citizen-body (*dêmos*), the Assembly (*ekklêsia*), the politicians (*rêtores*, *dêmagôgoi*) the council (*boulê*) and the chairs (*proedroi*).³³²

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part one will provide the relevant passages from the dialogue itself and account for my interpretation of them. Part two is a historical contextualization for the claims made in part one, and part three will support my claims and interpretation through analyzing part one in light of part two. The argument presented in this chapter can be summed up as follows: I will proceed by first introducing the relevant passages from the dialogue and the context: Especially the *apologoumenon* of the philosophers (488a-495c) provides essential information along three lines of investigation: i) how important the social relations are to the formation of the soul of the individual and ii) how Socrates here conceives of the relation between the social and the political realm and iii) how the democratic institutions, specifically, generate a particular kind of public decision-making with a particular kind of epistemic vulnerability: That of placing more weight on social relations than truth. This vulnerability is amplified by the democratic ideology itself also teaching its members to admire power over knowledge. This, I argue, is the meaning of the ‘Ship of State’ simile. In these passages, Socrates also distinguishes between ‘public’ and ‘private’ persuasion and claims that the former by far has the greatest effect: But, for the gifted “true”

³³¹ As I will argue, Socrates seems to be skeptical of admitting that there is such a thing as collective reason at all.

³³² Disclaimer: My account of these institutions and practices is limited to the instrumental needs for this thesis’ argument.

philosopher, it is the combination that will turn out to be fatal. The claims that these passages (488a- 495c) in my reading amount to, are the following.

- a) The true philosopher is corrupted by those who want his future power (private settings).³³³
- b) The true philosopher is corrupted by the masses (in public settings).
- c) The masses are self-corrupting.
- d) Demagogues also play a role in corrupting the masses.

These are the claims that I will investigate more closely through a historical-contextual analysis in part two of this chapter. The historical contextualization has the following structure: I will first account for the decision-making procedures in the *ekklêsia*, included the *boulê*, where the demos gathered to vote on issues of politics. This invokes the question of what we should in this context understand by the term demos, and how it is related to the *politeia* and the *plêthos*, the multitude. Next, I account for how the decision-making procedures in the assembly can be interpreted as having a strong drive towards consensus.

This brings me to the third part of this chapter: Drawing on Mirko Canevaro's analysis of the Assembly as an institution with certain consensus-producing features, I will illuminate the *Republic's* notion of decision-making process in my reading of the prism-passage in which the demos is likened to a beast. But this passage might also create a puzzle regarding the roles of the politicians. Why does Socrates seem to think they are blameworthy if it is the case that they cannot teach or lead the demos at all? The role of the politicians must be clarified. Should we regard the politicians as an interest group or were the Athenians similar enough to qualify as a group? I will suggest that both interpretations are correct, depending on the type of decisions in question, and that it is in the former cases that the politicians can be said to have the most influence and cause factions.

A Goat-Stag Apology: Why Philosophers are Useless or Vicious

During the course of Book V, Socrates has launched what has been called the *Republic's* most radical political idea,³³⁴ that either the philosophers must become kings, or the kings must become philosophers (473d). Adeimantus interrupts what has until now been a discussion between Socrates and Glaucon

³³³ Meaning that those who see a promising young man would flatter him, in the hopes of reaping the benefits of his good graces later, when he is in power, thus making him vain and conceited and less inclined to improve himself.

³³⁴ Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*. p.110.

with the charge that, empirically speaking, the philosophers are either queer or downright vicious, and even if some are decent, they all have in common that they are “useless to cities” (487b-d). Socrates, surprisingly, replies that he thinks that what Adeimantus is saying is true, but that he will make an apology on behalf of these men.³³⁵ This apology will reveal to us how Socrates in the *Republic* connects the political institutions of Athens to the corruption of individual citizens. Further, in my reading, it provides the grounds for identifying group decision-making as a potential threat to good (rational) decision-making in the argument of the *Republic*. This threat is actualized in democratic institutions for decision-making and by democratic ideology,³³⁶ and relates specifically to a concern with our ability to judge others: I claim that the ‘Ship of State’ simile shows that Socrates sees democratic values and practices as teaching the judgement of others by faulty standards, and that this has repercussions for how we should conceive of group decision-making.

Socrates’ defense against the accusations voiced by Adeimantus is twofold and concerns first, the true philosophers, and second the ‘false suitors’ those unworthy lovers who give philosophy a bad name. What will concern us here is mainly the first line of defense, the argument pertaining to the true philosophers (488a-495c). This argument has two lines of reasoning, one accounting for the perceived uselessness of the true philosophers, and the second explaining why and how the true philosophers are corrupted into “absolute viciousness” (487d). By way of explanation, Socrates says he will put together a defense (*apologoumenon*) from many sources, “like the mixtures painters do when they make a goat-stag” (488a). Socrates provides an image, an *icon*, of a ship at sea. This simile shows that like a crew of sailors who does not recognize the knowledge required to steer a ship simply because they themselves lack it, so the city of Athens does not recognize the use of a philosopher. Instead, they think that the skill that grants command of the ship is a matter of being clever at finding out how to *acquire* the rule. The relevant passage is this:

Though the shipowner (*nauklêron*) is bigger (*megéthei*) and stronger than everyone else on board, but he’s hard of hearing, a bit short-sighted, and his knowledge of seafaring is equally deficient. The sailors are quarrelling with one another about steering the ship (*tês kubernêseôs*), each of them thinking that he should be the captain, even though he’s never learned the art of navigation, cannot point to anyone who taught it to him, or to a time when he learned it. Indeed, they claim that it isn’t teachable and are ready to cut to

³³⁵ We should interpret this as being an apology for himself as well then, since the views recited by Adeimantus are what Socrates claims to be the real cause of the indictment that leads to his death (*Apol.* 24b). See also Bloom, “Interpretive Essay.” p. 307

³³⁶ I do not think there are grounds in the text for claiming that all group-decisions are worse than all individual decisions, but I think there are grounds for the weaker claim that democratic collective decision-making activates and systematizes a potential danger for all group decision-making.

pieces anyone who says that it is. They're always crowding around the shipowner, begging him and doing everything possible to get him to turn the rudder over to them. And sometimes, if they don't succeed in persuading him, they execute the ones who do succeed or throw them overboard, and then, having stupefied their noble (*gennaion*) shipowner with drugs, wine, or in some other way, they rule the ship, using up what's in it and sailing while drinking and feasting, in the way that people like that are prone to do. Moreover, they call the person who is clever at persuading or forcing the shipowner to let them rule a "navigator," a "captain," and "one who knows ships," and dismiss anyone else as useless. They don't understand that a true steersman (*tou alêthinou kubernêtou*) 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. And they don't believe there is any craft that would enable him to determine how he should steer the ship, whether the others want him to or not, or any possibility of mastering this alleged craft or of practicing it at the same time as the craft of navigation. Don't you think that the true captain will be called a real stargazer, a babbler, and a good-for-nothing by the voyagers (*tôn plôtêrôn*) in ships governed this way? (480b-489a) ³³⁷

The meaning of this simile is contested. While commentators are unanimous in seeing the simile as an analogy to Athens, what are the identities of "our current political rulers" and of the "shipowner"? Socrates provides for us only a partial explanation: The ship is a city, the shipowner is "our current political rulers" and the true steersman is the true philosopher.³³⁸ While John Adams and more recently, David Keyt, have argued that the shipowner must be the demos, C. D. C. Reeve argues that the shipowner is the true, but corrupted philosophical nature.³³⁹ Given that Reeve presents a direct challenge to the reading I am proposing, let us look at his reasons in order to see if they, in the end, have any bearings on my interpretation of this simile and the passages that surrounds it. Reeve grounds his interpretation in that the young man with a philosophical nature, but without a philosophical education, is said to be noble (*gennaios*) and tall (*me gas*) (594a) – the same nouns used to describe the shipowner in the simile (*gennaios, megêthei*) (588a). Further, Reeve places much weight on Socrates' statement that he will relate what philosophers experience "in relation to cities," unspecified, not Athens in particular. Further, he thinks that the "huge, strong beast" that is interpreted by Adams (and Keyt) to fit the big, strong shipowner is "any gathering of a mass of people in public" whether in assemblies, courts, theatres, or army camps.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ This translation draws on Keyt's and G. M. A. Grube, rev. C. D. C. Reeve. David Keyt, "Plato and the Ship of State.," Plato, Cooper, and Hutchinson, *Complete Works*.

³³⁸ David Keyt, "Plato and the Ship of State." p. 193.

³³⁹ David Keyt. "Plato and the Ship of State." p. 194.; Plato *The Republic of Plato. Edited with Critical Notes, Commentary and Appendices By James Adam. Second Edition, with an Introduction By D. A. Rees* (Cambridge U.P., 1963). VI, 9. Note 7.; C. D. C. Reeve, "Colloquium 6: Goat-Stags, Philosopher-Kings, and Eudaimonism in the Republic," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 22, no. 1 (2007): 185–219, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134417-90000084>. p.4, 5.

³⁴⁰ Reeve, "Goat-Stags, Philosopher-Kings, and Eudaimonism in the Republic." pp. 2-3.

Reeve overlooks, it seems, that the discussion is launched by determining the precise qualities and natures of the guardians who are to be rulers in the city and that the very first ability they agree on is that they are sharp-sighted (484c- summarized at 487a). Clearly, the ocular reference is metaphorical, and adds to the already established metaphor within the framework of the dialogue.³⁴¹ As we shall see, the demos in the *Republic* is short-sighted in an epistemological sense, and its selective deafness was well-known.³⁴² The argument could also be made that what education can do, is to direct your gaze in the right direction, as in the case of the steersman, towards “the sky and the stars” (488d), not to make ones’ vision keen or blunt.³⁴³ Sharp-sightedness is a natural ability, and besides: The corruption of the philosopher makes him come to be “completely vicious,” not slightly dim (489d). Furthermore, and as already mentioned, Socrates, although he includes “any gathering of a mass of people” in his wording, explicitly says that he has particularly the demos “when they gather as a political assembly” in mind. (493b).³⁴⁴ Going forth, my reading will be based on the shipowner representing the demos. This is an important premise to establish because it also means that Socrates refers not to the demos, but to the demagogues and professional politicians with the phrase “our current political rulers” (*tous nun politikous archontas*) (489c).

The simile is undeniably a harsh one for the political dynamics of Athens. It is with dread that one imagines being among the travelers on such a ship, while it is much less clear that the state of Athens was such a place of dread. But the simile also goes some way towards explaining the uselessness of the decent philosophers: Their worth is simply not recognized in a political culture which thinks that the main qualification of a ruler is that he is able to get into the position of ruling.³⁴⁵ Their perceived uselessness should be blamed on those who see no use for them (489b). This provides the first clue to a central part of the charge against democracy, namely that it teaches the replication of fundamentally flawed attitudes towards its own values.

However, while the above reasoning might provide an explanation for the lack of perceived worth for the philosophical natures, and thus for why they should themselves become vicious, further explanation is needed. Socrates launches a social explanation of the corruption process along two lines: One concerns the masses, and the other concerns the private relations of the potential philosopher. The philosopher embodies the following traits: courage, magnificence, and the facility of learning and memory, and these, along with

³⁴¹ In chapter 1 and 2, I said that the gaze in the *Republic* was a literary device, illustrating in which direction our attention was directed. See “Metaphors of Vision: The Corruptive Gaze” and “Vision and Place in the Story of Leontius”.

³⁴² See the passage on ‘The Roar of the Beast and how to Sooth it’ in this chapter.

³⁴³ See also 529a-b.

³⁴⁴ On this Reeve might simply disagree.

³⁴⁵ One question is how to divide blame for this state of affairs – the *Statesman* too (around 296-299), e.g., provides a story that could be taken to place some of the responsibility for this sorry state of affairs with the philosophers.

beauty, wealth, strength of body, and powerful relatives, are also what brings about his downfall (491d-3). In the present regime, if any such person happens to hit upon the right path of learning, then he might grow to virtue, “but if it isn’t sown, planted, and nourished on what’s suitable, it will come to all the opposite” (492a). Or, Socrates asks, do you too believe, “as do the many (*hoi polloi*), that certain young men are corrupted by sophists, and that there are certain sophists who in a private capacity³⁴⁶ corrupt to an extent worth mentioning?” (492a). Or, Socrates continues, introducing a crucial turn in the argument, isn’t it rather *those who say this* that are the greatest sophists of all: those who “educate most perfectly and who turn out young and old, men and women, just the way they want them to be?”³⁴⁷ (492b). Those who say that some young men are corrupted in private, are in fact the real sophists. In other words: “those who say this”, are “the many”, and so “the many” are the real corrupters.

For now, I will note a distinction between public and private persuasion. Persuasion in a private setting seems to play a secondary role, according to Socrates. Yet, as we shall see, when the public and private persuasion are in agreement with each other, the result is a synergic effect that efficiently corrupts. Adeimantus does not immediately follow this reasoning, but wants to know “when, exactly” they perfectly educate. Socrates answers: When the many gathers together, and they:

[...] sit down in assemblies, courts, theatres, army camps, or any other common meeting of a multitude, and with a great deal of uproar, blame some of the things said or done, and praise others, both in excess, shouting and clapping, and; besides the rocks and the very place surrounding them echo and redouble the uproar of blame and praise. (492a).

In answering Adeimantus question of when the molding and shaping by the *hoi polloi* take place, Socrates answers both the questions of when and how: Whenever the multitude gather together to form a mass, and through the process of expressing likes and dislikes, praise and blame, the *hoi polloi*, the masses, shape the characters both of itself and of each other.

After asserting that it is the many, when gathered together, shouting and clapping, blaming and praising in excess, who truly shapes the citizens, he asks, rhetorically: what kind of private education will hold out for the flood of praise and blame? (492c).³⁴⁸ Surely, if any young man is corrupted, they (the

³⁴⁶ *ιδιωτικούς* refers to individual sophists as opposed to the great sophist of public opinion, Plato in *Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 & 6 translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1969.

³⁴⁷ My Italics.

³⁴⁸ Socrates statements here in effect amount to a *reductio ad absurdum* of this charge, reminding the Athenians that they come together every so often, and they have at their disposal the strongest of remedies, doling out or withholding social esteem, and the possibility for punishment as well. (*Apol.* 25d.) Reeve also holds that we are supposed to be reminded of

many) should be the primary suspect. Especially so, says Socrates, since the “private wage earners”, never educate in anything except “these convictions of the many, which they opine when they gather together (*hotan hathroisthōsin*)” (493a) – and this he calls wisdom. To repeat the relevant lines from the passage in question:

It is as if someone were learning the moods and appetites of a huge strong beast that he’s rearing – how to approach and handle it, when it is most difficult to deal with or most gentle and what makes it so, what sounds it utters in either condition, and what sounds soothe or angers it. Having learned all this [. . .] he calls this knack wisdom [. . .] In truth, he knows nothing about which of these convictions is fine or shameful, good or bad, just or unjust, but he applies all these names in accordance with how the beast reacts – calling what it enjoys good and what angers it bad. (493a-b).

With this, a somewhat surprising picture emerges. As opposed to the standard idea that Socrates charges a handful of sophists with the responsibility for corrupting the young, and that they do this, in part, as teachers in a private setting, Socrates is here saying both that the “many when gathered in a body” are the corrupters, and that the sophists are to blame, *qua* educators: Wouldn’t such a man be out of place as an educator? Socrates asks (493b). Adeimantus confirms, and Socrates goes on to say that like this man is the man who, whatever he produces, whether he displays poetry or a craft, or any “service to the city” (holds public office), adapts and makes the many his master “beyond what is necessary” and is compelled to produce the things these men praise (493c-d).

The *hoi polloi* itself, or the multitude, are what or who shapes and influences each citizen, molding him in its own image, making him like itself. At this we might see the contours of a puzzle: For who constitute the multitude other than precisely those who are said to be influenced by it, the young and old, the men and the women? This puzzle about the self-corrupting crowd and their relationship to the demagogues is one that can only be solved in light of the historical contextualization, and we shall return to it later in this chapter.

Having accounted for the perceived uselessness of the true philosophers, I now turn to Socrates’ second line of defense, concerning the corruption of philosophers. The social corruption of the philosophical nature relates to the innate abilities and dispositions of the philosopher in interplay with his external environment. The potential philosopher, embodying, as we saw above, attractive and admirable traits, catches the eye of those who perceive that he will become powerful in the future, and they try to position themselves so as to benefit from this future power. “They lie at his feet begging and honoring him, taking possession of and flattering beforehand the power that

the *Apology* in these passages, Reeve, “Goat-Stags, Philosopher-Kings, and Eudaimonism in the Republic.” p. 12, although he makes a different use of this connection.

is going to be his” (494c), Socrates says. He elaborates on the imagery in such a way that brings our minds to, perhaps, Alcibiades:³⁴⁹ If he is also from a big city, rich and from a good family in it, he will become full of pretention and empty conceit. Through the wall of so many evils, Socrates goes on, one can only have the faintest hope of coming through by saying such less pleasant things as the truth: that there is no intelligence in him and he can only obtain it by slaving for its acquisition (494d). And, if he should by any chance listen to this and turn towards philosophy, those same flatterers would apprehend that they were losing his comradeship: “Is there any deed they won’t do or any word they won’t say, concerning him, so that he won’t be persuaded”? The same goes for the man who is doing the persuading; they will not stop at anything to make it so that he cannot persuade, and “won’t they organize private plots and public trials?” (494e).

Socrates’ defense speech for the philosophers has left us with the following picture of the corruptive nature of what must be interpreted as a version of a democratic regime: Besides being a decisively *social* process,³⁵⁰ democracy corrupts in the following ways: On the one hand, the masses are self-corrupting. This constitutes a puzzle that will guide my further investigations. On the other hand, the demagogues are given a special kind of responsibility for the political decisions and proceedings of the democracy. This responsibility seems to be limited to, or belong mostly to, the public sphere. It is in their capacity as public persuaders that the politicians have power. This conclusion is based on how Socrates expresses doubts about the force of private persuasion. In order to understand better what Socrates has in mind here, I will in the next sections situate these claims in their historical context.

Collective Decision-Making and Plato’s Masses

Socrates’ apology provides us with interesting material to mine for its contents about the masses and for the *Republic*’s take on the dynamics of Athenian politics. First of all, the question that needs to be answered is how we should understand the *hoi polloi*, the masses. For, in the Platonic corpus, it seems, the masses are treated in two ways: On the one hand, ‘the many’ are referred to in derogative terms, especially regarding their epistemological status and capacity. Secondly, in the *Republic*, the masses are brought to our attention as part of a powerful social dynamics which on the one hand influences the state of the individual’s soul, and on the other hand affects collective decision-making.

³⁴⁹ Reeve also thinks that “Plato seems to have had Alcibiades in mind here”. See *Alc.* 104a-105c, *Symp.* 215d-216d. Reeve “Goat-Stags, Philosopher-Kings, and Eudaimonism in the *Republic*”, p 4, n 5.

³⁵⁰ Which is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the corruptive process the *Republic* points to with regard to political institutions.

Democratic decisions are collective decisions. In this section, I will launch and defend the idea that in the *Republic*, Socrates claims that collective decisions differ in some significant sense from decisions made by an individual. Quantitatively, there is a variety of ways in which one could delineate a mass. The remarks Plato lets this various characters voice with reference to ‘the multitude’ sometimes include women, slaves, and metics, while at other times, as with regard to the political institutions or army camps, it can only refer to the male citizens over a certain age.³⁵¹ The multitude is sometimes inferior solely by virtue of being a multitude, like in this following quote:

The phrase ‘stronger than himself’ is used when that which is better by nature is master over that which is worse [. . .] And when, from bad training or some association, the smaller and better part is mastered by the inferior multitude, then this, as though it were a reproach, is blamed and the man in this condition is called weaker than himself, and licentious (431a).

Although this passage is about the soul, it alludes to the inferior status of the masses as a rhetorical move. Socrates further elaborates on this when he describes this multitude as having many and diverse desires, pleasures, and pains. The diverse desires spring from a diverse population of “children, women, domestics, and those who are called free among the common many” (431b-c). In the *Republic*, it seems that the masses are referred to in two ways. On the one hand, Socrates seems to describe the *hoi polloi* as the multitude that encompasses all citizens, including women and children, who must be said to be on the outside of the institutions of democratic decision-making. On the other hand, he ties these multitudes to decision-making in the city through the city-soul analogy and ruling/mastery as in the above quote (431a).

The explanation for this seeming mishmash is perhaps that Plato does not distinguish quite clearly between an *oikos*, and its decision-making representatives – in all cases the men of the household. Despite this arrangement, the ancient Greeks suffered no illusions about women’s agency in general, and the influence other members of the household could execute on the designated voters is thematized in Plato through, for instance Socrates’ remarks on Aspasia and Pericles, (*Menex.* 235e) and not least with in the *Republic* itself, as noted in chapter 3.³⁵²

Recent research points in the direction that strong social networks linked the adult male citizens to each other, but also to women, slaves, and metics,

³⁵¹ Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Blackwell Publishers, 1991)

<<http://libgen.rs/book/index.php?md5=BDC86C92285D612B38B45F1469E1684B>> [accessed 2 October 2020]. p. 87, 115. For a discussion about the citizenship criteria, see John K. Davies, “Athenian Citizenship: The Descent Group and the Alternatives,” *The Classical Journal* 73, no. 2 (1977): 105–21. p. 89.

³⁵² See “Polis: *oikos*, *politeia* and *koinônia*”, chapter 3.

as well as other actors within the state.³⁵³ So even though the direct decision-making was made by men of a certain age with citizen-rights, it is not unlikely that they would have been seen as representatives for their households, as they were representatives of their *demes* when elections for the *boulé* were held.³⁵⁴ The presumed failure to distinguish clearly between the decision-making masses of the Assembly and the ‘people of Athens’ may not be a failure after all, but may rather reflect that these groups were not always thought by the Athenians to be clearly distinct. For the purposes of this thesis, this means that I will assume that what Socrates says of the masses will hold true of the *demos* as well. This is further supported by Socrates’ mention of politics as particularly susceptible to the dynamic that is said to be true of the masses (493d).³⁵⁵

A further issue worth remarking upon in connection with the masses, is that the mentions of the masses are often derogatory in nature. In the *Republic*, we find several passages where the ‘common many’ (*hoi polloi*) are said to be mistaken about concepts such as ‘justice’ or the ‘truth of being’. Consider the following selection: In the discussion with Polemarchus, we are told that the many are mistaken in their judgement about justice (334e), and likewise, they [mistakenly] believe that justice belongs, not to the fairest class of the things that are, but among the toilsome things one must practice for the look of the thing (358a). Towards the end of Book V, Socrates and Glaucon identify the majority’s views on beauty and “such things”, with that of opinion, lodged in between ignorance and knowledge, and in-between being and non-being (479 d). We are also told, supporting my above analysis of *akrasia*, that the multitude falsely believe that pleasure and the ‘good’ is the same thing. (505b).

Not all references to the many are of a derogatory nature, to be sure – some are neutral in kind – but the overall picture that emerges from the various passages where the *hoi polloi* is made subject is doubtless a negative one, especially when it comes to knowledge. However, we should also note that of the laboring classes from which came the majority of the *demos*’ members, Socrates states that “their souls are cramped and spoiled by the mechanical nature of their work, in just the way that their bodies are mutilated by their crafts and labors” (495d-e). In the same way that we could find cause for saying that *The Republic* ties the inferiority of women to their material conditions and position in life, the laborers’ insufficient knowledge, or even

³⁵³ Federica Carugati and Barry R. Weingast, “Rethinking Mass and Elite: Decision-Making in the Athenian Law-Courts,” *Working Paper Series*, No. 501 (December 8, 2016), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2881560>. This would presumably also entail that the Greek democracy had representative elements, elements that the Athenians at least were self-conscious about, pp.13-14

³⁵⁴ Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), <http://libgen.rs/book/index.php?md5=BDC86C92285D612B38B45F1469E1684B>. p. 102

³⁵⁵ My Italics.

insufficient capacity for knowledge, can also be interpreted as a result of the circumstances they are in. This allows me to conclude that while there is undeniably an elitist component to the *Republic*'s treatment of "the many", as far as explanations go, contempt cannot fully account for the role of the masses in the *Republic* on decision-making.

From this vantage point, I turn again to the prism-passage about the masses-as-a-beast, in which the sophist is said to teach only "the convictions the majority express when they are gathered together."³⁵⁶ From this we see that in the masses, some opinions preponderate, and they seem to belong to the mass *qua* mass.³⁵⁷ People, Socrates seems to say, behave differently as part of a crowd than they do as private individuals.³⁵⁸ The opinion of the crowds, "when gathered together", at least potentially differs from the opinion they each hold as individuals. Further, the masses, when gathered together, express these convictions, these opinions, that they hold *qua* mass, and this they might do *insofar* as they are a mass. It is only when the multitude is gathered together that they make out this great beast which moves in certain ways and utter certain sounds under certain conditions.

In order to understand what Socrates may have meant by the "convictions the many express when they are gathered together," and the implications of this statement, it is necessary to further investigate the context within which the statement is made. It is with an eye to this that I will in the following investigate the Athenian political institutions.

"I Contain Multitudes": Who Gathered, When and How?

The Athenian masses gathered together astonishingly often and in a variety of ways: In fact, when adding up the different occasions the Greeks found for getting together, one can get the impression that they did nothing but gather in various mass-constellations. Positive evidence has been found for 120 festival days of the year.³⁵⁹ As the democratic institutions of Athens are by far the most central to this thesis, I will focus mainly on the assembly (*ekklesia*) and the council (*boulê*), while the courts will be only briefly implicated.

³⁵⁶ This criticism would be all the stancher considering the idea that it belonged to the domain of the true statesman to discover the best passions for the citizens to have, and, I assume, how to bring them about. For the first point see p. 293.

³⁵⁷ Keyt also remarks on this, stating that it is a strength of the 'Ship of State' simile that Socrates likens the citizen body to one man, for: "Socrates thinks that when people gather together in a body, the body has properties of its own distinct from the properties of the individuals composing it. David Keyt, "Plato and the Ship of State." p. 194.

³⁵⁸ I have partially argued this in relation to the *Apology*. Tvedt, "Philosophy, Democracy and Poverty: The Philosopher as Political Agent in Plato's *Apology*."

³⁵⁹ Jon D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975). p.187.

The *ekklêsia* met, according to Aristotle, four times per *prutanis* (five week period), but as Jon D. Mikalson shows, the meetings were in that case very unevenly distributed among the periods.³⁶⁰ What is worth noting, is that the Athenians evidently took care to avoid extensive overlap between assembly-days and festivals, and since there is evidence for 145 attested *ekklêsia* meetings, the number of days on which the Athenians, either all or just the men, gathered together is somewhere around two thirds of the days in a year.³⁶¹ Among these gatherings, the religious festivals typically consisted of sacrifices, a procession and then some contests, either for teams, like the choruses, and/or individuals.³⁶²

The term ‘demos’ was used to indicate ‘every man over twenty with citizen-rights’, a number usually stipulated to be around 30 000, and the decisions of the demos were treated as decisions of the entire Athenian people.³⁶³ In reality, perhaps as few as 6000 citizens were present at any one meeting at the Pnyx, approximately one fifth of all eligible citizens. Some decisions were reached by show of hands, and some by ballot, and some possibly required a presence of no less than 6000 citizens.³⁶⁴ Regarding participation in the demos, the evidence indicates that it is likely that participation in the democratic institutions, that is in the assembly and in the people’s courts, was widespread, represented citizens from the countryside as well as city-residents, and had representation from all economic classes.³⁶⁵ Sometime after the Peloponnesian Wars, pay was introduced to make sure the quorum was reached.³⁶⁶

The assembled Athenians voted on issues presented to them by the *boulê*: the council. How many cases were decided each time would have bound to vary, but M. H. Hansen stipulates 2-3, while later researchers suggest a number quite a lot higher than that: Since the debates only began if someone voted against a proposition from the council, uncontroversial decisions could be made fairly efficiently.³⁶⁷ Furthermore, we should note that the Assembly

³⁶⁰ . Mikalson.,1975 p. 182.

³⁶¹ Jon D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year*.p. 1975, 182.

Exceptions can be found – e.g., some festivals were women-only-events.

³⁶² David M. Pritchard, *Public Spending and Democracy in Classical Athens* (Austin, UNITED STATES: University of Texas Press, 2015), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=3443749>. p. 27 is informative on this as well as on the political discussions about the public-religious budget.

³⁶³ Mogens Herman Hansen, “How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 18, no. 2 (June 5, 1977): 123–37. p 130-1. Some sources say 18. This is of minimal importance for this thesis which does not aim to account for Athenian democracy at large.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ Claire Taylor, “From the Whole Citizen Body? The Sociology of Election and Lot in the Athenian Democracy,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 76, no. 2 (2007): 323–45. p. 340.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ Hansen, “How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?.” p. 123

could not reach a decision on any subject until it had been considered by the council and placed on the Assembly's agenda. Once in the Assembly, any citizen could propose a motion or an amendment; if a new topic emerged during the Assembly's debate, the Assembly could commission the council to produce a *probouleuma* for a later meeting. Only a member of the council could propose a *probouleuma*; a non-member who wanted to raise an item of business would commonly make a formal approach to the council through the *prytaneis*, or else arrange informally for a member to raise his business in the council.

So, as we see from this, the role of the Assembly was predominantly to answer 'yes' or 'no' to suggestions of the council, and any citizen initiative would have to be taken up in the council and then presented back to the Assembly in the proper form, unless the council went for an open *probouleuma*, in which case anyone could get up and propose a plan or suggestion. But, as a main rule, the standard procedure was that the council proffered the alternatives, and the Assembly voted on them.

The role of the council requires some further elaboration. Dating back to the reforms of Cleisthenes, each citizen was registered in one of the 139 demes. From these, *demes* were elected, probably, or else selected in some other way, a fixed number of representatives to the council of 500. Now, how much power the council really held is debated – Ober states that they had power to deal with “sundry matters of politics,”³⁶⁸ while others, like M. H. Hansen, argue that they had more extensive legal powers.³⁶⁹ What we do know at least, is that the council's work involved the preparation of the agenda for each meeting in the Assembly, which in turn was called by the *prytaneis*, a 50 men strong sub-division of the council.³⁷⁰

The council itself should, ideally, not be something set apart from the Assembly. Ideally speaking, the men of Athens were all free and equal, and they did take turns on the council, working from the assumption that if the one who rules today is ruled in turn tomorrow, that would provide an equal standing in relation to power. But the council members themselves were perhaps not free of other influences entirely. Acting as a council-member was a paid position, but the council placed great demands on the time of its members; they met almost every day. As a result, wealthy citizens spent more than their proportional share of the time serving in the *boulê*.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens.*, p. 71.

³⁶⁹ It seems the powers of the council changed during Plato's lifetime, and it is unclear which period the *Republic* refers to, but I will leave that detail for now.

³⁷⁰ Mirko Canevaro, 'Democratic Deliberation in the Athenian Assembly', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 74th year.2 (2019), 337–81 <https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_ANNA_742_0337--democratic-deliberation-in-the-athenian.htm> [accessed 25 September 2020]., p 6.

³⁷¹ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*, p. 71

If we construe politics as a place where opposing interests are fought out, which I argue is the case in the *Republic*,³⁷² and, given that financial standing is generally agreed upon as a group-interest, this means that as an interest group, wealthy citizens had a slight advantage by holding the power of the initiative.³⁷³ On this account, two different interpretations of the power dynamics of the Athenian democracy are possible: If the council is construed as part of the *demos* itself, then we should say that the rulers, that is, the people, reply ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to their own suggestions. If we on the other hand construe the council as, in a minimal sense, a ruling group, or at least a powerful interest group, then there is a slight bias towards a top-down process. But new evidence indicates that of participation was not as limited as previously thought.³⁷⁴ M.H. Hansen shows that a small number of non-professional citizens were active in proposing legislation, and Taylor further shows that there was no city-bias to who held elective offices.³⁷⁵ These democratizing features should not be overstated, though. After all, Carugati and Weingast can only conclude that “proposers of laws and decrees do not belong *solely* to the Athenian elite.”³⁷⁶

More interesting for my purposes is perhaps their analysis of how the institutional design of the law courts and the “procedural constrains” put in place by the *graphê paranomon* led legislation to gravitate toward the preferences of the *median voter*, as well as encouraging innovation.³⁷⁷ But the institutions such as the *graphê paranomon* also made ‘counseling the *demos*’ a risky endeavor. The rhetor addressing the *demos* was at the mercy of the *demos*’ masses in more ways than one, not least because of the considerable risks involved with being a really successful politician. This might be the reason why so few Athenians in practice executed their right to *parrhêsia*, free speech.³⁷⁸

³⁷² And in Aristotle, Book II of the *Politics*.

³⁷³ Taylor finds that the elected offices were held predominantly by wealth elites from the *demes* closest to the city, but that the lack of corruption attested in the sources in relation to these offices implies that they were not highly sought after. Claire Taylor, ‘From the Whole Citizen Body? The Sociology of Election and Lot in the Athenian Democracy’, *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, 76.2 (2007), 323–45 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25068022>> [accessed 23 September 2020]. pp. 339-40.

³⁷⁴ Carugati and Weingast, “Rethinking Mass and Elite: Decision-Making in the Athenian Law-Courts.” p.163, building on Taylor, “From the Whole Citizen Body?”.

³⁷⁵ Taylor, “From the Whole Citizen Body?”; Mogens Herman Hansen, ‘The Number of Rhetores in the Athenian Ecclesia, 355-322 B.C.’, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 25.2 (1984), 123–55 <<https://grbs.library.duke.edu/article/view/5591>> [accessed 23 September 2020].

³⁷⁶ Carugati and Weingast, “Rethinking Mass and Elite: Decision-Making in the Athenian Law-Courts.” p 159. My italics.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p 177.

³⁷⁸ An arguable truth. See Mogens Herman Hansen, “The Number of Rhetores in the Athenian Ecclesia, 355-322 B.C.,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 25,no.2 (1984): 123–55. who stipulates that while the number of decree-proposers in a given period (355-322 in this case) could have been between 700-1400, those who regularly addressed the *demos* and could be

The nature of the Athenian decision-making practices has long since been determined to be a majority rule, by such authoritative figures as M. H. Hansen, Balot, and Ober.³⁷⁹ Against this assumption, Canevaro in a recent paper argues that new evidence suggests that the decision-making processes in the Assembly was driven by consensus-rule, and not simple aggregation. This matters for the purposes of this thesis for the reason that the *Republic's* argument is predicated on a conception of Athenian democracy, and as a result, the critique of democracy often has been interpreted as a warning against mob-rule. This notion fits well with the idea of the *Republic's* critique as primarily epistemic, and Plato's motives as elitist, but if Canevaro is right, the picture that emerges from Book VI, in my view, looks quite different: A consensus-culture would fit my interpretation of the masses-as-a-beast-passage as being a point about group-decision-making.

In the following, I will first account for Canevaros' analysis before I go on to show that close reading of certain passages of the *Republic*, in particular, the ones concerned with the corruption of the true philosophers, points to two issues regarding group decision-making: That of group radicalization and the problem of simultaneous voting.

Deliberation in the Assembly: Towards a Consensus

By stressing certain often overlooked features of the decision-making process in the Assembly, Canevaro is able to argue that the process in the Assembly was a deliberative one, and that the Assembly procedures were driven by incentives toward consensus. Particularly the role played by the *proedroi* in the proceedings supports his argument.

As mentioned, all suggestions presented to the Assembly were posed in the form of a preliminary, decree, a *probouleuma*. This *probouleuma* was either open or closed. In the first case, the council did not suggest a decision, while in the case of a closed one they did have a suggestion, and in these cases, the closed *probouleuma* was put to the vote immediately after the demos had been seated and called to order, by show of hand. If merely a single vote were cast against the preliminary and pre-discussed decree suggested by the council, a debate would be opened on the issue. Once the debates commenced, the proceedings were in the hands of the facilitators, the *proedroi*. The *proedroi* had extensive powers during the proceedings, and they were often named in the decrees should anyone wish to claim misconduct on behalf of these public officials. Their powers included making decisions about when to close a

regarded as professional rethores he stipulates as low as 10-20 individuals. p. 151. See Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p.108 for a slightly more liberal estimate.

³⁷⁹ Balot, *Greek Political Thought*. p 55; Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*. p.147.

debate and when to put a matter to the vote. They also had, Canevaro states, “ample discretion” in deciding which suggestions (amendments to the *probouleuma* in most cases, or formulations of a decision on an open *probouleuma*) should be put to the vote, and which suggestions should not be put to the vote at all. There were no upper limits to the length of a debate, the number of speakers or the numbers of suggestion. But the *proedroi* had the powers to determine which of these would be put to the vote by a show of hands, first the ‘ayes’, then the ‘nay’s’. The intention behind these procedural niceties was, according to Canevaro, to steer the demos towards a consensus decision.

Two further features of the Assembly dealings supported deliberations towards consensus, he continues. One, the possibility of suggesting amendments to the councils’ proposal, to be approved with, or instead of, the initial proposal. Two, that any citizen at any time could call a *graphê paranomon*, a charge of an illegal proposal which would put debate to a halt until the matter had been resolved by the law courts – something that needed to be avoided because of the significant disadvantages this presented to the individual. The result of these features, Canevaro writes, was that:

only by aiming for consensual agreement proposers, assembly-goers, speakers and proedroi could really hope for a proposal to be enacted on the spot and smoothly implemented. The wider the overall support gathered around a proposal, the lower the chance that someone would find the nerve to bring a *graphê paranomon* against what was being agreed.³⁸⁰

Canevaro highlights the consensus-function of the practices in the Assembly. Reviewing the limited sample material of Assembly outcomes, Canevaro finds support for his view: With the notable exception of the Mytilenean debate, the votes that we know of from the literature is very often unanimous or almost unanimous.³⁸¹

The drive towards a consensus should sound somewhat familiar for readers of Plato. The ‘great beast’ of the demos is, in the analogy, portrayed as acting as one being, with properties ascribed to it, like ‘moods,’ ‘appetites,’ and so forth. It is capable of enjoyment of certain things, while being angered at others. The prod towards consensus also placed some restraints on the speaker, just as the *Republic* can be taken to indicate: Demosthenes reportedly refrained from submitting a decree to the *proedroi* because the debate was not going in that direction (*Aisch.*1.35)³⁸². Integral to Demosthenes’ insight would be the practice of *thorubos*.

³⁸⁰ Canevaro “Democratic Deliberation in the Athenian Assembly.” p. 9.

³⁸¹ From Thucydides, *Thuc.* 3.49.1.

³⁸² See Judith Tacon for an argument that the *thorubos* might have had a more positive standing in the democracy. Judith Tacon, “Ecclesiastic ‘Thorubos’: Interventions, Interruptions, and Popular Involvement in the Athenian Assembly,” *Greece & Rome* 48, no. 2 (2001): 173–92.

The Roar of the Beast and How to Soothe it

The Athenians' habit of expressing their opinions through catcalls and heckling is something which Plato has Socrates address in the *Apology*: On trial for his life, accused of corrupting the young, Socrates resorts to a vicious attack on the men of Athens, accusing them of putting their wealth and their own concerns before the good of the city. Several times, Socrates must ask them to "please, do not make a disturbance (*thorubos*)" (21a).³⁸³ By this we understand that a reciprocal communication was going on. Aischines reports of a practice of such hecklers being paid to shout out against specific speakers, or points, and although such a practice was prohibited, if Aischines is to be believed, it still took place.³⁸⁴

Ober writes of the phenomenon;

We must also keep in mind that the communication (in the Assembly) was always reciprocal. The speaker obviously communicated messages to his audience, but the audience communicated to the speaker as well: immediately through direct verbal intervention (e.g., catcalls) and nonverbal signals (e.g., restlessness), at a short remove through voting, and at a greater remove through their subsequent behavior toward the speaker.³⁸⁵

The real-time feedback from the demos gave the speakers the possibility of adjusting their speeches as they went along and change their speech to one that was more likely to have a favorable outcome. The practice would have allowed the rhetors to, with practice, judge the various possible scenarios and estimate outcomes, so that the skill of the politician was to a large part one of correctly estimating the opinions or moods that preponderated in the crowd on a given issue.

Because of this *ad hoc* nature of the Assembly-speeches, the material is limited, but Demosthenes' *prooimia*, or 'Prologues', provide us with valuable insight into the politician's work. The *prooimia* left behind are 56 (55) short introductions to be used in speeches, depending on the situation and the aim. Several of the *prooimia* (3, 4, 5, 47) implore the demos to listen quietly, as in the following excerpt from *prooimia* 4:

[...] it is right to hear everything that is said since it is in your hands to choose whatever you wish. For it often happens that the same man speaks incorrectly

³⁸³ The plea is repeated at 17d, 20e, 21, a, 27b, 30c, punctuating and interrupting Socrates' speech and included often enough to be worthy of our attention.

³⁸⁴ Aischines, 1, 19-20. Ian Worthington states to the contrary that the laws quoted in Aischines' speech are "generally regarded as forgeries" but gives no further information on this point. Ian Worthington, "Oral Performance in the Athenian Assembly and the Demosthenic Proemia," *Oral Performance and Its Context*, January 1, 2004, 129-43, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047412601_010. 129-43, on p. 132

³⁸⁵ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 105.

about one thing but not about another; thus, by shouting him down when you are in a bad temper you may lose many beneficial ideas, but by listening in good order and quietly, you will do everything that is proper [...].³⁸⁶

Several more of the same kind can be found, for different occasions: One implores the demos to listen to *all* advisors equally (26), one is an encouragement to prove wrong the critics who say they only approve of speeches that gratify them (5), and one tells the demos to listen despite a lengthy speech (56). The Assembly was evidently known to grow restless and to decide and execute its decisions with expediency.³⁸⁷ Ian Worthington suggests that the audience heckled and shouted down audiences as much for a lackluster performance as for a speech it disagreed with, but he also states that Demosthenes' preludes show "the extent to which good speakers had to take verbal audience response into account."³⁸⁸ Canevaro interprets the *prooimia* as manuals for how to start a speech, anticipating almost any possible situation, in some cases speaking to a well-disposed audience, but

[. . .] in others the speaker wants to introduce unwelcome considerations; sometimes he is speaking after others in support of what some have said, or against what others have said; sometimes (often) he is speaking against a forming consensus; occasionally he is speaking first.³⁸⁹

As we see, the audience's response was a factor, and learning the moods and tempers of the great beast – that is, predicting outcomes – was a considerable part of the skills of a rhetor.

The practice of *thorubos* was not limited to the Assembly: According to the *Republic*, it went on wherever the Athenians gathered. But as already mentioned, the Assembly is of particular interest because here, the beast's roars of pleasure and displeasure came in response to persuasive speeches. We might recall Protagoras', or rather Socrates-as-Protagoras', claim in the *Theaetetus* that he could judge the future outcome of political cases (278e-279a). We may now see quite clearly what was meant by this. The kind of skill Protagoras must have had in mind is, in my view, something like this: to know the behavior and moods of the beast from its 'sounds' and what words would soothe it and what would anger it. In the *Republic*, Socrates quickly turns our focus from the beast of the demos to the ones who make their livelihood as its handler: "And this 'knack' he calls wisdom, and, organizing it as an art, he turns to teaching" (493c). Socrates is here alerting us to the dialectical point that contrary to what the etymology might imply, the dynamics between a perceived *dêmagôgoi* and the *dêmos* is not the one

³⁸⁶ Worthington, "Oral Performance in the Athenian Assembly and the Demosthenic Proemia." p. 134, Canevaro. p. 13, brought this paper to my attention.

³⁸⁷ Worthington. p. 137.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 138.

³⁸⁹ Canevaro, "Democratic Deliberation in the Athenian Assembly." p. 14.

between a leader and a follower: Through the beast/handler analogy it becomes clear to the reader of the *Republic* that it is hard say who is leading whom: When dealing with a beast, one is not free to do what one likes. Each and every action is already determined by what one has learned are the beast's likely responses. Like the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus demonstrated in Book I,³⁹⁰ and as was made explicit through Glaucon's characterization of them as a snake and its charmer, the demos places constraints on the politician. Both in choosing his strategy beforehand, and in real-time during an assembly-meeting, the successful politician would have to adapt his views to fit the opinions that the multitude already held in order to remain successful, or to "regurgitate the demos' opinions back to it."³⁹¹ This form of manipulation of the crowds was seen as an important part of a young man's education if he had ambitions to council the demos. Combined with the practices of personal liability, as the *graphé paranomon*, the opinions that the many held "when gathered together" placed considerable constraints on what the politician could and should say. This dialectical point is, I think, original and unique to Plato among the Greeks. Furthermore, it shows that The *Republic* is conscious of social-and group dynamics as important driving forces in the Athenian decision-making processes, and as such, an important feature informing its critique of democracy.³⁹²

While it is not so difficult to see that Socrates in these passages is directing a critique of such practices of persuasive oratory as the ones we find exemplified in Demosthenes' *prooimia*, it is not entirely clear why these practices would necessarily be *bad*: Reviewing the materials and arguments from the vantage point of deliberative democracy would perhaps rather give cause for optimism on behalf of ancient Athens: Consensus is a thing to strive for insofar as the legitimacy of a democratic decision hinges on how widely accepted it is, that is, to which extent it represents the all-things-considered judgement of the people. But there are also problems with such a consensus-culture – problems which I claim that I claim that the *Republic* anticipates, and which can be drawn from its dialogue, and which I furthermore argue are related to the group dynamics a demos inevitably must have been prone to. In the following sections, I will look into issues related to group decision-making as I have found them addressed in the *Republic*.

³⁹⁰ See chapter 1, "Thieves of Justice: Knowledge of self, Knowledge of Others as Success Criteria for Political Actors".

³⁹¹ Balot uses this phrase, albeit about the *Gorgias*. Balot, "Socratic Courage and Athenian Democracy," p. 65. Referencing *Gorgias*, e.g., 481d-e.

³⁹² I think the argument can be made that the *Greeks* were very conscious of these dynamics, but I will not make it my task to argue that point here. I refer to Ober's analysis of the Persian Debate in Herodotus, Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*.p.3.14, "Choosing a constitution for Persia". The practice of paid hecklers also indicates such a conscience.

Group Radicalization – The Demos as Group

Throughout the *Republic*, Socrates warns against ‘factions’ (*stasis*) in the city, a politically charged term.³⁹³ The aim of the city state is one of unity and harmony, and in identifying this political aim, he is in consensus with his contemporaries.³⁹⁴ At the same time, I have now established that the decision-making culture, of the Assembly at least, was likely a consensus-based one. This perspective makes me able to identify in the *Republic* a consensus-culture, which runs parallel to a claim that democratic institutions foster strife and factions in the city (*stasis*).³⁹⁵

This seems contradictory: How can consensus foster strife, one might wonder? Consensus seems to be the opposite of internal strife (*stasis*). The answer contains multiple parts: On the one hand it relates directly to the way in which consensus is obtained: A consensus achieved for the right reasons, that is, a reasoned consent to the best argument, is not equal in value to a consensus obtained by appeal to the smallest common denominator, like appetitive desires. A consensus is a form of equilibrium. But an equilibrium does not have to reflect the best possible outcome: As the prisoner’s dilemma shows, it is quite possible to reach an equilibrium where the outcome is suboptimal for everyone.³⁹⁶

Furthermore, we might infer from the *Republic*, that a consensus, when reached by appeal to the lower parts of the soul, to the appetitive and the *thymotic* part of the soul, encourages the kind of decisions which undermine the sustainability of the system in the long run. A decision is the formal way of legitimizing an action. Or, to put it in a way that will, true to the city/soul analogy, correspond to the way the soul reaches decisions by itself, a vote can be seen as a nod of agreement to suggestions made by others. A vote by hand is a visible nod of agreement,³⁹⁷ either confirming and legitimizing for the voter that her decision has the majority on its side, or perhaps the opposite. If unanimous votes were the norm as they seem to have been, given that the debates only began if someone voted against a proposition, then what the demos did agree on must have been consolidating in a powerful way of their shared values and views. As such, the beast-passage in the *Republic* can be taken to imply a consciousness about issues such as group radicalization.

³⁹³ David Keyt, “Plato and the Ship of State.” p. 195. Factions and group interests are made topic in the next chapter and is in Plato especially related to the economic sphere.

³⁹⁴ See Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. pp. 99-100

³⁹⁵ See chapter 3, “*Oikos*: Private Wealth and Hidden Power”.

³⁹⁶ Avinash Dixit and Susan Skeath, *Games of Strategy* (New York, London: W W Norton & Co Inc, 1999). p. 30.

³⁹⁷ See chapter 2, where I determined the action of ‘willing’ as the soul nodding agreement to itself in: “Desire and Motivation: Reason, Thymos, and Appetite”.

As Cass Sunstein tells us, groups often make more radical decisions than what the individual members of the group would do if acting on their own.³⁹⁸ The groups' pre-deliberative tendencies are a reliable predictor for which direction the move towards an extreme (relative to the point of departure) will take.³⁹⁹ What is meant by this is that whatever view or stance preponderates in the group before discussion ensues, deliberations are likely to make the group more firmly committed to these views, or a more extreme version of them.⁴⁰⁰

Whether the demos when gathered in the Assembly could or should be taken to constitute such a group is arguable. On the one hand, the members of the demos were, as a group, "meaningfully pluralistic" as they came from both elite and non-elite segments, they were "representative" of the population as a whole, and they were embedded in social, and "extensive social networks linked adult, male citizens with other citizens and a wealth of other actors (including, slave, *metoikoi*, foreigners, and women)."⁴⁰¹ On the other hand, the citizenry of Athens gave themselves the name *hoi homoioi*, "the equals," in virtue of their equal political rights.⁴⁰² This probably expressed a political ideal, but might it also be the case that the demos could be seen as holding some pre-deliberative opinions in common that could become grounds for group polarization in the relevant sense? *Homonoia* requires a sort of same-mindedness as well as exclusivity,⁴⁰³ and the men of Athens were also equal in a mythological sense. The autochthony-myth told that they were all descendants of the same earth-born Erichthonius and this mythological origin ensures continuity through time and with the source, and further:

It also guarantees the basic concept on which Athenian democracy is built; Athenians are like identical brothers and as such they have identical rights. In other words, the story provides mythological justification for the fundamental principles of the democratic city state, namely the political equality of its citizens and their interest in a stable and unitary society.⁴⁰⁴

The identification of the males with the city state through time and changing generations was justified and explained through the mythological framework of their common origin. Vigdis Songe-Møller argues that the institutions of Athens were politically and socially aimed at preservation and self-identity of the city state, and further that "every citizen was directly dependent upon his

³⁹⁸ Cass R. Sunstein, "The Law of Group Polarization," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 175–95, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9760.00148>. p. 178

³⁹⁹ Sunstein, "The Law of Group Polarization". p. 176.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 176.

⁴⁰¹ Carugati and Weingast, "Rethinking Mass and Elite: Decision-Making in the Athenian Law-Courts". p. 159.

⁴⁰² Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. p. 4.

⁴⁰³ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp. 9-8. Exclusivity in the sense that the notion of citizenship relied on the exclusion of women, slaves, and metics.

⁴⁰⁴ Songe-Møller, *Philosophy Without Women*. p. 5. See also Nicole Loraux on this. Loraux and Zeitlin, *The Children of Athena*. p. 10.

fellow citizens for his primary political identity” from the reforms of Cleisthenes.⁴⁰⁵ So, at least ideologically, the men of Athens were thought to be defined precisely by being like each other. This very idea underpins the radical dispersion of power that the democratic city-state exemplifies.

On the other hand, though, it is possible to say that the Athenian society was one divided by financial class. From the age of Solon, the citizens were divided into four wealth classes, and while the lowest class, the *thêtes*, only had minimal political rights, as Ober has shown, this was a successful strategy for ensuring relative political stability.⁴⁰⁶ The wealth classes were retained throughout the various democratic reforms, and in the 4th century BCE, the wealthiest classes were expected to fund the reestablishment of Athens military might and its democracy.⁴⁰⁷ In this sense, the various classes must be construed as having pluralistic interests. There are also other ways in which inequality could be, and has been, measured: Picking up on J. K. Davies’ seminal work in Athenian wealth research, Geoffrey Kron shows that, although the prosperity of Athens and her inhabitants fluctuated, the majority of Athenians belonged to a financial middle class, and this view is supported by Ober, especially in the late classical era.⁴⁰⁸ Anna Lagia’s nutritional analysis supports the same interpretation: Most Athenians belonged, much of the time, to a relatively prosperous middle class.⁴⁰⁹

Further evidence supports the notion that the demos could be construed as a group, e.g., the number of days that the Athenians spent gathered together outside of the Assembly: The 120 days of festivals come in addition to usual socialization and interaction that come with living in a society. Furthermore, Socrates mentions the army camps, theaters, and courts as places where the mass-dynamics is operative in shaping the individuals’ attitudes. The amount of socialization alone makes for an argument for a certain degree of homogeneity. Add to this that the Athenians shared a strong mytho-poetical inheritance. This too would have a role in furthering a homogenous set of

⁴⁰⁵ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 70. Each citizen was voted in as legitimate citizens (legitimate sons) by their fellow demesmen.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.* p. 63-63

⁴⁰⁷ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. p. 99.

⁴⁰⁸ Geoffrey Kron, “The Distribution of Wealth at Athens in Comparative Perspective,” *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 179 (2011): 129–38. pp.133-4. Josiah Ober, “Inequality in Late-Classical Democratic Athens: Evidence and Models,” in *Democracy and an Open-Economy World Order*, ed. George C. Bitros and Nicholas C. Kyriazis (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 125–46, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52168-8_9.

⁴⁰⁹ Anna Lagia’s dietary analysis pushes back against economic models that suggests that the majority of Athenians lived on, or near, sustenance levels. The dietary models rather show that the majority of the adult population had a diet relatively rich in animal protein, indicating relative prosperity. Lagia, Anna, “Diet and the Polis: An Isotopic Study of Diet in Athens and Laurion during the Classical, Hellenistic, and Imperial Roman Periods,” in *Archaeodiet in the Greek World: Dietary Reconstruction from Stable Isotope Analysis* Eds. Anastasia Papathanasiou, Michael P. Richards, and Sherry C. Fox, 1st ed., vol. 49, Hesperia Supplements (American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2015). p.138.

values and ideas, and a sense of shared identity would “heighten the shift”, towards a more extreme version of pre-deliberative views.⁴¹⁰ It is not unthinkable then, that as a group, the Athenian demos would, in certain cases, have been prone to the dynamics of the inevitable move towards a more extreme version of whatever view, pre-deliberation, was held by the groups’ members at the outset.

In light of the evidence summarized, I suggest the following answer to the question of whether the Athenian demos could have been taken to be a decision-making group, in the relevant sense: In some cases, they would have been considered a group, while in others, they would not. In a fair amount of cases, cases where personal wealth and internal distribution of wealth (as in tax questions), and in a range of other cases that one could imagine pertaining to inter-polis matters or city/countryside dynamic, the Athenian demos, or at least some out-groups of the demos (the very rich and the very poor) can be said to have been meaningfully pluralistic in that they would have had opposing interests.⁴¹¹ But in a great many other cases, cases of foreign politics for example, the majority of Athenians would have been sufficiently homogenous both in terms of income, but also ideologically, to meaningfully be construed as a group. While the “meaningfully pluralistic” kind of decisions seem to have presented themselves as problematic in terms of undermining unity and as evidence of *stasis*, the consensus-decisions might help us understand what kind of dynamics Socrates has in mind when he claims that neither the private nor the public sophists can teach anything but what the demos already believes (493a). The latter type of decisions might also explain what is meant by the “madness of the many” (496c).

Can the Demos Think? The Agency of Groups

That Plato’s Socrates is willing to ascribe certain properties to the Assembly as a group, gives rise to the further question regarding the extent to which the demos can be said to have agency. When Socrates says that the ‘convictions of the many’, which the demos ‘opine’ when they are gathered together, there is some ambiguity in whether the demos’ opinions belong to it, *qua* demos, or whether what is pointed to is the aggregated opinions of the individual members of it. This is not so strange, because it would be very difficult to distinguish between them in any exact way. But at one point, he comes very close to attributing agency to the mass: When he asserts that it is impossible that “a multitude” (*plêthos*, perhaps best translated as ‘the multitude’) “be

⁴¹⁰ Sunstein, “The Law of Group Polarization.” p. 180.

⁴¹¹ Of course, this does not go to say that groups cannot be pluralistic, but that in regard to the interest which they are at any one time construed as a group in relation to, they are homogenous within their class.

philosophic” (494a).⁴¹² In other words: The many are not philosophic. This does not seem to be related to the line of reasoning pertaining to the useless nor to the vicious philosophers, but it is nevertheless thrown in, in the middle between the other two lines of reasoning in the ‘Goat-Stag-Apology’: A multitude, *qua* multitude I read, is not philosophic because it cannot accept forms, but only instantiations of a form – the particulars. As a result, when they meet someone who *does* philosophize, they blame him.

Admittedly, the word here is not *demos*, but rather *plêthos*. Yet, although the *plêthos* is wider than the members of the *demos* – it would be used to encompass the non-citizen groups – the *demos* would mostly be compiled of the same members as the *plêthos*, although sometimes and for some purposes the notables would be included in this group.⁴¹³ The text itself is pretty clear in posing the *plêthos* as the subject for the property of non-philosophical-ness and should in this context be taken to mean gatherings of people.

But a further puzzle arises regarding groups: Even if a collective can have agency, it does not necessarily have consciousness.⁴¹⁴ As mentioned, the criteria for rational agency was the ability to have desires and beliefs, and, we might further add for the sake of clarifying how we might construe groups as agents: “a capacity to intervene in the environment on the basis of these states, i.e., to ‘act’ in pursuit of its ‘desires’ in line with its ‘beliefs’.”⁴¹⁵ The *sustêma* of the Assembly must be said to satisfy the rationality-criteria in this sense that as a decision-making body, the *demos* would be capable of action.

Plato’s Socrates seems to be reluctant to granting the masses consciousness *qua* group, and on this he is in line with many contemporary philosophers who will deny that groups can have phenomenal experiences.⁴¹⁶ Plato’s Socrates seems to deny that the relevant groups have the ability to reason and deliberate at all, on the grounds that the ability to differentiate the particulars from the universals, or that the ability to “accept or believe that the fair itself, rather than the many fair things, or that anything itself, *is*, rather than the many particular things” (493e-494a) can belong to a mass.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹² As Bloom does. Plato, *The Republic of Plato*.

⁴¹³ David Keyt, “Plato and the Ship of State.”, referencing Aristotle, *Politics* III.1.1275b7; III.11.1282a27–9, 1282a34–9), p. 194

⁴¹⁴ That groups can have agency is widely accepted, while the view that groups satisfy criteria for phenomenal consciousness is much more disputed.

List, “What Is It Like to Be a Group Agent?”

⁴¹⁵ List, ‘What Is It Like to Be a Group Agent?’, p. 297. See Christian List and Philip Pettit, ‘Group Agency and Supervenience’, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 44.S1 (2006), 85–105 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-6962.2006.tb00032.x>>. pp. 89-90, for the argument for the last criteria.

⁴¹⁶ List, ‘What Is It Like to Be a Group Agent?’

⁴¹⁷ This invokes the question of *why* groups cannot reason. On this the *Republic* is not clear, but I do think the link to the *Symposium* which is inexplicably placed in the middle of the ‘goat-stag-apology’ might indicate that the philosophical ascent detailed in that dialogue could be key in understanding the epistemological limitation of democratic institutions. See

While this is not a criterion for agency, it is very much a criterion for rationality in the *Republic*, without which reason is not able to perform its very own specialized function of recognizing and determining the content of the ‘good’. If this makes Plato’s agent into a moral agent, then what the *plêthos* lacks is precisely this moral agency that would satisfy the account of true actions as actions that are taken with a consideration to an overarching moral good.⁴¹⁸ If we see this point in relation to my analysis in chapter 2, we might say that the group, *qua* group locked on to the particulars, will only, insofar as it engages in rational action, be able to do so by the lucky coincidence of SR3 or AR2. These are the cases in which Reason makes a suggestion and it so happens that Spirit or Appetite’s interests are aligned with what Reason, properly engaged, would have chosen if Reason were in charge.⁴¹⁹ This then, seems to be the answer to this thesis’ initial question of how group-decisions differ from individual decisions: The difference is on the one hand one of potentiality, and on the other hand, it is a qualitative one. If the demos cannot reason, because it cannot comprehend the forms, then it can never aspire to rise above the appetitive or spirited rule – the lower parts of the soul. While this seems to hold true also of many individuals, a single agent at least has the potential to transgress to the level of reason. This option seems to be eliminated for groups, even though it should be emphasized that this does not preclude the possibility of the groups making rational decisions. The important difference seems also here to be for what reasons they do so. As we saw in chapter 2, motives matter.

That Socrates makes the subtle shift in his choice of metaphors from shipowner, a man, to a beast, reflects this: The demos have agency only in the limited sense of animals. On this reasoning it might also be clearer what Socrates means by referring to his apology as a ‘Goat-Stag’. The apology is a composite, fusing together the individual with the masses, the masses with the demos, the demos with the politicians. They are all connected, bound by invisible threads, but separate by nature. The city is a composite, like a goat-stag, or like a ship, consisting of on the one hand, matter, given form and function only in light of a common aim, which is to sail, preferably to some destination, and on the other hand, of individuals, more or less in agreement on what the aim and destination should be. Should they all get derailed or side-tracked by their personal short-term aims, the very concept of the ship seems to lose its meaning and decompose.

also Rosen on this. Stanley Rosen, “The Role of Eros in Plato’s ‘Republic,’” *The Review of Metaphysics* 18, no. 3 (1965): 452–75.

⁴¹⁸ See chapter 2, “Desire and Motivation: Reason, Thymos, and Appetite”, and “A Closer Look at Akrasia”. Also: Frede, *A Free Will*, p. 29.

⁴¹⁹ In denying groups the ability to reason in the strict sense, Socrates is at odds with contemporary social ontology, which is preoccupied with defending group agent’s ability to reason. See e.g. Christian List and Philip Pettit, “The Epistemic Desideratum,” in *Group Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199591565.003.0005>.

We may conclude that while the demos had a certain agency in The *Republic* its lack of insight into the forms *qua* collective, combined with its restless refusal to listen, make for the opposite point to that of Aristotle's careful suggestion that there may be such a thing as "wisdom of crowds".⁴²⁰ Rather, it seems a feature of Plato's crowds that they are irrational in the strict sense which includes moral agency as a necessary feature of rationality.⁴²¹

In the next, and final, section, I will put this conclusion into the context of the statements Socrates has made about the social dimension of the corruption of the individuals. The conclusion about the masses gives rise to a concern about social decision-making as it relates to direct voting.

An Imitation Game: How the *Cheirotonia* Shapes the Preferences of the Individual

In this section, I will argue that the premises that admiration engenders imitation and that the citizens are thought to admire power and wealth before wisdom have consequences for how we should construe the decision-making procedures of the Athenian democracy. As I have shown in the exposition of Book VI, a critical exposition of crowds has made them out to be unphilosophical, self-corrupting, and irrational. Further, they "the many" themselves are the "real sophists" and they corrupt those who are noble through flattering, making them into the kind of men who "do the greatest harm to cities and private men" (495b). In his chain of evidence against the city as the great corrupter, Socrates insists on the connection between admiration and imitation:

No one whose thoughts are truly directed towards the things that are, Adeimantus, has the leisure to look down at human affairs or to be filled with envy and hatred by competing with people. Instead, as he looks at and studies things that are organized and always the same, that neither do injustice to one another nor suffer it, being all in a rational order, he imitates them and tries to become as like them as he can. Or **do you think that someone can consort with things he admires without imitating (*mimeishtai*) them?** -I do not. It's impossible. -Then the philosopher, by consorting with what is ordered and divine and despite all the slanders around that say otherwise, himself becomes as divine and ordered as a human being can (500b-d).

By making explicit a relation between admiration and imitation in the context of mass-decision-making, Socrates brings out a further point that relates particularly to the masses as a decision-making body. In the Assembly, votes

⁴²⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1281a43-5

⁴²¹ As we remember from chapter 2, Plato's agent is a moral agent.

were often made by a show of hand.⁴²² We do not know as much about the procedure of *cheirotomia*, vote by show of hand, as we do about the vote by ballot.⁴²³ While the latter was used in the courts, and for exceptional cases also in the Assembly, the *cheirotomia* was the dominant procedure in the Assembly.⁴²⁴

This we know: The vote proceeded by stages. The demos were asked by the *prodoroi* (from year 380 BCE) to vote either on a single proposal or between two alternatives. In both cases, the ‘ayes’ were counted first, then the ‘nays’.⁴²⁵ How exactly the outcome was decided is more unclear. Canevaro, relying on Xenophon, states that the votes were “assessed, not counted”⁴²⁶, and Hansen, reviewing a broader set of sources, concludes the same. He bases this on the stipulation that the Assembly would sometimes have had 60 votes in one day; it is unreasonable to assume that all votes would have been counted each time, if for no other reason than the share amount of time this would have taken.⁴²⁷ Some problems connected with direct voting should interest us in this regard: First, pairwise voting can violate transitivity. Second, direct voting is non-simultaneous.

The problem, or should we say puzzle, of collective action is one which it should now be clear that the *Republic* is conscious about. Aggregating votes is not, as Social Choice Theory has shown, as straightforward as simply counting a majority: Depending on the number of alternatives one is presented with, one can choose between binary methods for no more than two alternatives, or pairwise, multistage methods for more than two alternatives.⁴²⁸ For the latter alternative, the Condorcet method is perhaps the most well-known. The procedure suggested by Marquis de Condorcet of positing each alternative against each of the others in a series of one-on-one contests has given the winning alternative the name Condorcet-Winner.⁴²⁹ This suggestion followed the insight called the *Condorcet-paradox* which expresses that the order in which alternatives are posed against each other in a binary series of voting rounds can, and will, impact the outcome, and that this violates one of the criteria for rationality, namely that preferences be *transitive*.⁴³⁰ The

⁴²² See e.g., *Cratylus*, 437d.

⁴²³ Hansen, “How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?” p. 123.

⁴²⁴ Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens.*, p. 133.

⁴²⁵ Hansen, ‘How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?’. Earlier quite possibly a board of 5 chosen by lot. p. 124.

⁴²⁶ Canevaro. p. 10, Xen. *Hell.* 1.7.7.

⁴²⁷ Hansen, ‘How Did the Athenian Ecclesia Vote?’, (*Ath. Pol.* 44.3) p. 128-29.

⁴²⁸ Dixit and Skeath, *Games of Strategy.* p. 463

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 463-4.

⁴³⁰ Christian List, ‘Social Choice Theory’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2013 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2013) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/social-choice/>> [accessed 19 October 2020]. That preferences are transitive implies that the ranking of preferences is fixed: If a voter prefers the alternatives A to B, and B to C, we should also assume that they would prefer A to C. Dixit and Skeath. p. 468.

discovery that this is not always the case has led some theorists to discount voting as a means of making rational decisions. The chairs, (*proedroi*), and before them, the board appointed by the council, had considerable discretion in deciding which suggestions were put to the vote when: In some debates this may have had a decisive outcome, whether intended to or not. These kinds of issues, although they are not addressed in detail, are included here to show that institutional procedures of decision-making are agreed upon to have an impact on the kind of decisions that are made by a given body. That *The Republic* formulates a criticism against democracy and democratic practices that anticipates this kind of institutional and procedural concern is, I think, established through the weight he attributed to the dynamics between the demos and the politicians. In the above, I have suggested that the *Republic* strongly indicates that these two entities are locked in an interdependent relationship, in which the demos' moods dictate the politicians' aims.

The other concern relates to the junction between knowledge and the social realm and involves first, the place of emotions within decision-making and second, that of deference to experts when in a situation of direct-voting.

Emotions, which the assembled demos expressed, are not only features of individual decision-making, but as Jon Elster has argued, they play an important role in collective action as well. He assesses four different motivations that he has found to play some role in his case study: enthusiasm, fear, self-interest, and spite. Distinguishing fear of harm which belongs to a sort of self-interest from 'visceral fear' he claims that the latter, like other strong emotions "can undermine the rational pursuit of self-interest", by inducing a sense of urgency (a preference for early action over delayed action), impatience (a preference for early rewards rather than later rewards), and biased beliefs.⁴³¹ This fits well with what I mentioned briefly in chapter 2 the *Protagoras*: In the *Protagoras*, the right measurement of pleasures and pains would involve 1) an acknowledgment that pleasures that in consequence leads to a pain that is greater in size than the size of the pleasure experienced is not a pleasure at all, and vice versa for pains, and 2) an ability to rightly measure the pains and pleasures in terms of size and adjusting for the time-horizon. In other words, it is a feature of reason to be able to measure correctly between current actions and future rewards.⁴³² If what 'rules in a man' is rather fear or desires, then I showed that this belonged to the irrational part (SR or AR). Since direct voting is a visible expression of agreement or disagreement, the fear of others and their judgements, even in the milder sense of 'non-visceral-fear' but simply construed as 'not in my immediate self-interest'

⁴³¹ Jon Elster, 'The Night of August 4, 1789. A Study of Social Interaction in Collective Decision-Making', *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales*, 45.136 (2007), 71–94 <www.jstor.org/stable/40370632> [accessed 22 December 2019]., p.85.

⁴³² See note on *Protagoras* in chapter 2.

becomes an issue. Likewise, the desire to be esteemed may influence decisions.

Elster points out that open, simultaneous voting is not precisely simultaneous. There is a second or two in which to navigate, in which one might check and see what others do and adjust one's own course accordingly. We may easily construct examples which show how this process is vulnerable to be overshadowed by social and 'private' concerns: Imagine being under contractual negotiations with someone who you happen to know has a strong view against outcome x in the assembly. Further, imagine that you at the time of the vote notice him standing a little way back from you. Or, imagine a young man, attending the Assembly, perhaps for the first time. Your older relatives are there, ones that you have been taught to respect and honor. It would not be unreasonable to assume that such a young person would glance over at his father, or uncle, and that the vote he casts would not differ much from theirs, perhaps even assuming, in the case of disagreement, that the mistake was his. These examples illustrate that self-interest, in a private sense, might easily come into conflict with what one might, in the *Republic's* conception, construe as self-interest in a collective sense. Even if one had doubts initially, seeing and hearing your fellow citizens, those whom you admire and want to be like, and be liked by, repeat your own decision back to you would most likely have quelled those doubts and reinforced the ethos that underpinned the decision made. The integrity and courage to be unpopular is by Plato attributed to Socrates as a claim for Socrates' commitment to truth: Since his endeavors have made him both poor and unpopular, what other motivations might he have had? (*Apol.* 24a-b, 31c).

But is deferring to others necessarily a bad thing? Considering Socrates' concerns about the state of knowledge in an individual, we should rather think that deferring to expertise would be a good thing. Such an argument would of course hinge on the assumption that there is a) such a thing as political expertise,⁴³³ and b) that Socrates thinks that the Athenians who did not

⁴³³ On the question of there being such a thing as political expertise, there seems to be near unanimous agreement that Plato subscribes to such an idea, and that it is a central premise for his political thinking. See Renford Bambrough, "Plato's Political Analogies," in *Plato A Collection of Critical Essays II: Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, ed. Gregory Vlastos, Modern Studies in Philosophy (London; Basingstock: The McMillan Press Ltd, 1971). R. W. Sharples, "Plato on Democracy and Expertise," *Greece & Rome* 41, no. 1 (1994): 49–56. And for a more recent contribution, see Anders Dahl Sørensen, *Plato on Democracy and Political Technē*, vol. 143;143 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016). I, on the other hand am not so sure that we should conclude that there is such a thing as a political *tékhnē* for several reasons: i) As argued in chapter 3, in the *Republic*, the dialogue from whence the idea of a rule by knowledge originates, the *polis* is reworked so as to render politics superfluous. ii) In the *Theaetetus*, Protagoras political skill is said to be to judge future outcomes, and there is reason to read this passage as indicating that this is a dubious kind of endeavor. It does, however bring to our attention that all political decisions are of the sort of which there cannot be knowledge t because only Gods have knowledge of the future. This means that the kind of political expertise that Plato might have in mind must have been the ability to somehow make

themselves have this kind of expertise, were capable of recognizing such expertise in others. But Socrates seems to rather conclude to the contrary: He criticizes the Athenians for lack of knowledge, lack of self-knowledge, and an overly optimistic belief in the transferability of their own fields of expertise.⁴³⁴ When considering this against the background of admiration, imitation, and the epistemic limitations of groups, it is clear that many other considerations than figuring out who has the relevant expertise might affect the members of the demos: Not only because of the pederastic practices which made some of the men in to the (former, present, or aspiring) lovers of others, but also because, on Socrates' reasoning, one imitates that which one admires. This must surely also hold for voting, and building on the reasoning that a vote, a decision, is a way of asserting, and making visible a belief. Here, I suggest, lies the solution to my initial puzzle: How can the masses be the corrupter of themselves? If conceived of as an imitation game where A tries to make oneself like B who in turn makes himself like C who tries again to imitate the A, then the social dynamics would entail that some values, traits, and features would come to dominate over time.⁴³⁵ Having a belief shared, acknowledged, and mirrored back to you must be a powerful way to imprint and cement the attitude that lies behind it.

The *ad hoc* nature of the procedures in the Assembly might have made it more resilient to malignant and intentional manipulation, but perhaps at the cost of becoming more vulnerable to the irrationality of strong emotions. The desires, fears, and preferences of the voters become more important in such a scenario: Socrates' comment on the "mad masses" is not just an expression, but might be a quite accurate picture of the feeling one would get if faced with 6000 roaring and angry men. This is where we should pause to consider the

decisions under great uncertainty in a sort of principled alignment with what we can have knowledge about, that which is eternal and unchanging, AKA the forms. This brings me to iii), namely that while Bambrough takes the 'Ship of State' simile to be expressive of the "doctrine that political wisdom is analogous to a special skill" (p.192) it is first of all very unclear what the special skill consists of, beyond that the steersman is the one who is able to get them to where they have all agreed to go, or at least where the shipowner initially had decided before he was drugged with intoxication words from the demagogues. (See David Keyt, "Plato and the Ship of State.", 2006, p. 200, for an argument, against Bambrough, that the helmsman would not sail for a destination of his own choosing, but one the ruler, whoever was the ship owner, had decided.) I rather tend to think that if the claims about political knowledge is that everyone has it but it is unteachable, Plato concludes that the problem belongs to politics, not to Socrates' standards for knowledge. Hence, politics is not an art and politics itself should be gotten rid of as it, in the form of negotiating interests, does not live up to the standards of a *tékhnē* in the sense that there can be a *tékhnē* about it. Further, given that the general Athenian ideal was that of agreement, it does not even meet the Athenians' own standards. But they, as the bedrugged ship owner, have forgotten that their aim was unity.

⁴³⁴ See e.g., the *Apol.* 30b.

⁴³⁵ It is a feature of some systems, known in systems thinking, that systems not only are self-reproducing, but self-reinforcing, meaning that they escalate over time. Donella Meadows, *Thinking in Systems* (Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008). p 124. This, I think, is the kind of problems Plato anticipates in his critique of democracy.

anthropology of the *Republic* again: If human nature is appetitive, greedy, honor loving, and reasonable, but above all, moldable and susceptible to external influence, it becomes clear why the democratic decision-making procedures might give cause for concern. For they do not, in the *Republic*'s account, appeal to reason, but to likes and dislikes. The honor lover, with his need to be liked, to be admired, is especially vulnerable to the influence of the social practices of democracy, but so are the citizens more likely to become honor-lovers by the constant social practice of public praise and blame.

I already suggested that the demos self-imitates. But what then of the responsibility of the politicians for whom Socrates often reserves his most scorching criticism? In order to answer this, I must first answer the question, who did the demos imitate? Who, or what, did the paradigmatic Athenian man admire? One answer is already provided to us by Thrasymachus' and Glaucon's anthropologies: They portrayed as strong and manly one who is greedy for power, sex, and wealth. The culmination of this picture is the tyrant – an all-powerful man with total sexual domination. Remember that this was precisely the nature that Glaucon ascribed to all men: Pleonexic (unbound), power and wealth, and an uninhibited sexual realm. We are reminded of this also by the *Republic* itself: Just when Socrates is wrapping up his argument about the corruption of the philosopher and concludes that the opposite of what is common practice should be the case: Namely that one should engage more thoroughly in one's philosophical studies as one grows older (498b), Thrasymachus makes his only appearance except for in Book I. Or rather, Adeimantus makes him appear, for he is [. . .] sure that most of your hearers, beginning with Thrasymachus, will oppose you with even greater enthusiasm and not be at all convinced (498c). Socrates replies: "Don't slander Thrasymachus and me just as we've become friends – not that we were enemies before" (498d). He then follows up with these remarks:

S: We won't relax our efforts until we either convince him and the others or, at any rate, do something that may benefit them in a later incarnation, when, reborn, they happen upon these arguments again.

A: That's a short time you're talking about!

S: It's nothing compared to the whole of time (498d).

With this, temporality is suddenly introduced to the discussion, and as such the text points beyond its own realm as well. For also in another setting, concerned with eternity and the soul, Thrasymachus is described:

It is also he who knows best how to inflame a crowd and, once they are inflamed, how to hush them again with his words' magic spell, as he says himself. And let's not forget that he is as good at producing slander as he is at refuting it, whatever its source may be. As to the way of ending a speech,

everyone seems to be in agreement, though some call it Recapitulation and others by some other name (267c-d).

With this, we are reminded of Thrasymachus' inflammatory oratory, just when we had accepted that the groups are self-corrupting. This, I suggest, entails the following: while the crowds are in these passages said to be their own corrupters, Socrates is reminding us that not everyone corrupts to an equal amount: individual moral responsibility is not abated. With the reminder of the tyrant and the demagogue's special responsibility for channeling and encouraging the demos' desires in this direction, we also get something else: A reminder of a timeframe that extends beyond this life. This timeframe, first introduced by the fearful Cephalus, is now re-introduced. In the next, and final, chapter I will turn to fear and freedom as key concepts in the *Republic's* critique of democracy.

Chapter 5

Freedom, Fear and Tyrants Everywhere: Men who Gaze at Statues and How to Find the Tyrant in the Democrat

But I once caught him when he was open like Silenus' statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they were so godlike—so bright and beautiful, so utterly amazing—that I no longer had a choice—I just had to do whatever he told me. (*Symp.* 216e-217a)

Introduction

In this chapter we arrive at Book VIII, the natural highlight of any exposition of democracy as it is related in the *Republic*. In this final chapter, I add my voice to those who hold that the core of the critique of democracy which is put forth by the discussions in the *Republic* is the particular relationship democracy stands in *vis à vis* tyranny.⁴³⁶ As such, this chapter will also treat Book IX. The *Republic's* criticism of democracy, I will propose, addresses and engages with ancient Greek's contemporary political discourse. As such, it contributes to the broad public conversation about rule, power, and legitimacy which was ongoing in Athens, at least from the conception of the Athenian Empire (478-405 BCE).⁴³⁷ In this statement, I follow Ober, who further argues that Plato is one among a small group of elite dissidents to democracy who tries to develop a critical language with which to criticize democracy. Democracy had, he argues, by the early 5th century, reached almost monopolizing powers, not only as a political regime, but also

⁴³⁶ As Arruzza does. Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. *Sic passim*.

⁴³⁷ About the ongoing conversation, see Kurt A. Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece: Revised and Updated Edition*, trans. Renate Franciscono, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). p. 166. For an argument about Athens being central to the argument in the *Republic*, see Debra Nails, "Plato's Republic in Its Athenian Context," *History of Political Thought* 33, no. 1 (Spring) (2012): 1–23. See also Allen, *Why Plato Wrote*.

discursively.⁴³⁸ To find a place from which to criticize democracy and engage in dialogue with it was for this reason challenging.

Taking Socrates in the *Republic* to engage with and enter into dialogue with democracy, allows us to see him as an ‘immanent critic’ of democracy, but this should not cause us to adopt the misconstrued idea that he was a *friendly* immanent critic.⁴³⁹ The *Republic*, even though I do not construe it here as a political verdict to the same extent as perhaps has become commonplace, firmly expresses a political dissident view of democratic Athens.⁴⁴⁰ As has been pointed out by scholars like Ober and Arruzza, the *Republic*’s attacks on democracy mobilizes tropes from the hegemonic political discourse of Plato’s time: The democratic notion of self was based on an ideologically supported binary opposition which places tyranny as democracy’s negation. This dichotomy constructs tyranny and the tyrant as the inverted mirror that democracy holds up for itself when determining its own identity.⁴⁴¹ In this chapter, I will examine the tropes of tyranny and the way they are mobilized in the *Republic* in order to show how they challenge the cemented opposition between democracy and tyranny. Plato is targeting, as formulated by Ober, “the language and logic of democracy itself.”⁴⁴² Working from this premise, my first analytical claim is that the *Republic* destabilizes the opposition between democracy and tyranny by claiming that democracy’s relationship to tyranny is due to a flaw in its ideological system. The settled upon ‘good’ in the democratic mind is freedom (*eleutheria*) and it is the particular ideological construct of freedom that the *Republic* posits as fundamentally flawed, and, as we shall see, inconsistent, when its logical implications are followed through to conclusion. Furthermore, I will argue that the *Republic*’s juxtaposition of democratic tropes regarding the relationship between tyranny and democracy makes visible a risk that democratic reasoning might instill a certain admiration of tyranny in democratic citizens. This second point is related through the dramatic dimension and the character of Glaucon. The *Republic* depicts Glaucon as a young man, about to enter public life by taking his place among the political leaders of Athens. He is portrayed as in an undecided position, not convinced by Thrasymachus, nor a follower of Socrates. At the core of his attraction to the arguments of Thrasymachus I find a covert admiration for tyranny which the *Republic* will posit as closely related to the idea of the tyrant as embodying the ultimate realization of the democratic good of *eleutheria*. This idea is in my reading what Socrates recognizes as

⁴³⁸ Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p. 28. See also Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. pp. 332-339.

⁴³⁹ As Saxonhouse, and to some extent, Sarah Monson does. Saxonhouse, “The Socratic Narrative,”. Monson, *Plato’s Democratic Entanglements*.

⁴⁴⁰ See Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. Monson, *Plato’s Democratic Entanglements*. seems to try to occupy some middle-ground here.

⁴⁴¹ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. *Wolf in the City*, p. 9.

⁴⁴² See Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p. 28.

underpinning Glaucon's admiration and what he relies on throughout his argument. This becomes part of 'Glaucon's Unspoken Challenge'. I launch this notion to make clear the idea that Socrates on the one hand responds to the explicit arguments that 'Glaucon's Challenge' presents, but on the other hand responds to what he deems to be behind the words: Glaucon's motives. It is a premise of my reading of the *Republic* that Glaucon covets the tyrants' possibilities for desire-satisfaction.

Building further on this, my second analytical claim is that Glaucon is not able to recognize properly the consequences of his desires or their origins, external or internal. Socrates will provide Glaucon with the tools of self-judgement and, I argue, subtly portray this as a vital political expertise required for democratic politics. The reasoning uncovered by my analysis seems to be that insight into his own soul is also what will allow Glaucon to judge others correctly, as opposed to universalizing his own motives, as I argued in chapter 1 that he did. As a way of facing the 'Unspoken Challenge,' Socrates will unearth from Glaucon his own desires for him to assess.

Connected to these analytical claims, I find that the *Republic* relies on *topoi* related to Athens' status as imperialistic superpower in order to convey the idea that there is a tension within central tenets of democratic discourse. These tensions contribute to affirming the idea of freedom as power, and Athens' imperialistic politics as a way of instilling these ideas in the citizens. The idea of Athens as tyrannical – the *demos tyrannis* or *polis tyrannis* – does not originate with Plato, but existed, and surfaces, in the sources alongside more widely accepted ideas of the tyrant.⁴⁴³ To the latter type of ideas belongs the notion of the tyrant as antithetical to democracy because he monopolized power – an affront to the idea of equality (*isonomia*). Other tropes surrounding the tyrant depict him as excessive, especially in regards to his use of unnecessary violence and in his sexual endeavors, as incomparably and conspicuously wealthy, and as suspicious, paranoid and isolated. Socrates strongly suspects that the tyrant's incredible wealth is among the features which holds a powerful allure for Glaucon. One of the rhetorical tasks 'Glaucon's Unspoken Challenge' implicitly burdens him with, is to show that intellectual wealth can offer more benefits than can monetary wealth. At least this is how Socrates interprets his challenge, for he takes it upon himself to turn Glaucon from a pursuit of honor, wealth, and power – which in the young

⁴⁴³ Robert Connor's influential paper from 1977 is the first to pick up this thread in some speeches from Thucydides, and argues that it was a commonly held view that tyranny was good for the tyrant but bad for the city under him. Raaflaub argues against Connors on this, claiming that this a minority view. What matters for my present purposes the *Republic*, is that Plato obviously assumes that there is such a popular opinion, both in the *Republic*, but also in the *Gorgias*, as pointed out by Ober. Robert W. Connors, "Tyrannis Polis," in *Ancient and Modern: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Else*, ed. John H. D'Arms and John E. Eadie (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1977), 95–109. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy." See also Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. pp 33-34 on this debate.

man's mind will grant him the ability to satisfy his desires with something close to impunity – to a life of philosophical examination. The tyrant's wealth is alluring in Socrates' interpretation of Glaucon's Challenge in mainly three ways: It offers freedom from punishment both in terms of law and in terms of social repercussions, and it offers possibilities for satisfying desires. Finally, another allure is hinted at: It offers impunity from the gods. Socrates' unspoken task is to purge Glaucon of admiration for tyranny in order to turn his soul towards virtue. He argues that satisfying desires will not make you happy, and further, that while one might be free of punishment, to treat desire-satisfaction as a goal will put you in an unfree relationship to yourself. Finally, Socrates will show Glaucon another kind of godlikeness and impunity in the afterlife: his own immortal soul after a life of virtue.

The question remains whether Socrates succeeds in turning Glaucon towards a 'life examined'.⁴⁴⁴ The construction of the city of Kallipolis is extremely revealing of Glaucon's character, I hold, and Socrates' role as a midwife of not only ideas, but of desires too, is on display throughout the *Republic*. Ultimately, I argue, Glaucon fails to distinguish between the king and the tyrant, and this is indicative of a connected failure: The failure to correctly judge himself. Despite being able to provide the right answers regarding their presumed happiness or wretchedness, Glaucon displays a propensity to conclude prior to investigation. By the end of the *Republic*, he is no more capable of examining himself or others in the thorough way required of the philosopher than he was at the outset. For, as we will see, only the philosopher's kind of investigation is able to conduct the investigation 'from within' which is necessary for being able to tell the tyrant and the king apart.

This analysis will be structured as follows: I will begin by accounting for what Book VIII of the *Republic* launches as its explanatory model for corruption on the ideological level, the origin story of the regimes. These passages have often been commented upon due to the unclear organizing principle behind the ranking of the regimes. I will next argue that the organizing principle of the ranking of the regimes is kept deliberately vague. I argue that this vagueness opens for a certain ambiguity in the ideas surrounding kings and tyrants which in turn exposes Glaucon's ideas of human nature as informed by democratic culture, and, ultimately, to be desires for tyranny. This analytical move shows how the dialogue can communicate to its readers more than what the interlocutors within it say, and it contributes to my argument that we should not trust Glaucon's judgement in the contest between king and tyrant in Book IX.

The *Republic's* analysis of democracy hinges on its interpretation of the democratic notion of 'freedom'. In the section 'Freedom Rules' I will place the *Republic* into the historical context of the notion of freedom, before I go

⁴⁴⁴ In the *Apology* 38a Socrates claims that the unexamined life is not worth living.

on to show how the *Republic* can be said to constitute a discursive attack on Athenian reasoning. The democratic freedom, in the *Republic*'s account, is in my reading to be understood as positive freedom,⁴⁴⁵ and this is a prerequisite of the central implication of the *Republic* which my reading illuminates: that democratic freedom is in effect equivalent to power. This idea of freedom as power, I argue next, is what determines the democratic relationship to fear. These ideas are best comprehended by reading Book VIII and Book I as functioning in a close intertextual relationship, as I also think the text itself indicates. Through a revisitation of the conversation between Cephalus and Socrates, I will let the arguments and dramatic implications of Book I throw its interpretational light upon Book VIII. Furthermore, the conversation between Cephalus and Socrates launches the theme of self-investigation. This thematic, I argued in chapter 1, was also on display in the conversation between Socrates and Thrasymachus in which Thrasymachus claimed to be able to apprehend Socrates motivations, and which in my analysis dramatically illustrated to some principal difficulties with making such claims about other people. This topic is what will guide the remainder of my analysis, because the concerns that Socrates has about Glaucon's ability to judge motives and intentions correctly re-surfaces as a political problem in Book IX of the *Republic*. The ability to critically investigate others and oneself is, I conclude, in the *Republic* portrayed as a political skill, at least a skill required in order to navigate democratic politics.

Becoming Democratic

In this section, I will offer a summary of what precedes the statements about democracy itself in Book VIII. This is relevant because it shows how Socrates builds a narrative about ideology, which will become very important to the analysis of democracy. While historians will often point to economic and socio-economic reasons for democracy coming to be in Ancient Attica, Socrates here gives socio-political factors a secondary role while privileging ideology.⁴⁴⁶ The story of political demise (beginning at 545d) has more in common with the poetic origin stories than with sociopolitical or historical accounts. Socrates invokes the muses before embarking on the story of demise, in a way that alludes to Homer's *Iliad*, and the pattern of demise itself has much in common with Hesiod's *Theogony*.⁴⁴⁷ In Book VIII, the city-soul analogy is brought to the forefront through each regime being fitted with a corresponding psycho-political profile, before the analysis turns to the

⁴⁴⁵ Understood as unrestrained action. I discuss this more below.

⁴⁴⁶ Later, Socrates will give a historical-political analysis, focusing on the economy as the central explanatory model (556e-557a).

⁴⁴⁷ Bloom, in Plato, *The Republic of Plato*. p. 467, n. 4.

becoming and transformation of each.⁴⁴⁸ We should not lose sight of the city-soul analogy, but bear in mind that the ‘constitution’ that comes to be is as much a constitution of the soul, and that this genesis also tells of what impulses trigger different set-ups of the parts of the soul in an individual.

Socrates proclaims that this leaves four regimes left to discuss (544a). He then asserts that there are five types of characters and regimes altogether, and, seeing that they have already adequately accounted for one, namely kingship, in the form of the rule of the philosopher-kings and queens, he asks whether they must now go through all the worse ones (544d-e). They must, it seems, and since regimes arise from the character of men, there must also be five types of soul for the private men (544e). This is not self-evident – after all, the soul was said to be tripartite – but the division is explained by introducing some middle categories in between the types of rule in both souls and regimes. The timocrat is ruled by *thymos*, but is trying to reconcile it with wisdom, while the democrat is in between oligarchy and tyranny.⁴⁴⁹

One point to note about the particular story of demise that Socrates is relating here is that for each regime he points out what it identifies as its ‘good’, and in his account it is through a flaw in this ‘good’ that the regime fails. In other words, this origin story is about political ideals as much as it is about regimes and the men who inhabit them. The fall of the wisdom-loving Kallipolis comes about as a result of an epistemic failure, a failure to calculate correctly. From this follows the timocracy. In chapter 3, I noted that distributing private property was the first political action of the new regime, both a cause and a catalyst for internal divisions within the *polis*. Life in the *oikos* transformed the role of women, and private property divided the city state into a private and a public world. From this world of private ambition springs the timocrat – a haughty man with a love for honor (550c). “The treasure houses full of gold” (550d) in this regime is what sets the citizens in a competitive relationship to each other, and their interpretation of gold as a sign of success makes them focus more on acquisition and less on virtue. Virtue is anyhow not properly internalized in them because they “were educated by force, not by persuasion” (548b). The timocratic regime is dominated by spiritedness, and as such, love of victories and of honors is the

⁴⁴⁸ According to the Complex Constitutional Model, the tripartite soul would yield 9 different constellations of soul-parts, with three different contestants for ruling in the soul: Reason, Spirit, Appetite. The reason for why the number of regimes should be precisely 5 is somewhat mysterious, unless one includes, as Glaucon seems to indicate, a sixth, untold of, kind of regime. In that case the number of regimes and men would also be 6, and it would be easier to map onto it some version of the tripartite soul in which each part of the soul would be responsible for engendering two types of regime: 1) RR=untold of regime/kingship, 2) SR=Timocracy/Oligarchy 3) AR=Democracy/Tyranny. This potential analysis falls outside of the scope of this thesis, but it might be worth pursuing in future research.

⁴⁴⁹ The latter point I extrapolate. That should make democracy ruled by appetite in two ways. The one within the boundaries of law and custom (riches) and the other transgressional in pursuing bodily appetites. This is not the topic I want to pursue here, but may be an idea to pursue in the future.

most distinctive feature within it. This becomes its demise when money and wealth is also honored in the city; fear of not acquiring enough to be esteemed is what drives the change from timocracy to oligarchy (550d). Eventually, in the oligarchic regime, the love for honor is transformed into a pure love for gold, not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. The oligarchic regime is rule by a wealth-elite. The possibility for extreme poverty, and ascribing power on the grounds of owning property is pinpointed as the fatal flaw that will lead to the demise of also this regime (552a, 554a). Some who were wealthy will become poor. When they were rich, they would have been considered as one of the natural rulers in the city, although they were nothing but a “spender of means” (552c). Now, when they have no more means to spend, they will become “like a drone that grows up in a cell in the hive, like a disease of the city” (552 c).

While oligarchy’s ideological flaw is to insert money as its ‘good,’ the social and practical consequence gives rise to a dynamic of inequality which is the prerequisite for democracy. Embittered, the drones, these disenfranchised men, turn to theft “if they have stings,” and to beggary if they do not (552c).⁴⁵⁰ When the son sees his father thus impoverished and embarrassed, he becomes frightened (553b) and he turns to money-making full time. Enslaving the calculating and spirited part, he sets the desiring part to “rule as king” in his soul.⁴⁵¹ He reveals himself as the oligarch when he has guardianship over other people’s money – he hates spending his own. He is the “reputedly just man” in the sense that he has a good reputation for contractual relations, and most of the time he holds down his bad desires, as we remember from chapter 2, by force – not out of reason or understanding, but out of fear and necessity (554d). He would be more graceful than many, but true virtue escapes him. His motivation is not the ‘good’ – or rather, the ‘good’ he has set his soul’s eye upon is of a kind that is silent on the question of the ‘good’ itself. The oligarchic greed for money is transformed to a general greed – a *pleonexia* for more. From this seed, democracy grows forth (555b). To satisfy this greed for more the democratic man requires unlimited freedom, which is what brings about the ideological change which will turn the oligarchy into democracy. Democracy is a regime which places freedom as its ‘good,’ and which gives rise to a variety which makes it attractive and beautiful, like “a many-colored cloak, decorated in all hues,” of the kind that children and women would enthuse about (557c).

As has been pointed out, this critique of democracy is not only surprisingly mild, but it also completely neglects the epistemological limitations which

⁴⁵⁰ Socrates makes some very convoluted statements regarding the drones at this point, distinguishing between those with wings (without stings) and those with feet (some stingless, others with terrible stings). So the drones are, according to this, of three kinds, but the further implications of this are left unmentioned.

⁴⁵¹ Money-loving is an ambiguous trait, belonging to both the timocrat and the oligarch, not to mention the democrat and the tyrant, for different motivations.

was made issue in Book VI when Socrates concluded that the multitude was unable to apprehend the forms, and thus precluded from philosophy.⁴⁵² To sum up, wisdom, honor, gold, and freedom have each been said to be a defining feature and an ideological principle for a regime. As this brief synopsis has shown, Socrates' concern seems rather to be to identify the central value each regime and man can be said to exalt to its 'ruling principle'. Socrates is making an argument to the effect that the core value of each regime is what causes its transformation into a new, worse ideal, and furthermore, he shows how socio-political factors contribute to the demise on the level of political ideas and ideals. As the account show, each 'good' is flawed and will eventually cause the collapse of the regimes' ideology. In the next section, I will argue that the ranking of the regimes is a hint towards how Socrates' arguments can be seen as being positioned within, and in opposition to democratic discourse.

Rethinking the Ranking of Regimes

This section argues that the ranking of the political regimes in the *Republic* does not reflect a political verdict, but that its function is rather to insert an ambivalence between kingship and tyranny. This ambivalence will shed some new light on the preceding construction of the Kallipolis. Furthermore, I argue that the ranking is the first in a series of moves which has the effect of discursively tying democracy and tyranny together.

The citizens of the democratic regime are first and foremost free: "And since they have this license, each man will organize his private life just as he pleases," Socrates says (557b). This makes the democracy not only multiform, but also the fairest regime. The city/soul analogy implies that the license to organize one's life as one pleases, is in every kind of regime, and every kind of man, to be found within it. This is a point worth noting, for the *Republic's* critique tracks the distinction between forms of rule that is often said to belong to the Greeks in that the number of rulers is the crucial denominator: As such, monarchy is the rule by one; oligarchies is the rule by the few; and democracy rule by the many. So far, Socrates has shown us that also the cities themselves are divided, internally, and that this enumeration, one; few; many, also holds true internally for the cities so ruled: A city under a king is unified; in a timocracy, hidden differences grow forth so that it becomes a middle stage between kingship and oligarchy, which is divided in a poor and in a wealthy class; and democracy contains every kind of regime, and every kind of man (557d) but is later said to be divided into three classes (564d).

⁴⁵² Arlene W. Saxonhouse, "Democracy, Equality, and Eidê: A Radical View from Book 8 of Plato's Republic," *The American Political Science Review* 92, no. 2 (1998): 273–83, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585663>. p. 273.

And precisely unity, or lack of it, has been suggested as the organizing principle which accounts for the particular ranking of the regimes.⁴⁵³ Yet, other scholars have noted that there seems to be no need for democracy's particular ranking – after all, in the *Statesman* (303b-c), democracy is ranked above oligarchy, and even within the *Republic* itself, it seems that Socrates has some good things to say about democracy and no good things to say about oligarchy.⁴⁵⁴ Only the timocratic one, 'the Spartan regime' had any aspirations towards knowledge at all, and of the remaining, oligarchy seems at least as bad, if not worse than democracy. Annas suggests that the regimes are ranked in accordance with how unified they are, on both state and individual level.⁴⁵⁵ Saxonhouse holds that it is the *lack* of a ruling principle that is Plato's charge against democracy and which causes the multiform nature of democracy.⁴⁵⁶ Ober suggests that the regimes are organized according to how well they correspond to the requirements of rationality. The ranking places tyranny and kingship as binary oppositions, not tyranny and democracy as opposite poles as I said was the usual conception among Plato's contemporaries. Only Kallipolis is rational in the Socratic sense in that it also has the right understanding of the 'good', but both timocracy and oligarchy satisfy the 'Folk Theory' of rationality in that they are able to demonstrate consistency with regard to the means, even if they are mistaken about the ends. Democracy and tyranny are bottom ranked in this account, because they, failing to satisfy even the consistency-requirement, are irrational.⁴⁵⁷

While democracy seems to fail in respect to ordering preferences over outcomes, if this is the reason for democracy's place in Socrates' ranking, then what prevents democracy from being ranked below tyranny? After all, tyranny and the tyrant seem to be more consistent in ordering preferences according to a means-end rationality: The tyrant's preference seems to consistently be power, and his actions seem to express, at least on the outside, a reality-tracking pursuit of this aim. Further, it seems clear to me that the ranking of the tyranny is problematic also on the unity-account. The tyrant's desires are multiform, but so are the democrat's, and in tyranny, the city as a whole is unified, even if it is unified in enslavement under the sovereign powers of one ruler

⁴⁵³ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. pp. 301-2.

⁴⁵⁴ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. p. 5.6. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. p. 155, and, Saxonhouse, "Democracy, Equality, and Eidê." Although she stresses the importance of *change* rather than decline. p. 274 n.3. Monson follows Saxonhouse, 'Democracy, Equality and Eidê', in this. Monson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements*. Marshall and Bilsborough argue that the controversy is unresolvable. Mason Marshall and Shane A. Bilsborough, "The "Republic's Ambiguous Democracy," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2010): 301–16. See also Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 97.

⁴⁵⁵ Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. pp. 301-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Saxonhouse, "Democracy, Equality, and Eidê." p. 282.

⁴⁵⁷ Ober, *The Greeks and the Rational: The Discovery of Practical Reason*. 5.2 "Democratic irrationality? Plato's critique of democracy".

That the ranking of the regimes resists any attempts to smoothly map on to them any of the divisions or hierarchies that Socrates has painstakingly built up for us leaves us, I think with two options: We must either assume that we are facing an instance of a flaw in the argument, as Annas does,⁴⁵⁸ or at least an inconsistency, or we might interpret it as a deliberate ambiguity of the text, one that is there as a part of the dialogue's communication with the reader, rather than as a representation of Socrates and his interlocutors. The latter alternative opens up an intriguing possibility, namely that the unclear ranking criterion is a cue to the reader, telling us to be alert. And if we take this prod seriously, we might find the ambiguity inserted by the lack of an organizing principle is further exploited in the text by that, as will become clear below, kingship and tyranny share certain traits.⁴⁵⁹ This blurring of what is taken to be two diametrically opposed categories in my reading serves two distinct textual purposes in the discussion which follows. In addition to the one already mentioned – that it is inserted as a purposeful way of getting the readers attention – it is arguably there as an epistemological stumble-block for Glaucon: As readers, we are in the privileged position of being able to both observe what Glaucon overlooks and, ourselves be warned to be on the lookout.

First of all, if my reasoning on the unity of the city under tyranny holds, then the ranking in the *Republic* places two kinds of unity on the top and the bottom among regimes. In my reading then, we should – rather than regarding the regimes being portrayed in the shape of a pyramid, the narrower the triangle the more unified the regime – see them portrayed in the geometrical shape of a rhombus, a diamond shape standing on edge, pointed in both ends and wide in the middle. 'Unity' can, from this perspective, be applied as a criterion for both the best and the worst kind of regime and man, depending on the kind of unity in question. Hence, I argue that unity cannot be the sole explanatory criterion for the ranking of regimes. This claim finds support in the *Republic's* argumentation, and an issue I will pursue further in the upcoming sections. The solution to the unclear ranking-criterion then, is not reached by asking what the organizing principle is, but rather to ask what the lack of an ordering principle indicates.

By placing kingship, not democracy, as diametrically opposed to tyranny, I argue that the *Republic* prepares the ground for criticizing democracy in terms of its kinship with tyranny. I agree with Arruzza when she argues that Plato is relying on the trope of the tyrant as antithetical to the democratic mindset and inverts the picture to rather show that the demos is father

⁴⁵⁸ As Annas holds: Plato is simply confused and is too preoccupied with the city-soul analogy. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. pp. 294, 299.

⁴⁵⁹ The words *tyrannos*, *monarchos* and *basileus* were long used synonymously. See Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy." p. 62.

(*gennaô*) (568e) to tyranny.⁴⁶⁰ But what is lacking from her account is a credible (argumentative) motive or aim for the doing so, other than to insult democracy. To fill this gap, I suggest that we see the account of democracy's close and necessary relationship to tyranny as pointing out flaws in the conceptions of democracy's principles and justification. I have argued that the unclear ranking-criterion serves to destabilize the binary opposition between democracy and tyranny, and that it further has the function of tying democracy to tyranny. This link will be supported by a reading of the *Republic*'s analysis of the democratic notion of freedom. In the upcoming section, I will analyze the ideological concept of freedom (*eleutheria*) in the light of the *Republic*, taking into account the historically contingent meaning that this notion came to hold for the ancients who invented it, in order to show the centrality of this theoretical concept in the *Republic*'s critique of democracy.

Freedom Rules: The Notions of Freedom and Power in the *Republic*

In this section, I will argue that the *Republic* posits the democratic notion of power as closely intertwined with ideas of power. In Book VIII, Plato has Socrates put forth three claims about democratic ideology: i) that freedom is the ruling principle of democracy, ii) that this very principle is the undoing of democracy itself, and iii) that the unbridled pursuit of freedom will lead to tyranny. In my reading, these claims are based on an understanding of the democratic conception of freedom as power. Furthermore, I will argue that the analysis in books VIII and IX displays the reasoning employed by the Athenians themselves for justifying their own power as – if followed to their logical conclusion – anti-democratic and even tyrannical.

From the discussion in Book VIII, we learn that what democracy has appointed as its ruling principle – its 'good' – is also what will become its undoing: "And isn't democracy's insatiable desire for what it defines as the good also what destroys it?" (562b), Socrates asks. And, further, when Adeimantus asks what this good is, Socrates answers:

Freedom (*eleutheria*). For surely in a democratic city you would hear that this is the finest thing it has, so that as a result it is the only city worth living in for someone who is by nature free," – "[...], as I was about to say, doesn't the insatiable desire for this and the neglect of other things change this constitution and prepare it in need for tyranny? (562b-c).

Democracy, in the depiction of the *Republic*, consistently places freedom as not only the core value of its members, an ideal they lived by, but as the

⁴⁶⁰ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 118.

guiding, or ruling, principle. That means, following the terminology I have used so far, that a democratic person would have placed ‘freedom’ as their ‘good’ in the sense that it becomes the evaluating principle for other actions and decisions. In order to answer the question ‘is this good’?⁴⁶¹ the person with the psycho-political make-up of the democrat really asks ‘to what extent does this contribute to freedom?’ To this, Socrates objects that the notion of freedom as prime ‘good’ will, if followed consistently as a guiding principle and evaluative standard, necessarily undermine itself: if freedom is not balanced against other principles, and freedom is pursued unbridled, then freedom will accumulate for some individuals, leading to a freedom-deficit for others. By this reasoning, freedom will lead to what was thought to be its opposite: enslavement. While the argument about internal enslavement to desires in search of unrestrained satisfaction is easier to follow, the argument regarding external freedom is more convoluted. In my reading, this is an ideological question, which must be answered by tracing the social analysis back to Book I, as Plato has Socrates indicate: By the end of Book VIII, after having shown why the idle, extravagant men, led by their courageous (*andreîos*) part, is the disease to blame for the dynamics that paves the way for tyranny, Socrates changes the topic somewhat: What is the beginning of the transformation from leader, from drone, to tyrant? From this point in the text, at 565d and for the remainder of Book VIII, the discussion revolves around, not so much the tyrant himself, but the men and the social norms and practices which make his existence possible, and even necessary.⁴⁶²

From this point on, the tone in the text also changes. Immediately after asking this, Socrates again begins to pepper his speech with references to myths, poetry, and legends⁴⁶³ which take up the imagery and underlying issues from Book I. Consider 565d, in which Socrates asks whether the tyrant comes to be like in the story told of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia.⁴⁶⁴ The story refers to King Lycaean who mixed human flesh into his offerings to Zeus to test his divinity, and in return was turned into a wolf.⁴⁶⁵ According to Socrates, anyone who tastes a morsel of the human flesh that is mixed with the other sacrificial victims must necessarily become a wolf (565e).⁴⁶⁶ The trope of the wolf was first invoked in connection with Thrasymachus’ entrance in Book I: Socrates narrated that had he not seen Thrasymachus charging before his attack, he might have been struck dumb – as the myth says of the man who does not see

⁴⁶¹ See chapter 2. “A Closer Look at Akrasia”.

⁴⁶² The tyrant himself is made topic in Book IX.

⁴⁶³ Which he has not done, since leaving the many references to the *Iliad* and to *Hesiod* behind at 547b.

⁴⁶⁴ Plato’s is the oldest extant reference to it in the sources. Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. pp. 200-1.

⁴⁶⁵ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 200.

⁴⁶⁶ This bloodthirst can also be awakened through the process of the court, when the tyrant brings unjust charges against a man of his own tribe and, murdering him in this way, “tastes of kindred blood with unholy tongue” (565e).

the wolf before the wolf sees him.⁴⁶⁷ The word ‘blessed’ (*makarios*) is now used two times in a row about the tyrant (in 567d1 and in 567e9), recalling Thrasymachus’ argument: He who possesses the “whole of injustice” is called “happy and blessed” (344b). Within these passages, the text intermingles the poetic references with language of death, cowardness, fear, and power. Thus, these passages encourage the reader to revisit the beginning, and to go back to Book I. This is what I propose to do.

In chapter 1 of this thesis, I argued that Thrasymachus argument could be said to make out the implicit premise that you either have power over others, or you are yourself subjected to others’ power over you.⁴⁶⁸ This is a rhetorical talking point, a *topos*, also attributed to Alcibiades in his speech to the assembly in the debate about whether to invade Sicily: “We must not be content with retaining (what we have) but must scheme to extend it, for if we cease to rule others, we are in danger of being ruled ourselves” (*Thuc.* VI, 18, 18-23.) In the famous rendition of Pericles’ funeral oration as well, the same kind of logic is at work. In a speech trying to dissuade his plague-ridden and war-tired fellow men from making concessions to Sparta in a bid for peace, Pericles speaks harshly to the Athenians about the dire situation they are in:

[...] you cannot decline the burdens of an empire and still expect to share its honors. The issue at stake is not only slavery or freedom, but the loss of an empire and the danger from the animosities to which it has exposed you. You cannot longer give your empire up, should anyone out of fear of the present circumstances think of sitting at home and playing the honest man. For the empire you possess is already like a tyranny: to acquire it is perhaps unjust, but it is certainly dangerous to let it go. (*Thuc.* II.63.1-2)

The rationale for power-seeking behavior is coupled with fear, as it was in my analysis of Thrasymachus in chapter 1. It is not only a question of freedom versus slavery, but the Athenians have real reason to fear the retribution of their allies turned subjects.⁴⁶⁹ This passage is interesting for the purposes of this analysis because it summarizes and displays the use of some key concepts which illustrate the political thinking to which the *Republic* contributes: First, it tells us that freedom, on the one hand is conceived of as an opposition to slavery. Citizen liberty was first a pressing issue for the lawgiver Solon, due to the increasing demand to end debt bondage (a variety of statuses is compressed in this term, but having to do with offering one’s personal freedom as loan security in archaic Attica).⁴⁷⁰ Freedom was, as such, first a status an Athenian had *vis à vis* his fellow citizens. On the other hand, freedom was a concept related to inter-state relationships: When freedom became an issue for a *polis* this was in connection with the outside threat of tyranny, and

⁴⁶⁷ See chapter 1, “Socrates and Thrasymachus: A Personal Drama”.

⁴⁶⁸ See chapter 1, “Dog-Eats-Dog: The World According to Thrasymachus”.

⁴⁶⁹ On this gradual shift see e.g. Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece*. p. 477.

⁴⁷⁰ Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p. 46.

this became more of an acute issue for the Athenians in the 6th century and with the Persian invasions.⁴⁷¹ Yet, freedom did not emerge as a political concept until the 5th century, and it was in these “fully developed *poleis*” with confident and self-conscious citizens that tyranny became perceived as incompatible with a city of free citizens.⁴⁷² From this originates the anti-tyranny ideology from the classical period. Freedom as a political concept remained a delimiting concept and was as such negative: Freedom was predominantly understood as freedom from being subjected to others’ powers over you, Raaflaub concludes in his comprehensive study of the subject.⁴⁷³

This is also the notion of power that is implied in Thrasymachus’ argumentation: Freedom is *autonomia* – the power to rule oneself, and freedom from subjugation to external rule.⁴⁷⁴ Incidentally, Gorgias also links freedom with power. When prompted by Socrates’ question as to what is the nature of his art, he answers that it is the highest good: “It is the source of freedom for humankind itself and at the same time it is for each person the source of rule (*archon*) over others in one’s own city (*Gorg.* 452d). However, in Glaucon’s challenge we may find the contours of a more positive conception of power.⁴⁷⁵ The invisibility ring provides its bearer with the powers to do as he pleases, and power in this sense must be understood in the positive sense of ‘freedom to act’. This positive interpretation of freedom is also, according to Socrates, the kind of freedom that underpins the democratic promise of license; each man “will organize his private (*idion*) life just as he pleases” (557b).⁴⁷⁶ Even if the historical source material may grant a conclusion that the concept of freedom in classical Athens was mainly negative, the *Republic* puts forth a positive conception of freedom and attributes it to democratic discourse in order to criticize democracy. For it is the positive freedom of the tyrant that makes his position so enviable and “equal to a God” (360c) as Glaucon puts it, echoing Euripides’ Hecabe.⁴⁷⁷ While negative freedom does not become positive simply by removing obstacles for action, the tyrant’s possibilities for acting in the sense of realizing his wishes and desires go beyond the mere notion of freedom from

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 53. Raaflaub points out that *eleutheria* is not mentioned in relation to cities and not as the opposite of tyranny or slavery of cities before the Persian Wars “activated” this latent transfer of personal freedom to the political sphere of inter-state politics. pp. 53-59.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.* pp. 254-55.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.* See pp. 158-160 for a discussion about the relationship between the terms *eleutheria* and *autonomia*.

⁴⁷⁵ In distinguishing between a positive and a negative sense of freedom I rely on Isaiah Berlin’s famous speech. Isaiah Berlin, Henry Hardy, and Ian Harris, *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See particularly pp. 178-9.

⁴⁷⁶ See also Schofield who states that freedom is “an enabling good. It is freedom *to* — ‘to do what a person wants’, to recapitulate the formula Socrates reproduces”. Malcolm Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2006), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=431252>. p. 112.

⁴⁷⁷ Euripides, *Trojan Women* 1169.

rule by another. The tyrant is equal to a god, or, as it is said in *Prometheus Bound*: “only Zeus is free,” and this notion of freedom as well must be interpreted as positive. Absolute freedom is only granted to the one with absolute power.

The discussion of the democratic value of *eleutheria* in Book VIII is about positive freedom. Given that equal distribution of freedom on this premise would depend on equal distribution of power (*isonomia*) combining *pleonexia* with a notion of positive freedom is fundamentally inconsistent. If each citizen is restricted by the equal freedom of other citizens, they are not free, in the sense of being able to satisfy their desires and appetites unrestrained and without consequence. Simultaneously, the *Republic* argues, in their “insatiable greed” the Athenians are applying the concept of *isonomia* indiscriminately, to actions, to values, to pursuits, to interests, and to behaviors. It then follows that some will become immoderate, indulging in desires, and by that kind of habituation become appetitive – that is, they will develop the preconditions for tyranny in their souls. That the tyrant had lawless and transgressional desires was among the tropes that had become truths about him as archetype.⁴⁷⁸ While the Athenian ideals and political identity were developed in contrast to, and by distancing themselves from, the tyrant, the *Republic* is invoking the democratic salutary political notions *par excellence* and shows instead that their core political ideas are incompatible: Freedom and a complete equality of values is a dangerous combination. For if freedom is the *only* good, and more of a good thing is even better (*pleonexia*), it follows that more freedom would also be better. Unless *isonomia* is constantly invoked, and the citizens are all on guard, the precarious balance of equal access to common and shared goods, like freedom and power, could easily tilt. If freedom can only be obtained by satisfying desires without restraint, then tyranny truly becomes the ideal position. Combined with pluralism of values and the extreme relativism which the *Republic* in my reading seems to identify as operative within the democratic discourse, the implicit critique amounts to an idea that democratic reasoning undermines its own argumentative force and leaves its politicians without compelling means of persuasion.⁴⁷⁹ Importantly, a notion of freedom which depends on the equal distribution of power in order to avoid tilting the balance toward inequality, while at the same time instilling the idea

⁴⁷⁸ Arruzza follows Meulder, who argues that Plato combines traits associated with tyrants, real and fictional when he describes his particular brand of tyrant. Pisistratus e.g. was known for “sexual and paraphilic excesses”. Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 52.

⁴⁷⁹ As in not bound by “logical necessity.” See chapter 4 for the relationship between the demos and the demagogues. An interesting idea to consider in this relation is that of Giulia Sissa who suggests that each regime in Antiquity should be seen as operating on its own “pathetic apparatus”, that is, that each regime embodies and enacts a certain emotional habitus: “The pathetic apparatus of democracy requires different feelings and character traits: a self-governing multitude is, above all, courageous, proud, competitive, and potentially envious”. Giulia Sissa, “Political Animals: Pathetic Animals,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Ryan K. Balot (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009).

that *more* freedom – *more* power – is better, is a volatile one, and ultimately, a self-undermining one. This analysis is supported by the demonstration of this volatility in the initial debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus. Against skeptics like Thrasymachus, moral arguments are hard to come by as it is. Seeing this discursive climate in combination with the premise that all opinions are of equal worth, regardless of their truth-value, makes visible a real discursive difficulty. From this perspective, democratic ideology offers no steady ground for forceful normative arguments.⁴⁸⁰

To sum up, the *Republic* postulates an idea of freedom which makes it close to indistinguishable from power, discursively speaking. This notion of freedom-as-power is attributed to democracy and it is also what the critique of democracy is predicated on. In my reading, the notion of freedom-as-power functions as a prerequisite for ideologically tying democracy to tyranny, something which destabilizes democratic political discourse.

The Fear of the Free: A Discursive Attack on Democracy

As has, to my mind, been satisfactorily established by scholars in the field, the *Republic* can be said to mobilize the tropes and imagery of the tyrant in the public democratic conception in order to subvert it.⁴⁸¹ This subversion, in the accounts of Ober, and later, Arruzza, is aimed at undermining a bipolar conception of politics. The conception of politics as divided primarily between democracy and tyranny, and that these were polar opposites, was prevalent in the democratic discourse. In this section, I will add to that conversation and argue that the argument of the *Republic* exploits both democratic accounts of tyranny as antithetical to democracy as well as dissenter-tropes claiming that the demos or the *polis* itself is the real tyrant. My aim is to demonstrate that Socrates can be taken to say that the logic inherent to the democratic discourse encourages tyrannical impulses. The demos as the “real corrupters” (492b) supports and prepares the ground for this claim.⁴⁸² Contrary to widespread Athenian ideas, the *Republic* implies that the issue of tyrants aspiring to take over the demos is not a matter of ‘good ideology being threatened by bad people,’ to put it crudely, but rather a question of the relationship between the regime and the type of people it’s ideology fosters.

⁴⁸⁰ See also Saxonhouse. I believe she is pointing to a similar point, only more eloquently put, when she writes that the lack of form (*eidê*) which is emblematic of democracy on the *Republic*’s account and that Socrates is concerned that this formlessness also affects language and meaning. Saxonhouse, “Democracy, Equality, and *Eidê*.” p. 279.

⁴⁸¹ Josiah Ober, “Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts,” in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn B. Morgan (Texas University Press, 2003). p. 229, Arruzza p. 250.

⁴⁸² See chapter 4.

As Ober, I think that Plato's target for the critical ideas conveyed in the *Republic*, were not only his contemporary elite audience, but "the language and logic of democracy itself."⁴⁸³ The democratic discourse had grown quite powerful and the political outlook it prescribed had become the language of power in 5th century Athens. This is exemplified by the way the tyrant came to represent all opposition to democratic rule. Tyranny and the tyrant held a prominent place in the self-conception of the democratic ideals and thus, as will become clear, in shaping democratic fears. Tyranny was not a widespread condition in Greek *poleis* from the 5th century, but oligarchy was. Democracy was thus mainly devised as a solution to the problems related to oligarchy. The last tyrannical regime, in the proper sense of the term, was a thing of the past for the 4th century Athenians, but the application of the term 'tyrant' to anyone who sought to overthrow democracy contributed to keeping the fear alive.⁴⁸⁴ While the cult which celebrated and commemorated Harmodius and Aristogeiton did so because these tyrant-slayers were believed to have liberated Athens and engendered democracy by killing a tyrant, this idea was later challenged by the historians.⁴⁸⁵ By the late 5th century, the myth of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as tyrant slayers and liberators was firmly established.⁴⁸⁶ But, as Thucydides remarks, the Athenians suspected a conspiracy to overthrow the democracy, and they were fearful because they had heard how hard life had been under the Peisistratids before their reign ended.⁴⁸⁷ Furthermore, they had "received information that the tyranny had been put down at last, not due to themselves and Harmodius, but by the Spartans, and so they were always in fear and took everything suspiciously" (*Thuc.* 53:3).⁴⁸⁸ This "information," Raaflaub suggests, might very well be

⁴⁸³ Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*. p. 28.

⁴⁸⁴ Ober, "Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts," in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn B. Morgan (Texas University Press, 2003). p 216.

⁴⁸⁵ A central piece of evidence for the importance attributed to them was the group statue placed in the Agora. It was later removed by the Persians but the Athenians swiftly replaced it on opportunity. For a more cohesive portrayal of the information about the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton see Aruzza, pp. 20-23 and especially Ober "Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis", pp. 217-22.

⁴⁸⁶ Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth- Century Athenian Democracy." p. 66.

⁴⁸⁷ Thucydides cites these events as explanatory for the strong reactions among the Athenians to the mutilation of the Herms, the small statues used to mark borders. One night someone defiled these statues, and Alcibiades soon became implicated as a suspect. This contributed to fears that he was truly a transgressional and tyrant-like figure. These fears were fanned by those of influence who saw him as a threat. The profanities were said to have been executed by an organized network which aimed at overthrowing the democracy. On this, see Nails, *The People of Plato.*, Excursus I.

⁴⁸⁸ Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth- Century Athenian Democracy." p. 66-67.

from Herodotus, who relates that the after Hipparchus' murder, the tyranny went on for four more years, until the Spartans eventually intervened.⁴⁸⁹

Socrates might even be taken to comment on this when he states that the young man is changed from an oligarch to a democrat “just as the city changed when one party received help from likeminded people outside” (559e). However that might be, as Ober states: [...] the relationship between the assassination of Hipparchus, the overthrow of the tyranny, and the origins of democracy were at the center of the debate between democratic ideology and critical discourse on various levels.⁴⁹⁰ We may therefore assert that these debates in all probability belong to the *Republic*'s immediate context. Despite the fact that the most likely threats to democratic rule would seem to come from oligarchic coups (411, 404,) by the 5th century, democrats came to conflate tyranny with anyone who sought to overthrow democracy.⁴⁹¹ The oligarchic ambitions were thus tyrannical in the *demotic* political universe. One indication of this was the oath of Demophantus, instated in the immediate aftermath of the coup of 411, which called on all Athenian citizens to take to arms against anyone who sought to overthrow democracy by setting up a tyranny.⁴⁹² The binary opposition between democracy and tyranny, by relying on the much-hated figure of the tyrant, rendered all critique of democracy as a form of government illegitimate. Within the democratic discourse, the tyrant represented all that was antithetical to democracy itself and the murder of a tyrant was seen, not only as a legitimate act, but as a duty and as an act of heroism. The famous statue group by Critius and Nesiotes, depicting the tyrant-slayers Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the *agora* testifies to this; as does the honors extended to their descendants; including state-sponsored dining in the Prytaneium.⁴⁹³ The presence of a tyrant meant lack of equality, and the threat of his being was thematized in writings, speeches, iconography and art, but perhaps above all else in drama.⁴⁹⁴ As a political figure, the tyrant was a threat to democracy because he “monopolized power and severely

⁴⁸⁹ Raaflaub, “Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy.” p. 67. Wohl, “The Eros of Alcibiades.” also comments on this passage, p. 350. Ober challenges this notion somewhat by claiming that the Athenian democracy was in the public conception imagined to be robust and capable of overcoming brief tyrannical interludes. His conclusion is that the Athenians were optimistic on behalf of democracy, not paranoid and fearful. Ober, “Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts.” pp. 223, 235.

⁴⁹⁰ Ober, “Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts.” p. 222.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 216.

⁴⁹² Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 23-24

⁴⁹³ See Raaflaub, “Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy.” Verified from mid-fifth century.

⁴⁹⁴ See Richard Seaford, “Tragic Tyranny,” in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn A. Morgan (Texas University Press, 2003). p.106.

restricted freedom for everyone else.”⁴⁹⁵ As an archetype, he had certain inherent trademarks, most of which will be familiar to readers of the *Republic*.

The tyrant is portrayed as greedy, distrustful and impious,⁴⁹⁶ traits he to a large extent shares with the *Republic*'s tyrant.⁴⁹⁷ Add to this arbitrary and excessive violence, immoderate behavior like sexual and appetitive excesses, paired with a status as “exceptional,”⁴⁹⁸ and the tyrant has become an Other which embodies all that is unwanted, and in the democratic imaginary: opposite to themselves. The democrat must, by default of this logic, be the opposite of what the tyrant is.⁴⁹⁹ But the convenient position of outsourcing all negative and problematic traits or ideas to a moral monster is one that the argument of the *Republic* does not let pass unchallenged. Plato was, as mentioned, not the only dissenting voice who attempted to destabilize the binary opposition between democrat and tyrant. The idea of the Athenian demos as tyrannical was an image invoked by critics (and subjects) of the Athenian empire on the one hand,⁵⁰⁰ and by internal dissidents in order to criticize Athenian domestic politics on the other.⁵⁰¹ Lisa Kallet draws a cautious distinction between domestic and foreign-relation uses of the imagery applied to Athens as a tyrannical demos or *polis*, respectively.⁵⁰² Although the imagery was conceived in relation to Athens as an empire (*archê*), a ruler over subjects in various states of unfreedom,⁵⁰³ it was also present in internal affairs within the *polis*. The imagery of tyranny within the *polis* can be categorized as three different functions:

The imagery of the ‘Old Oligarch’ represented an elite accusation that the many poor, unjustly ruled their betters, the few, as tyrannical.⁵⁰⁴ A second function was, as Raaflaub argues, the imagery of a “stick” with which politicians could either beat on their opponents or whip the demos into action.⁵⁰⁵ A third function relates to the poetical exploitation of an ambivalence regarding the tyrant who, although consistently portrayed in negative terms by

⁴⁹⁵ Raaflaub, “Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth- Century Athenian Democracy.” p. 62

⁴⁹⁶ Seaford, “Tragic Tyranny.” pp. 96, 100-101. See also Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 42.

⁴⁹⁷ Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 51.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 46.

⁴⁹⁹ The tyrant as a “moral monster” is a wording borrowed from Carolyn Dewald, “Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus.”

⁵⁰⁰ Lisa Kallet, “Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage,” in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn A. Morgan (Texas University Press, 2003). p. 118.

⁵⁰¹ Ober, “Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts.”, p. 216.

⁵⁰² Kallet, “Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage.” p. 118.

⁵⁰³ See Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p. 121-22.

⁵⁰⁴ Ps.-Xen, *The Athenian Constitution*.

⁵⁰⁵ Raaflaub, “Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth- Century Athenian Democracy.” p.71.

the ‘official’ discourse,⁵⁰⁶ nevertheless also was seen as enviable.⁵⁰⁷ This latter function is perhaps the one most clearly applicable to the *Republic*: the dialogue is predicated on very premise that Glaucon is tempted by tyranny and that Thrasymachus is offering a theory with which to legitimize this desire theoretically.⁵⁰⁸ Thrasymachus is further connected to the idea of *polis tyrannos* by virtue of his origin from Chalcedon. In chapter 1, I suggested that we should see Thrasymachus as representing the dialogue’s ‘third level’ in the sense that the dialogue also tells us that Athens as a tyrannical *polis* is to be taken as background information for its discussions.⁵⁰⁹ The critique of Athens as tyrannical arose as a result of what increasingly came to be a rule over subjects rather than a defensive alliance. After the Persian Wars, in which Athens had the key role in defending Greek states from being subjected to a foreign ruler, the Delian League was formed.⁵¹⁰ The league was a defensive alliance of *poleis* with Athens at the helm. As the purpose of the alliance was determined by the wars that had caused its existence, and due to the prior experience, the Greek *poleis* had with such alliances, the terms and duration of Athens hegemony were left unspecified.⁵¹¹ As time went by, the defense league took on the traits of an Empire and became more of a master than a leader, resorting to force and requiring expensive tribute to be paid – only accepting money, not men.

Faced with disgruntled allies turned subjects, and with the responsibilities of an *archê*, a need arose for justifying and explaining their rule.⁵¹² In this context of inter-city politics, the Athenians claimed to be justified in their position on two accounts: First, their entitlement arose from the city’s ‘unique merits’ on both empirical and theoretical grounds. The Athenians could rightly claim that theirs was the most prominent role in securing Greek freedom in the Persian Wars, and secondly, they referred to the doctrine of the natural right of the stronger to dominate the weaker.⁵¹³ This argument perhaps rings familiar to readers of the *Republic*. By putting this postulate in the voice of Thrasymachus, who in this context must be seen as a victim of Athens interstate policy, the *Republic* is in my reading showing us how the logic of the democratic justification of its own rule is inconsistent with democratic reasoning legitimizing a rule by the people. The notion of Athens’

⁵⁰⁶ Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p.108.

⁵⁰⁷ Especially in tragic poetry it seems. See Kallet, “Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage.”p.140, Seaford, “Tragic Tyranny.”et passim, Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*.p 107, 108 for examples. See also *Rep.* 360b-c, 568b.

⁵⁰⁸ Ober, “Tyrant-Slaying as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts.” p. 229.

⁵⁰⁹ See chapter 1, “What Can Thrasymachus do that Glaucon Can’t Do Better? (Political context)”.

⁵¹⁰ A crude portrayal on my part. For a better one, see Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p. 118-19, or Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece*. pp. 201-208.

⁵¹¹ Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p. 118.

⁵¹² *Ibid.* p. 166.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*

legitimization of its rule on account of merit and the natural right of the stronger is liable to be turned around and used against it.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, this reasoning, although aimed at inter-state politics, can be said to become a vehicle for communicating the desirability of tyranny to the young. If one agrees that Thrasymachus and Socrates are engaged in a contest for the role as mentor to Glaucon, this connection emerges through the logic of ‘rule or be ruled’.⁵¹⁵ Further, the Athenians appealed to their freedom as justification for their rule over the Ionians who had proved unworthy for freedom and who had been “long accustomed to slavery.”⁵¹⁶ Freedom is in this account something that one is granted on merit, but more importantly for my argument here: The freedom of some, unless held strictly in check by ideas of equality, always threatens to infringe upon the freedom of others. The Athenians’ status as free legitimized their right to undermine the freedom of others, a theoretical move which shows the close relationship between freedom and power in the discourse. This is the tyrannical seed contained within democratic discourse which the *Republic*, by holding up as a mirror for democracy show: faced with their own logic, the Athenians should see the tyrant within, not the tyrant externalized. One way in which the *Republic* can be interpreted as a comment on this ongoing political debate is in other words this: The above reasoning and the fact that Socrates focuses so much on the soul and on internal tyranny, might, in light of this context, be taken to indicate that the Athenians were so excessively concerned with whether their neighbors (within *polis* or in the sense of other states) harbored tyrannical ambitions, that they neglected to scrutinize themselves with an eye to the same thing.

Reading the *Republic* as situated in an ongoing contemporary debate about power, freedom, and rule has some further implications for how we may conceive of the dialogue as a whole. I see the notion of freedom as power as connected to another feature of the tyrant, and the demos, namely fear. In this section, I will argue that Socrates relies on tropes of the tyrant as both fearful and fearsome in order to strip him of his power in the admiring eyes of Glaucon. Taken together, these ideas are important to my reading. It is through notions of fear that the *Republic* is able to make the discursive move connecting democracy to tyranny and thus destabilizing the binary relationship between them. To explain: The demos can be said to be connected to the tyrant by sharing some fear-related features in two ways: On the one hand, tyrants were recognizable by their ability to instill fears in others, and on the other hand, they were seen as fearful themselves. The *Republic*, I argue, largely pursues the latter perception.

⁵¹⁴ Incidentally, a similar move as Irwin sees Thrasymachus performing on the craft-analogy.

⁵¹⁵ In Book IX, this reasoning is made explicit as a tyrannical and tragic trait: “So someone with a tyrannical nature lives his whole life without being friends with anyone, *always a master to one man or a slave to another* and never getting a taste of either freedom or true friendship”. (*Rep.* 576). My italics.

⁵¹⁶ Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*. p. 168.

Yet, I will briefly review the idea of *demos tyrannos* as fearsome, since it belongs to the context of the *Republic*'s treatment of the issue. In an analysis of Aristophanes' *Knights*, Kallet finds that the fear that the *demos* instills in its subjects both connects the *demos* to the tyrant-discourse, but also serves as a (potentially backhanded) compliment. "Demos, you have a fine sway, since all mankind fears you like a man with tyrannical power" (1111-1114).⁵¹⁷ Here, the *demos*' power is connected to the degree of fear it instills in not only its subjects, but in "all of mankind", and the *demos* is implicitly connected to the tyrant by its fearsomeness. But the connection between fear and the tyrant is double-sided: On the other side, the tyrant, particularly as we know him from the *Republic*, perhaps, is also known to be fearful. When Pericles (and Cleon) in their speeches liken the Athenian *arché* to a tyranny (*Thuc.* 2.63.1– 2, 3.37.2), the rhetorical function of this can be seen as one of striking fear in the heart of Athenians in order to orient them towards a realistic assessment of their situation. Raaflaub contends that this use of the metaphor still retained the negative valor of the tyrant-image. However, others have argued that the *demos tyrannos* was not to be understood in entirely negative terms. As Robert Connor hypothesized in his influential article *Tyrannos Demos*, the idea of the *demos* as tyrannical indicated that tyranny was "good for the tyrant, but bad for the subjects."⁵¹⁸ Kallet argues that when the *demos* was called tyrannical it was sometimes in the sense of being enviable.⁵¹⁹ Against Raaflaub who sees this use of *demos tyrannos*, – as a way of instilling fear in the *demos*,– as an argument against any positive connotations of the metaphor⁵²⁰ I think it is rather the case that on the basis of the portrayal of the relationship between tyranny, democracy and fear in the *Republic*, the case can be made that the fear-instilling function rather proves the *demos* as tyrannical: The powerful who fears does so because they rule unjustly. If Pericles' rhetoric's worked, this rather proves the point, but does not exclude the possibility of tyranny also being seen as desirable and worthwhile on an all things considered-judgement. This is also a possible interpretation of Pericles' speech, which I quoted above. The idea of the tyrant as instilling fear and hatred in others, causing him to become fearful himself, is in the *Republic* made into a criterion for tyranny. At least on Plato's account, the tyrant has good reasons to believe that others want to harm him, surrounded as he is by enemies on all sides (579a-c).

⁵¹⁷ Kallet, "Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage." pp. 137-8. Aristophanes, *Knights*. 1111-1114,

⁵¹⁸ See Connors, "Tyrannis Polis." p. 98; Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 33. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy.", offers a critique of Connors conclusion.

⁵¹⁹ Kallet, "Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage." p. 123.

⁵²⁰ Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy." p. 108.

Such reasons might not count for Socrates as ‘reasons to be afraid’. While fear seems to be a rational response to certain situations,⁵²¹ Socrates challenges this view. Fear, in the *Protagoras*, is defined as “an expectation of something bad [...] whether we call it apprehension (*deima*) or fear (*phobos*)” *Prot.* 358d). We moderns would call it an emotion, but the Greeks did not have an exact equivalent. *Pathos* is the closest we get, which can be translated as ‘that which happens to a person or thing’ or ‘affection’. A. W. Price stresses the propositional core of Greek emotions, one that we to a certain extent share today. Consider that we are usually sad *about* X or angry *that* Y.⁵²² Paul W. Ludwig states that the ancients regarded passions as “changes which the soul ‘passively’ undergoes, as opposed to the soul’s activities, such as thinking.”⁵²³ As discussed in chapter 2, Socrates’ definitions of courage demonstrate the epistemological component of emotions, and especially of fear:⁵²⁴ In the *Protagoras*, courage is defined as the wisdom to know what is and what is not to be feared (358d), and in the *Republic* as “[t]he power to preserve through everything, the correct and law-inculcated belief about what is to be feared and what isn’t” (429c-d).

Such definitions of fear in turn raise the question of emotions’ relationship to beliefs. The Socratic definition of courage has been much debated, and in the *Republic*, he makes a novel point about civic courage.⁵²⁵ Given that fears or aversions work in roughly the same way as desires, we are pulled towards some things, and are averse to others, depending on our psychological make-up. When a soul is ruled by reason, reason is what determines the ends, and the proper means, for the agent. If any other part of the soul rules, then fears will become irrational. Honor, for example, is a social value. Someone who has as his top-ranked desire, his ‘good’, to gain honor cares very much about what other people think. Public ridicule is not something any of us strive for, but when it takes the form of a fear that keeps us from pursuing the goals set for us by reason, for example in telling truth, the fear has become irrational. This seems to be one of the ways in which non-rational ends can be exposed, and it also lets us know that each character-type has some likely vulnerabilities; not only with regard to desires, but also in terms of fears. In chapter 2, I extrapolated a schematic form of how aversions correspond to motivations according to the tripartite-soul principle:

⁵²¹ Not to mention instinctive, natural and necessary

⁵²² A. W. Price, “Emotions in Plato and Aristotle,” *Oxford Handbooks Online*, accessed December 3, 2020, https://www.academia.edu/25511307/Emotions_in_Plato_and_Aristotle.

⁵²³ Paul W. Ludwig, “Anger, Eros and Other Political Passions in Ancient Greek Thought,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Ryan K. Balot (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), p. 294.

⁵²⁴ See Chapter 2, “Dying Cloth is a Manly Art: Glaucon’s’ Deliberations”.

⁵²⁵ Paul Woodruff, “Socrates and Political Courage”, *Ancient Philosophy*, 27 (2007), 289–302; R. K. Balot, “Subordinating Courage to Justice: Statecraft and Soulcraft in Fourth-Century Athenian Rhetoric and Platonic Political Philosophy”, *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 25.1 (2007), 35–52 <<https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.2007.25.1.35>>.

	Desire/Motivation	Fear/aversion
Reason	Truth	Falsehoods /Lies
Spirit	Honor	Dishonor
Appetite	Sex, food, drink, power	Pains/Restraints

Now it is time to review this formula in light of the democratic ideology in relation to which the *Republic* positions itself. In the Platonic corpus we find that Socrates makes the following claims about fear and death.

- I There are worse things than dying (*Apol.*)
- II We should fear slavery more than death (*Rep.*)

These claims (which are essentially moral claims) hold little sway in the democratic regime. First of all, the democrat is by default unordered, bordering on the lawless⁵²⁶ – he shuns any kind of constraints on his pursuits. But even more seriously, the democratic principle in itself is opposed to the kind of ethical considerations Socrates thinks we should be concerned with. Freedom, which was established as the agreed upon ‘good’ in democracy has as its opposite, not slavery, but death. At least if death is what the poets make it out to be. In further explanation of this point, I argued, as the reader might remember, that democratic freedom in the account of *Republic* should be interpreted as (more or less) synonymous with power. Death, not slavery, is portrayed as the ultimate loss of power in the poetic account. Thus, death is the ‘bad’ to pair off democracy’s ‘good’. According to Socrates’ conception of what should be feared and not, the democratic discourse can rightly be charged with making its citizens fear the wrong thing. For in the Socratic account there are worse things than dying. If there were not, then all actions would be morally permitted in the face of death.

The relationship between fear and freedom in democracy is at the core of how the *Republic* in my reading argues that democracy engenders tyranny. Furthermore, it can be seen as yet another way the *Republic* posits its arguments in dialogue with democratic reasoning. As Ryan K. Balot has argued, democratic ideology appropriated the cardinal virtue of the hero and the hoplite, and transformed it into a feature of the democratic character.⁵²⁷ Against this, the *Republic* argues that the democratic notion of freedom rather

⁵²⁶ Even though transgressions do not become an aim itself until for the tyrant. The democrats aim is desire-satisfaction, and transgressions only a consequence.

⁵²⁷ Ryan K. Balot, *Courage in the Democratic Polis: Ideology and Critique in Classical Athens* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). p. 3.

generates a particular form of fear as a result of construing human and inter-poleis relations in terms of a power struggle. As becomes increasingly clear in Book IX, the tyrant is motivated by fear (*phobos*) (578a; 578d; 579b), and increasingly so the more tyrannical (powerful and unrestrained) he becomes. His fears and desires are what rules in his soul and in that sense, he suffers from internal slavery. But, seeing as the whole city is fearful under him (578a) he is surrounded by enemies (579b) on all sides, and his paranoia and mistrust will award him with the utmost loss of freedom also in the physical sense. He alone of the men in the city is unable to go anywhere abroad, or see what other men wants to see, because he spends his time locked up from fear of his fellow men (579d). In his attempt at gaining the whole of injustice, to become absolutely free in the positive sense, the tyrant becomes the most unfree, the most slave-like. With regard to first, his desires, and later, his fears, he is an *akratic* in relation to himself (579c). Thus, the tyrant has been brought to light as both internally and externally unfree.⁵²⁸ When in Book VIII we learn that rather than being antithetical to it, tyranny is democracy's offspring, the discourse of democracy's relation to tyranny has been dramatically altered from the conception that sets them as polar opposites.

In these sections I have shown how the *Republic* addresses and criticizes democratic logic and discourse by attacking the democratic value of freedom and on important aspects positing it as virtually indistinguishable from power. This move allows for the connection between the democratic value of freedom as a search for power and tyranny. In the *Republic*'s portrayal, they become interconnected by greed and fear.

Looking and Seeing Oneself: Modes of Self-Gazing and Investigation

In this section, I will return to the notion of seeing and looking launched at the very outset of the *Republic*, when Socrates relates that he wanted to "observe" (*theasasthai*) (327a) the festival of Bendis. Later in the dialogue, as I have argued above, the myth of Gyges will show us that how and where our gaze is directed, shape our understanding of ourselves as well as of others, and furthermore determine our epistemological horizon. When directed towards our desires, gazing inwards can hinder us in our relations with others and make us misjudge them.⁵²⁹ In the remainder of this chapter, I will build on this reasoning in order to argue that the *Republic* posits the ability to correctly judge others as also a political skill. Glaucon, like the Athenian demos, may

⁵²⁸ For an analysis of the tyrant's profile, see Karen Margrethe Nielsen, "The Tyrant's Vice: Pleonexia and Lawlessness in Plato's Republic," *Philosophical Perspectives* 33, no. 1 (2019): 146–69, <https://doi.org/10.1111/phpe.12129>.

⁵²⁹ As also argued in chapter 1, "Metaphors of Vision: The corruptive Gaze".

not be able to recognize the tyrannical desires within himself. These lacks are interrelated, I will argue. The topic of self-investigation is fathered by Kephalus. His views, I suggest, may be taken as an interpretational framework for the character of Glaucon in that they should be seen as background-assumptions that Glaucon would likely share. First of all, their conversation begins on the topic of wealth. Extreme wealth was by the Greeks connected with foreign tyrants.⁵³⁰ Kephalus, albeit far from a tyrant, must be said to possess tyrant-like wealth, and this, as we shall see, presents a powerful allure for a young man like Glaucon.

Kephalus shortly excuses himself from the conversation on the grounds that “it is already time for me to look after the sacrifices” (331d), even though we know he had recently sacrificed before Socrates encountered him (328c). Does Kephalus try to “flee enslavement in a cloud of smoke” (569a) as did Gyges’ descendant, the famously rich Croesus?⁵³¹ (*Hist.* 1.87.). Is this the “sweet hope” (*Rep.* 331a) that sustains Kephalus in his old age? Or what is the reason for his departure? As several scholars have pointed out, Kephalus’ views amount to a theory that wealth makes justice and just actions more readily available to the individual by that he can more easily pay off debts to humans as well as gods. This view has been criticized as a platitude expressing conventional wisdom, and the character of Kephalus has been portrayed as a complacent, wealthy man, content with accepting and practicing the norms of his society and letting the poets think for him instead of applying himself. In the words of Nicholas Pappas, he is “a bourgeois philistine.”⁵³² Harmless and uninteresting, he is not missed from the dialogue, and neither will he miss it.⁵³³ I will suggest that his actions, his words, and his character tell a different story. Kephalus looks to Socrates very old, and about his head is a wreath – for he has just preformed a sacrifice in the courtyard (328c). Their conversation proceeds: ‘How are you finding life on death’s threshold?’ Socrates can be taken to ask.⁵³⁴ Kephalus himself is so weak that he cannot make the trip to town, and he sits on a chair propped up with pillows, seeming to Socrates and the readers feeble. It has been suggested that this ‘feebleness’ is there to

⁵³⁰ On the wealth of tyrants, see Seaford, “Tragic Tyranny.” p. 110; Kallet, “Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power, and Economic Patronage.” pp. 122-3.

⁵³¹ According to the *Histories*, Croesus, immensely rich, was able to call upon Apollon, and by reference to his lavish sacrifices was able to have the god quench the flames of his funeral pyre, only to escape to a life as a slave. *Hist* 1.87.

⁵³² Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*. p. 31. Reeve gives a thoughtful reading, and concludes that whether Kephalus is a good or a bad man in Plato’s portrayal is disputed amongst scholars and the reason is that Plato’s portrayal is inconclusive on this. Reeve, *Blindness and Reorientation*. p 45.

⁵³³ Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*. p. 31.

⁵³⁴ The expression he uses is one that implies standing on the threshold of entering a different world – the meaning is that Kephalus is on the doorstep of Hades. See Bloom, note 12, p. 441. See Saxonhouse for a suggestion that the symposium itself could be seen as analogue to the death realm in which a meal and a feast is exchanged for insubstantial words. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity*. pp. 138-39.

illustrate and enhance his relatively “limited moral and intellectual capacities.”⁵³⁵ My suggestion is that he contributes to the framework of the dialogue in a different sense: His decaying body and waning strength are to remind us of what Thrasymachus leaves out of his ‘might-is-right-speech’ – Kephalus reminds us that we can all become ‘the weaker’. Thus, he contributes to the interpretational framework by reminding us of the relationship between vulnerability and power and our mutual dependency, even before the anthropology has been launched.⁵³⁶

When prompted by the extremely poor (*penia*) Socrates, the extremely wealthy metic Kephalus admits that his wealth probably does make his life easier, and the greatest benefit of his wealth is that he is able to depart for “that other place” without owing a god sacrifices or money to a man (331b).

Further, I argue, he contributes to the interpretational framework by launching a theme of self-investigation which will be an important building block in Socrates portrayal of the skill of assessing motivations as a political skill. For, now that he is approaching his departure to that other place, he turns to look at himself with a different eye, full of “suspicions and terror,” he investigates himself and considers whether he has done anything unjust to anyone (303). Like the democratic demos, Kephalus looks inside himself and finds fear and foreboding. These fears are perhaps a testimony to the many possibilities for wrongdoing a fortune such as his has provided him with in his life: As much as a means by which to right one’s wrongs, wealth must be taken to provide opportunities for doing wrong.⁵³⁷ Now his gaze is directed towards the afterlife and whatever deeds his desires drove him to when they ruled as “masters” in his soul (329c), they now present themselves to him in a different light. He reports that a man approaching his death is filled with:

foreboding and fear (*deima*) and he examines himself to see whether he has been unjust to anyone. If he finds many injustices in his life, he awakes from sleep in terror, as children do, and lives in anticipation of bad things to come (330e).

Kephalus must have found that he indeed had a thing or two to fear from the afterlife to be so eager to attend to his offerings. The notion that wealth will grant you impunity, from your fellow men as well as from the gods, is part of the background assumption that Socrates will assume that Glaucon shares, and which he will try to dissuade. In my reading, the function of Kephalus here is to act as a warning of the perils of wealth: Morally, because of the opportunities it provides for unjust actions with impunity from both men and

⁵³⁵ Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato’s Dialogues*. p. 169.

⁵³⁶ See 369: The origin of cities is a ‘need’ we have for each other. It is there portrayed as a question of productivity, but the feebleness of Kephalus lets us know that this is not the full story.

⁵³⁷ See e.g., 420a; Wages for paying mistresses; see Chapter 3 for an argument of what is wrong with wealth, according to Socrates.

gods. Practically, by making the wealth-holder a target for others' greed, as with Polemarchus. The reason for this warning is that Socrates suspects that part of the allure of the tyrant for Glaucon lies precisely in his wealth. Wealth offers, in Cephalus' account, the kind of impunity Glaucon fantasizes that the ring offers to Gyges. Refuting this conception of wealth is a part of responding to Glaucon's 'unspoken challenge'.

Cephalus has revealed that his current situation has caused him to undertake some sort of moral self-scrutiny, although, as should be expected from a businessman, he does not examine himself in the way of the philosopher (*exetazontos*, *Apol.* 38a) Rather, he calculates and considers (*analogitztai; kai skopei*) (330e). The word *skopei* does indeed mean to behold, or to contemplate, but also has the further connotation: to spy from above.⁵³⁸ Perhaps we can take the meaning of this newfound pastime of Cephalus to be one of looking at oneself *as one might look* to a god, that is, through a moral evaluation with judgement in mind. This would fit well with my analysis of Glaucon in chapter 1, where I concluded that desires and self-knowledge seemed to be somewhat opposed: Not only did Thrasymachus and Glaucon become blind to others because of the strong motives that moved them from the inside (fear and desire, respectively), but the effect of the ring, or rather 'the effect of perceived impunity' was to make clear to Glaucon his own desires, while blurring out everyone else's. Cephalus reports that his waning desires have changed the way he looks at himself, but with what kind of gaze does he look? Cephalus seems to be trying to not so much look inward into himself, but rather to try to see what he himself would look like from the outside. This is a mistake which I argue that Glaucon repeats, and which Socrates posits as endogenous to democratic culture by virtue of the explicit and implicit values it conveys. By tracking the analogy of the statue, I find that the *Republic* differentiates between a way of assessing others and oneself through a gaze from the outside, or from the inside. As we shall see, only the philosopher masters the latter skill.

The Revelation of Glaucon

During the course of this thesis, we have encountered Glaucon many times. I have argued that his character is a crucial backdrop for the conversation of the *Republic*. Now the time has come to pause and gather together what is known about him, both inside and outside of the *Republic*, in order to bring out why Socrates might conduct the conversation as he does.

We know little of Glaucon as a historical character, but we do know that he was Plato's older brother, as was Adeimantus. We furthermore know that their

⁵³⁸ To simplify. The word *skopao* which *skopei* is a form of (verb 3rd sg pres ind act attic epic doric ionic contr) has a common root with *skopiatzo*, which means to spy from above.

uncle on the maternal side was Critias, who led the Thirty oligarchs which held power in Athens rather briefly, but horribly, when Plato was a young man. Plato himself was drawn to their undertaking. Not only were these men his family (on the maternal side) and acquaintances, but “their project”, to replace the democratic regime with an oligarchic one I surmise, seemed to him also a “proper one”. “Not surprisingly”, Plato relates in the *Seventh Letter*, “for I was young” (324e). Like Glaucon is, at least in part, drawn to the ideas of power spoken by Thrasymachus “and countless others” (358c), Plato was drawn to the project of the Thirty.

Glaucon, and Adeimantus, must have been given the same opportunities to join the cause of the Thirty. Jacob Howland argues that we should entertain the idea that Glaucon did join his uncle, and that he in fact was killed fighting for the Thirty at about the same place on the road where he and Socrates are “overtaken” by Polemarchus in 403 BCE.⁵³⁹ The terror regime of the Thirty tyrants belongs to the *Republic*’s immediate political and historical context. Whether or not Glaucon did join their ranks is not necessarily of significance to my interpretation; the *Republic* is after all a work of fiction and although Plato populates his works with historical characters historical accuracy is not an aim of his dialogues. But taking this context into account is helpful for considering the role that Glaucon can be said to fulfil in the *Republic*. Is he present as a tragic young man who succumbed to the temptations of power “like so many young men,” or is he representative of ideas and doubts that Plato himself harbored at some crucial point in his life? Or should we rather see him as all young men in the Platonic corpus –as potentiality a soul which may or may not give birth to virtue, but really poses the question to the reader: what will *you* choose?⁵⁴⁰ The answer regarding Glaucon’s character in effect determines the intonation of the arguments of the *Republic*.

In the course of the *Republic*, Glaucon is portrayed as not without merit, but also with some serious flaws. He is perhaps, another young man, who precisely because of his brilliance, his good looks, wealth, and powerful relatives in the city, is in danger of turning out “completely vicious” by the corruption of the city.⁵⁴¹ In chapter 1 of this thesis, I analyzed Glaucon’s

⁵³⁹ Howland draws on a hypothesis by the historian Mark Munn. That Polemarchus here stars in the role of the democratic coalition is fitting – the democrats were supplied with shields from his and his brother Lysias’ factory. Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. p.8.

⁵⁴⁰ See Harvey Yunis for an argument to the effect that the *Republic* intends to compel the reader. Harvey Yunis, “The Protreptic Rhetoric of the Republic,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Republic* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–26.

⁵⁴¹ Howland argues that the passage of the goat-stag apology really relates to Glaucon rather than Alcibiades. Perhaps so, but since the fate of Alcibiades is the only one known at the (dramatic) time of the dialogue, the interlocutors present would not have picked up on this. At the very least the passage must refer to them both in the sense of being communicated on two different levels: One thing is what Socrates communicates to his interlocutors in the dialogue, another, possibly, what Plato communicates to his readers by means of what is said in the dialogue. On the first level then, the reference must be to Alcibiades, while the readers are in

contribution to the challenge about justice and concluded that his arguments amounted to a theory about human nature, an anthropology, which turned out to be in tune with common Athenian conceptions about humans and desires. In the words of Howland, this makes Glaucon into a

[. . .] paradigmatic Athenian, shaped by democratic desires and popular imperialistic longings. [...] In Plato's depiction of his character, we see a psychological reflection of the contest between the few and the many that would erupt violently at the end of the Peloponnesian War.⁵⁴²

Glaucon, belonging to the elite in terms of his birth and connections, seems to take for granted that he himself thus is both noble and good. But in the course of the *Republic*, we get many hints that this is not the full picture of Glaucon's character. A further hint we get by taking a detour to another dialogue, the *Symposium*:

The prelude to the *Symposium* is a peculiar one, even as Platonic dialogues go: An unnamed friend of Apollodorus asks him to relate the events at what must have become a famous symposium, and Apollodorus answers that coincidentally, he has just had the opportunity to rehearse the story. Only two days prior, Glaucon had come running up to him, urgently asking to be told the story as if it were an important piece of news. Really, the events had taken place many years earlier.

We do not know for certain that this Glaucon is the very same Glaucon who is a main cast of the *Republic*. Nails asserts that he is, and Nussbaum does not preclude it.⁵⁴³ Now, given what we have said so far, and assuming that he is the same, Glaucon comes running to a friend and follower of Socrates, in a hurry to be told Socrates' discourse on love. This is perhaps not as mysterious as it may seem at first glance: If Glaucon is on the verge of claiming a place for himself in public life at the dramatic time of the *Republic*, and if Socrates' project is to save him from doing so, then no one has a more urgent need to hear the story of Alcibiades and Socrates' discourse about love. Nussbaum suggest that the dramatic date of the dialogue is set in the days right before or after Alcibiades death. Athens would then have been on the verge of military capitulation to Sparta, internally torn between the oligarchs and the democratic sentiments, and a moderate oligarchical government would be on the verge of collapse. The so-called Thirty tyrants, led by Critias and other family members of Plato, want to obliterate from the city all traces of democratic institutions: "The hopes of the defenders of tradition, and freedom,

the privileged position of being able to pick up on the fact that the passage might be about a present (but at that point, silent), Glaucon. Howland, *Glaucon's Fate*. p. 40.

⁵⁴² Howland, *Glaucon's Fate*, p. 53.

⁵⁴³ Nails, *The People of Plato*. p. 315. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*. p. 170.

are in disarray.”⁵⁴⁴ These were the days when the democratic majority of Athenians largely bewailed their rash judgment of Alcibiades. Plutarch writes:

In despair they recalled their past mistakes and follies, and they considered that the greatest of all had been their second outburst against Alcibiades ... And yet ... a faint glimmer of hope remained, that the cause of Athens could never be utterly lost so long as Alcibiades was alive.⁵⁴⁵

It would make sense then for a politically interested person, whether democratically inclined, or oligarchic, to be intensely interested if some misconstrued news that Alcibiades was back in town, circulated.⁵⁴⁶ Since Apollodorus, as a follower of Socrates, was likely to be opposed to the unconstitutional measures of the Thirty, “Glaucou’s silence about his deeper concerns may suggest a link with the oligarchs.”⁵⁴⁷

Howland suggests that we see the dialogues’ internal relationship as, in terms the *Symposium*, in retelling, being Glaucon’s first encounter with Socrates, while the *Republic* is the second. This suggestion is based on the temporality in the two dialogues: in the *Symposium*, Apollodorus begins by speaking of “the day before yesterday,” while in the *Republic*, Socrates relates events of “yesterday.”⁵⁴⁸ But, in contrast to the story of Alcibiades, a generation older, Glaucon’s story has not yet played out. Even though it is notoriously difficult to dramatically date the *Republic*, Glaucon is at the time of the dialogue a young man of great political ambition,⁵⁴⁹ and of an undecided moral character. He is not convinced by Thrasymachus’ arguments for injustice, but neither is he convinced by Socrates’ refutation: As such, his soul hangs in the balance.⁵⁵⁰ He is in the company of Socrates at the outset of the dialogue, but is perhaps not a *follower* of Socrates, as such.

In chapter 2, I argued that Glaucon’s particular combination of fears and desires revealed him as an honor lover.⁵⁵¹ This is generally agreed on by scholars since it is also supported by statements within the dialogue; Socrates refers to him as “most courageous in everything” (357a) and already distinguished in battle. He had a lover, infatuated enough to compose an ode, praising the brothers distinguished effort in combat (368a), and from this we may infer both that he is attractive in some way, and that he is able to set aside

⁵⁴⁴ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*. p. 169.

⁵⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Alc.* XXXVIII.

⁵⁴⁶ Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*. p. 169.

⁵⁴⁷ Nussbaum. p. 169. On Socrates’ relationship to the Thirty, see the *Apology*, in which he relates a story of how he opposed them and refused to be compromised. Regardless, Socrates condemnation and execution cannot be understood unless in light of the Tyrants, because the charge that he was corrupting the young, to some extent charges him in complicity in inflaming these ideas in the young men of Athens.

⁵⁴⁸ Howland, *Glaucou’s Fate*. p. 30.

⁵⁴⁹ See also Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.6.

⁵⁵⁰ Howland, *Glaucou’s Fate*. p. 39.

⁵⁵¹ “Dying Cloth is a Manly Art: Glaucon’s’ Deliberations”.

the luxuries he so craves to endure the hardships of war, thus displaying a kind of moderation (*sophrosyne*).⁵⁵² Socrates also depicts him as a lover – an ardent lover of boys, finding reason to praise all of them, provided that they still have the bloom of youth (474d-e), and in this he seems less moderate. Combined with his tastes for luxuries and comforts, we might surmise that his courage is of the kind that is induced by even more powerful desires, that of the love of victory and esteem which hallmarks the honor lover. On this account alone he should be precluded as ruler of the city if he had listened carefully to what Socrates said at the outset, because

[...] good people won't be willing to rule for the sake of either money or honor. They don't want to be paid wages openly for ruling and get called hired hands, nor to take them in secret from their rule and be called thieves. And they won't rule for the sake of honor, because they aren't ambitious honor-lovers (347d).

His great ambition, perhaps, exceeds his ability to listen. Furthermore, I stated in the above that Glaucon's own powerful desires were of the kind to blur his judgement: His desires got in the way of seeing and perceiving others correctly. This led him to victimize others, or at least to fantasize about it, as we saw in the 'Ring Myth'. In chapter 2, I showed that Glaucon's desires caused him to mistake smaller pleasures for larger and to make the same mistake with pains: He would refrain from the pleasure of sex with boys for fear of ridicule, but he would go to war for luxuries. Ridicule is "a childish thing to fear," according to Socrates (451a), but in Xenophon, it is only by showing him how he is himself likely to be the victim of such public ridicule that Socrates is able to dissuade Glaucon from rashly presenting himself to the Assembly before maturity.⁵⁵³ Glaucon's desires and fears interfere with his ability to calculate correctly.⁵⁵⁴

Given the argument so far, which determined the soul as plastic, there is perhaps something simplistic about trying to determine Glaucon as 'the timocrat' or 'the oligarch': The whole point of the regime/man analogy is that character is moldable. On this premise, Howland's suggestion that Glaucon might have ended up as a supporter of the Thirty does not entail that Glaucon at that point would have mapped perfectly on to the portrayal of the oligarch from the *Republic*, but rather that some character traits comingled with circumstance, and that he at one point took the wrong turn, for reasons complex but nonetheless worth investigating. After all, even though Glaucon is said to be a lover of victory, he is still "less stubborn" than the full grown timocrat. This, however, does not necessitate that he is something better: it might be that he is too soft, too fond of luxuries which is said to be the other extreme (590b), and which would fit well with my interpretation of Glaucon

⁵⁵² Howland, *Glaucon's Fate*. p. 39.

⁵⁵³ Xen., *Mem.*, 3.6.16.

⁵⁵⁴ See "Glaucon's Deliberations", chapter 2 for this argument.

as a paradigmatic democrat. Furthermore, as Socrates warns, “there is no change so quick as from the young man who loves honor to the money lover” (553d). The question of who Glaucon *is*, is perhaps then somewhat misconstrued, for the point rather seems to be that he is still at the point in his life where the choices he makes will determine who he will become (e.g., 618b).

Despite his forebodings at the beginning of Book V (450d-451b), Socrates does go on to discuss how a change in regime could come about: only by extreme force, breaking apart families, killing both defective infants as well as exiling everyone over the age of ten, can the rule of philosophers come to be. Why does Socrates risk placing these ideas into the head of a young man of extreme political ambition? Perhaps the answer is that it is necessary in order to fully exhort the scope and nature of Glaucon’s desires. For the Kallipolis *is* Glaucon’s city, as Socrates makes clear time and again (431c; 453b; 461e; 534d; 546a).⁵⁵⁵ Having first established a city with Adeimantus, the virtuous city, the construction process continues with such fluidity as to almost escape notice when Socrates calls on Glaucon to help look for injustice. In a passage (428b-) which I take to be aimed at instilling in Glaucon that what is required to rule a city is some specific kind of knowledge (and assessing whether he understands that he does not have it), they determine that the knowledge required of the guardians is the ability to judge, not about any particular matter “but about the city as a whole and the maintenance of good relations, both internally and with other cities?” (428c). It is Glaucon who reserves this particular skill for the Guardians (428d), and from this point on Socrates refers to the city as *your* city: “Then, don’t you see”, Socrates asks, “that in your city, too, the desires of the inferior many are controlled by the wisdom and desires of the superior few?” (431d). He agrees with Socrates that the multiform desires of the many make them ill equipped to rule. But what is the alternative? To be ruled by the desires of Glaucon? This is, according to my reading, the idea that Socrates slowly unearths from Glaucon through his art of midwifery. Glaucon’s guardians are allowed to rule because they have a special kind of judgement, a kind of knowledge. To this effect, the rulers must go through extensive education. Yet, when asked to apply his judgement in order to judge between the life of a tyrant and the king in Book IX, Glaucon seems to have forgotten that he himself has not gone through these preparational stages and he takes it upon himself to judge.

In the coming sections I will argue that the act of ‘looking into’ others and reveal what is really there, for themselves as much as for others, is not only what Socrates is performing in the *Republic*, but that this also amounts to a sort of political expertise, a skill, or a craft to which the philosopher has the tools. Not only does the philosopher know himself; he assists others in

⁵⁵⁵ The preceding city, which follows the City of Pigs, Howland calls the Virtuous City and this is said to belong to Adeimantus (427d). Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. p.52-3

knowing themselves also, if they will only listen to the words they speak. What remains is to answer the question whether Glaucon is a better judge at the end of the dialogue.

Glaucon's Confirmations

In Book IX, the time has come to pass judgement on the tyrannic man, whether he lives “blessedly (*makarion*) or wretchedly (*athlion*)” (571a). In this section, Socrates has Glaucon confirm the wretchedness of the tyrant an inordinate number of times. The explanation for this behavior, I argue, is that even if Glaucon more than willingly condemns the tyrant, time and again, he has not really developed the ability to recognize him. This is something which Socrates hints at, but which is first and foremost shown dramatically to the reader, rather than discussed in the dialogue. Again, we see that the dialogues’ voice can not be identified with any one agent within it.

After having established a genesis for the tyrant with Adeimantus, accounting for how the “terrible, lawless and savage” (572b) desires are awakened; and how his erotic drive becomes a huge, winged drone in his soul (573a); with an unruly mob of desires around it, some coming from the outside while others from the inside, let loose by “bad habits” (575a), Socrates states that this man is the worst man (*kakiston*) (576b). “Necessarily,” (*anankê*) Glaucon states, when he takes over the argument “The man who turns out to be the worst, will he be the most wretched (*athlios*) as well?” (576b). Again, Glaucon answers that this must necessarily be so (576c). Socrates further asks for confirmation that the analogy between city and man holds, so that the “tyrannic man corresponds to the city under tyranny” and the “man of the people” to the democracy and so on (576c), and “as city is to city with respect to virtue and happiness (*eudaimonia*) so is man to man?” (576d). Both of these claims are accepted by Glaucon, when Socrates asks, “with respect to virtue, what is the relationship between a city under a tyranny and the one under a kingship such as we first described?” Glaucon readily answers that “everything is the opposite. The one was the best, and the other is the worst” (576d). Yet, Socrates does not relent: As to their happiness and wretchedness, do you judge similarly, he wants to know. For the second time, Glaucon confirms that the tyrant and the city under the tyrant is the most wretched (576e).

This does not seem to satisfy Socrates, who further has Glaucon confirm that the tyrannically ruled city is slave (and, again wretched) (577c); that the tyrant’s soul is likewise slave (577d); that the city under tyranny least does what it wants, as does the soul of the tyrant (577d-e); that it is poor, both in city and soul (578a); that it is suffering and lamenting; and that there is more of all this in a tyrannical city than in any other city (578a). “I suppose,” Socrates goes on, “that you looked to all of these things and others like them

and judged this city to be the most wretched of cities?” (578b). “Wasn’t I right?” Glaucon asks, suddenly uncertain. “Quite right,” comes the reply, “but what about the tyrannic man?” “By far the most wretched,” Glaucon confirms, for the third time (578b). Now Socrates says that this is not right, but that the most wretched man is additionally the one who “by some misfortune” is given the occasion to become sole ruler (578b-c). Glaucon affirms his agreement, for the fourth time confirming that the tyrant is the most wretched (578b-c). This latter point seems like splitting hairs, and although Socrates has a point in stating that “in an argument such as this one must not suppose things, but must consider them quite well” (578c) the number of questions and confirmations seems somewhat excessive in this passage.

What might be the cause for this? I argue that this is indicative of a greater point in the *Republic*, which is highly relevant with regard to Glaucon in that he illustrates it, namely that of the importance of being able to judge others – their motivations and character. In chapter 1, I pointed out that much of the discourse between Socrates and Thrasymachus amounts to a game of strategy where the opponents try to correctly judge the other’s motivations, as well as, on the part of Thrasymachus, rhetorically trying to undermine Socrates through *ad hominem* arguments, questioning his motives. Furthermore, I argued that a likely backdrop for Thrasymachus’ accusations against Socrates was the story of Deioces, who practiced justice vigorously, in order to win tyrannical power.

Glaucon picks up on this idea that justice is something practiced for the look of the thing, when he ‘restores’ Thrasymachus’ argument in his challenge to Socrates. In claiming that no one practices justice willingly, but only grudgingly and as a means to avoid suffering injustice, Glaucon argues that the just and the unjust man, given free reign, would by their desires be lead down the same path: “We would catch the just man red-handed going the same way as the unjust man out of a desire to get the better; this is what any nature naturally pursues as good” (359c). The myth of Gyges is an argument given in support of this claim, and continuing his reasoning (or the reasoning he has been “talked deaf” about by Thrasymachus and “countless others” (358c)), Glaucon sets up the thought experiment of an unjust man, who not only gets away with injustice, but is also perceived to be just and profits from this, and a just man, “simple and noble” who on the contrary is believed to be unjust (361b).

The concern Socrates has with regard to Glaucon is related to his capacity to judge. In Book IX of the *Republic*, the ability to look inside and to see what is really there is said to be the ability of a man fit to judge men (577a). After Glaucon has confirmed twice that status as most wretched belongs to the tyrant, Socrates further asks;

would I also be right in suggesting that that man should be fit to judge them who is able with his thought (*dianoia*) to creep into a man’s disposition and

see through it (*diidein*) – a man who is not like a child looking from the outside and overwhelmed by the tyrannical pomp set up as a façade for those outside, but rather who sees through it adequately? (576e-577a).

Nevertheless, in the passages following this, it is Glaucon who is asked to judge. Again, Glaucon gives the right answer, even though Socrates poses the question in yet new and innovative ways (579c, d, 580a).

But as I will show, there are several reasons to be suspicious of Glaucon's authority and ability in this role. For after having established that the man fit to judge should be the one able to "creep into a man's disposition," Socrates asks whether the man "who is both able to judge" and has "lived together with the tyrant in the same place and was witness to his actions at home" (577a-b) has seen how he is with each of his own, and "in public dangers" should not be deemed the most fit to judge how the tyrant stands? Glaucon agrees. Do you want us to pretend we are among those, Socrates inquires, so that we'll have someone to ask? (577b). Glaucon agrees to this too.

Come then [...] just as the man who has the final decision in the whole contest declares his choice, you, too, chose now for me who in your opinion is first in happiness, and who second, and the others in order, five in all –kingly, timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, tyrannic (580a-b).

Again, Glaucon is asked to judge, just *as if* he had the authority to do so, *pretending* that he has the qualification to do so. But why does this matter? After all, Glaucon does get the answers right, does he not, thus fulfilling his textual function? I contend that it does matter, for the following reasons. First, it matters to Glaucon, to his fate, to his personal moral salvation. Was Socrates able to turn his erotic strive towards learning, in Book VII? Has his intellect and understanding been summoned, (524b) or is he still in the cave, guessing at shadows of statues (*andriantas*) (514c)? This, I argue, should matter to the reader, because if Glaucon does not get it right, for the right reasons, and we yet tend to think that he does, then we have failed in becoming educated ourselves, both with regard to the question at hand, and in judging others.

Just "like a child, looking from the outside" (576e), Glaucon started out by looking at the just and the unjust man from the perspective of a young man wondering who to make himself like, who to imitate; looking to see who was held in high regard in the city he lives in.

But is that how he remains? Is not Glaucon's vision and eros redirected and would he not be a better judge at the end of the dialogue than was he at the outset? The answer, I will argue, is in part conveyed to us through the ocular metaphors which have been prevalent throughout the dialogue. I suggest contextualizing this *motif* by way of another trope which runs through the dialogue and compliments it: that of statues. These themes underline the topoi

that Socrates introduced at the end of Book V, the division between the lovers of wisdom (*philosophos*) and the lovers of sight (*philotheâmon*) (480a).⁵⁵⁶

Here, I argue for the claim that the analogy of the statue is a significant trope which signifies a distinction between modes of investigation and looking. As already mentioned, the discussion with Cephalus introduced this theme in relation to self-scrutiny. This analysis has ramifications for understanding why Socrates hesitates in accepting Glaucon's judgement. The trope of statues is first launched when Socrates accepts Glaucon's Challenge: "My, my," Socrates exclaims, when Glaucon has finished describing the just man perceived to be unjust and the unjust man, reaping the benefits of a reputation for justice, "How vigorously you polish up each of the two men – just like a statue (*andrianta*) – for their judgement (*krisin*)" (361d). Glaucon repays the compliment later, at the end of Book VII, when he states: "Just like a sculptor, Socrates, you have produced ruling men that are wholly fair" (540c).

We should note that Socrates is not the one calling these statues, these man-like things they have made, fair. But it is Socrates who introduces the term about Glaucon's thought experiment. This is no mere figure of speech, but a literary trope, applied to indicate a certain mode of examination, which limits itself to gazing at surfaces. This idea is also to be found in other texts by Plato: When Charmides enters the room in the *Charmides*, he is so stunning that "all beheld him as if he was a statue (*agalma*)" (*Char.* 154c). Actually, as Chaeperon remarks, he is so stunning to behold that "if he was willing to strip, you would hardly notice his face" (154c), thus underlining the meaning of the metaphor; for as all are taken by Charmides outward form and stature, the young man himself blurs into the background and loses his individuality.⁵⁵⁷ A statue is, as we know, made to be admired for its outside, for its looks and its form, but Socrates insists that he must behold the *soul* of the young man to determine if he is truly well-formed (*Char.*154d).

It might be somewhat ironical then that Socrates himself, the snub-nosed little man, should also be likened to a statue, but in the *Symposium*, a love-stricken Alcibiades gives an encomium of Socrates in which he does precisely this: First he says that Socrates on the outside resembles the Silenus statues, but that his "likeness goes beyond appearance" (*Symp.* 215b).⁵⁵⁸ For, like the statues of Silenus, Socrates opens up to reveal tiny god-like statues within. This, Alcibiades claims, gives him a special knowledge of Socrates: "I

⁵⁵⁶ Hamlyn argues that this argument runs continuously from Book V to Book VII, but I think the thematic runs throughout although there is no necessary opposition between our views in this regard. D. W. Hamlyn, "Eikasia in Plato's *Republic*," *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1950-) 8, no. 30 (1958): 14–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2216853>.

⁵⁵⁷ Howland brings these passages to our attention for a similar point. Howland, *Glaucon's Fate*. pp. 108-109.

⁵⁵⁸ On the relationship between *Symposium* and the *Republic* see Rosen, "The Role of Eros in Plato's 'Republic'."

wonder,” Alcibiades says “if you have any idea what a sober and temperate man he proves to be once you have looked inside” (*Symp.* 216d). One time, Alcibiades claims, did he himself catch a glimpse of what Socrates keeps hidden within:

But I once caught him when he was open like Silenus’ statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they were so godlike – so bright and beautiful, so utterly amazing – that I no longer had a choice – I just had to do whatever he told me (*Symp.* 216e-217d).

Alcibiades, strongly motivated by love, realizes that there is something to apprehend about Socrates beyond the surface, beyond what can be seen by the eye alone, and it is the beauty within that attracts him to Socrates.⁵⁵⁹ To “look inside,” then, is to apprehend what goes beyond a mere surface, and this is in the *Symposium* portrayed as an erotic activity, the special domain of the philosopher (*Symp.* 177e, *Phae.* 257a).

So too in the *Republic*: what sets Socrates apart from his interlocutors is his ability to see beyond the surface. We should note that the wording in Glaucon’s echo of the compliment manages to invoke the analogy without designating the images Socrates provides for us *as* statues. This is as it should be, for Socrates has told a story from the inside, about motivations, desires, and secret longings of the soul. In Glaucon’s challenge on the other hand, it is striking how the two men are portrayed, as through the eyes of an onlooker. The unjust man “gets away” (from the others) with his unjust deeds, also by possessing the “power to set himself right” if he trips up in any way, that is, convincing *others* of his innocence (361a-b), while the tragedy for the just man is precisely that he does not “seem” just and therefor misses out on honors and gifts (361c). This is a view from the outside, looking to see who is honored in the city. Glaucon is looking at the two men rather like the son of the timocrat looks at his father; a good father who lives in a not so good regime will sometimes result in a son who is torn between the fathers’ “watering of the calculating part of his soul” (550b) and the desiring and spirited parts. While his father keeps to himself, not bothered with pursuing public offices and things that are to the “busybody’s taste” (549c), the young man growing up in such a city will hear inflammatory words from his mother, and when he goes about town, he will hear similar things: those who mind their own business “are called simpletons and held in small account” (549d). The young man seeing this is torn – like Glaucon is at the outset of the dialogue – undecided between Thrasymachus’ appeal to anarchistic desires, and Socrates’ account of justice. The mode of apprehension which Glaucon exhibits in these passages is that of a “child looking from the outside,” as Socrates says about the man “not fit to judge” between the tyrant and the king (557a).

⁵⁵⁹ That he still finds only more figures within, speaks to his epistemological shortcomings. He is not yet a philosopher, but he has come a far stretch from apprehending mere surface.

There are two more references to statues in the *Republic* worth noting in this regard. In the analogy of the Cave, the prisoners are said to be looking at shadows of precisely statues (*andriantas*) (514b). The other instance comes at the beginning of Book IV in response to Adeimantus' charge that Socrates is "not making [the guardians] very happy" (419). Socrates concedes and adds to Adeimantus' charge that they work for their keep and get no extra wages (*misthon*) as the others do, so that they cannot travel as they please; nor have they got anything to give to their mistresses; nor anything to spend as they wish, "as people do who are considered happy" (420a). By way of defense, Socrates yet again replies in the form of an analogy involving statues: Well, what if we were making a statue (*andrias*) and someone came to us complaining that we were not putting the fairest colors on the fairest part of the image (*zôon*), that we had not painted the eyes which are the fairest part, purple, which is the fairest color (420c-d). To this man Socrates would reply, he says, that we should not paint the eyes so fair that they don't even look like eyes, but make the colors as is suitable to each part, and "make the whole fair" (420d).

This answer nicely illustrates the point Socrates makes to Adeimantus, that each get their rightful share of happiness, but might there be something more to it? The question that might arise if we take this analogy of statues as communicating in some way with the overall function of the analogy could be taken as a warning: "What if someone came up to us and said that our statues were all wrong?" Taken to rather indicate the 'statues' that the interlocutors have made in the text, the question might be rephrased as a subtle warning to the readers not to take the kind of humans they have made at face value, or perhaps even to be on the lookout for flaws in their design: What if statues have brown eyes, but we have made them purple? What if human nature is not appetitive and power-seeking, but rather something else, like cooperative and knowledge-seeking, or fundamentally plastic and moldable? The question of human nature is taken up yet again in relation to Socrates' cross-examination of Glaucon in the Judgement of the Tyrant, and I will return to this in the final section. Here, I have established the theme of looking and investigating oneself and others, supported by the literary trope of the statue which exemplifies the non-philosophical way of observing merely the surface.

How, then, does the analogy of the statue aid us in our analysis of Glaucon as judge? He has through the many hours of the conversation with Socrates been on a philosophical journey which has taken him far from the initial starting point as a child looking from the outset, gazing at statues to see which one was applauded by other men whose expertise in these matters he could not judge. As Howland argues, the dialogue of the *Republic* as a whole can be read as mimicking a human life from birth to death and back again – for death is not the end in the *Republic*. The myth of Er describes an endless cycle of reincarnation and rebirths, and various tropes within the text support such a reading: The relay race of the festival at Bendis is the backdrop for the

conversation, and Socrates compares a human life to such a race at 613b, when he states that “unjust men run well from the lower end, but not from the upper.”⁵⁶⁰ Against such a background, it seems reasonable to see the story of the cave as Glaucon’s opportunity for a philosophical and metaphorical rebirth through the analogy of the cave. What came out of it?⁵⁶¹ Was Glaucon’s rebirth of the kind that purged him of mere opinions and allowed for him to give birth to his philosophical soul, or was he only briefly seduced by Socratic imagery, only to later again succumb to the same powers that held sway over his soul at the outset? Let us assess the evidence.

The Hidden Tyrant: What Glaucon Forgets

In Book VII, Glaucon contradicts Socrates on behalf of the philosopher-kings. Socrates has just stated that they must be compelled to go back down in the cave. “What? Are we to do them an injustice and make them live a worse life when a better is possible for them?” (519d) he exclaims. Socrates reminds him that the project is to make everyone in the city as happy as possible, not to make one class “fare exceptionally well” (519e). “My friend, you have *again* forgotten”⁵⁶² Socrates says, for this is the second time he reminds Glaucon of what he first replied to Adeimantus. “Do you remember” Socrates asked in Book V

that previously an argument – I don’t know whose, - reproached us with not making the guardians happy; they, for whom it is possible to have what belongs to the citizens have nothing? We said, I believe, that if this should come up at some point, we would consider it later, but that now we were making the guardians and the city as happy as we could, but we were not looking exclusively to one group in it and forming it for happiness (465e-466a).

Glaucon agrees that this is what they are and should be doing.

When they embark on Book VIII, Socrates begins by summing up the argument of Book V, mentioning explicitly that the kings should be those who were best in philosophy and war, that the guardian classes should have everything in common and that the rulers could not have any possessions (543a-b). Glaucon volunteers that he does remember “that we supposed that no one must possess any of the things the others nowadays have” but will

⁵⁶⁰ Howland, *Glaucon’s Fate*. p.17-18.

⁵⁶¹ In interpreting the cave as a birth, I rely both on work I did in my MA-thesis arguing that to aid in giving birth to one’s own philosophical soul and thus becoming one’s own origin is the aim of the art of the Socratic Midwifery, and not least on Catherine Rowett who excellently places the birth metaphor of the cave into contact and context with the Noble Lie. Rowett, “Why the Philosopher Kings Will Believe the Noble Lie.” The idea of the cave as a womb was of course first launched by Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill, (Cornell University Press, 1985).

⁵⁶² My italics.

receive a wage (*misthon*) sufficient to cover their minimal expenses. (443b-c). This was agreed upon so that each class and each citizen within each class could be as happy as possible. But does Glaucon also remember that this was meant to distribute the largest possible amount of happiness equally among the citizens? This point seems to have slipped his mind again. What might have caused him to drink so unmeasured from the river of *lêthê*?

It is a character trait of Glaucon to be eager and assertive to the point of rudeness.⁵⁶³ This is a special weakness of the *thumos*-driven individuals (and states), to be assertive of their own claims and ignoring those of others.⁵⁶⁴ In his eagerness to prove himself worthy, to prove himself esteem-worthy and victorious, Glaucon does not pause to go over uncertainties, to ask critical questions, or to entertain doubts. This is a character trait of his that has been on display throughout the dialogue. He asks for clarifications, he sometimes gives arguments but most often his replies are marked by certainty, confidence, and an assertiveness that allow for little doubt. His confidence is on display when he says “and perhaps I can provide more appropriate answers than someone else” (474a). Glaucon does not blush nor stumble, but he does on occasion laugh (398c, 451b).⁵⁶⁵

But he also displays forgetfulness. Not only does he forget the overarching aim of the *polis* he is making (519e) but he also seems to forget the epistemological insights related to him:

438b is a rare instance of Glaucon admitting to not understanding a particularly convoluted statement of Socrates. After some explanation of the difference between things that stand in a relational situation to other things, and things that themselves are (anticipating the epistemological theories of Book VII), Glaucon states that he, after all, understands and agrees (438e). If this is indeed the passage Socrates has in mind when he asks whether Glaucon “remember, or needs to be reminded” that the one who loves something loves all of it (474d) this, then, is another instance of Glaucon’s forgetfulness. What is more, it shows that he prematurely claims to understand. Are these instances marks of quality in an aspiring philosopher?⁵⁶⁶

Only at one point in the dialogue does Glaucon express a sincere perplexity which might be interpreted as an *aporia*. By the end of Book VI, Glaucon has become humbler: he asks for clarification because “I don’t sufficiently understand what you mean here” (510b). In Book VII, after Socrates’ seductive initiation to the world of forms, they go through the education of the

⁵⁶³ See Strauss, *The City and Man*. p 64.

⁵⁶⁴ Balot, *Courage in the Democratic Polis: Ideology and Critique in Classical Athens*.p.173.

⁵⁶⁵ On laughter, see the puzzling passage at 387e, claiming that a decent person must not be a lover of laughter for, “if one indulges in violent laughter, a violent change of mood is likely to follow.”

⁵⁶⁶ Contrast Socrates doubtfulness, his hesitations and self-doubt. Contrast also the humble and tentative style of Theaetetus, or Charmides’ blushing (*Theat.* 148b; *Char.* 158c), and I think we must conclude not.

philosopher-rulers, looking for some discipline or activity that has the power to turn souls (521c) by “summoning the intellect” (523e). When the soul meets with conflicting reports from the senses, it is confused, and it is this confusion that makes it turn toward the study of “what is” (525a). It is at about this point that Glaucon is perplexed, as if to underline the point in question: “I can’t conceive,” he says (524d). At this point Socrates also reproaches Glaucon, in a way he rarely does elsewhere in the dialogue: “You are amusing” (527d), Socrates says, and Glaucon accepts the reproach with dignity, even though it must have hit him where it hurt the most. After all, the honor lover hates being laughed at (528e). This latter point I mention because I think this is also indicative of Glaucon being humbler – a certain humbleness would make him more receptive to reproach as well as to encouragement.

At this point in the dialogue, Glaucon does indeed appear to have been turned. But when he again takes over the argument in Book IX, his old certainty is back with a vengeance.⁵⁶⁷ Considering this, does the demise of the regimes, from the initial collapse in the skill of calculation, from timocracy to tyranny, somehow also symbolize the demise of Glaucon? From having been lifted by Socrates’ discourse at the philosophical peak of the dialogue in Book VII, the effect seems to gradually wear off. Something in Book VIII breaks the spell. Is it Adeimantus comment about him being a lover of victory which brings him back to himself and ends Socrates’ thrall? Or are we simply reminded that Glaucon’s calculative skills have not been sufficiently practiced?⁵⁶⁸

Between the initial summary of their argument, which omitted any mention of the brothers’ prevailing concern for the kings’ happiness, the king is left out of the remainder of Book VIII in favor of accounting for the decline of man and regime. When next the king surfaces, he is by Glaucon unhesitatingly proclaimed to be the happiest (576d). On what grounds is this verdict reached? I will argue that Glaucon’s reason for his ruling does not hold up against scrutiny and that this is made a point in the text. After all, whenever kings and happiness have been discussed hitherto it has been in relation to the moral excuses for their unfortunate but necessary unhappiness. Glaucon has repeatedly judged the tyrant to be the most wretched and the king to be the happiest. Socrates returns to the tripartite soul in order to make the point that for each part of the soul there is a particular pleasure: the money lover loves profit, the honor lover takes the most pleasure in being honored, whilst the philosopher finds pleasure in learning. Now, since each of these would judge their own pleasure as the finest, who is to judge between them? The philosopher, answers Glaucon. He argues, persuasively, that the philosopher

⁵⁶⁷ After Adeimantus has been the conversation partner for Socrates from the timocrat onwards (548d).

⁵⁶⁸ I believe at least this latter point to be the case and I further believe the puzzling passage of the tyrant’s number supports such an interpretation.

is the only one with experience of all of the pleasures (582b-d). The philosopher uses arguments and reason for his instrument, and as such his verdict is a truer verdict than the two others' (152e). But Glaucon's account of the philosopher's method makes a striking contrast to his own. For Glaucon has not given his verdict about the states of the king and the tyrant based on arguments and reason. Furthermore, the grounds for calling the king the happiest seems not to have been adequately laid out at the point of Glaucon crowning him the victor, and even to contradict what they have said before. Socrates at this point intervenes on behalf of the argument, and, taking himself up on his own word, proceeds to give an argument for the division of pleasures and their hierarchical relation which might very well be said to account for why the tyrant is the furthest removed from truth and therefor lives the most unpleasant life, while the king, living closest to "truth and a pleasure that is his own," will be the happiest (587b). But this account comes after Glaucon's judgements. Glaucon's verdict seems based on intuition and chance, and perhaps even on what he thinks Socrates wants to hear.

In these sections, Socrates might be taken to show Glaucon what it means to give an account, using reason and arguments, adding what was missing from Glaucon's many willing, but unfounded, judgements. But when Socrates launches the calculation which will conclude that the tyrant is 729 times more wretched than the King, one might get the feeling not only that Socrates is speaking in play again,⁵⁶⁹ but that the joke is somehow on Glaucon. For even though he is ready to agree to almost anything Socrates says at this point, it is clear from his answers that he himself lacks the skills to go over Socrates' math and check for himself if the reasoning is sound: "It is clear to the mathematician, at least," (587d) he answers.

The worry remains that Glaucon, although he has shown himself eager enough, perhaps lacks the consistency and discipline in thinking that will allow him to not only judge the tyrant to be the most wretched, but to be able to recognize a tyrant if he met one. For, upon closer inspection, the tyrant and the philosopher-king are not so easily told apart. This might sound somewhat surprising. Of course, we can tell them apart! One is beautiful, virtuous, and the best, while the other is vicious, stunted, and ugly. But there are some likenesses between them too, which might confuse the untrained onlooker. First of all, kings and tyrants have that in common that they are sole rulers. Secondly, the Philosopher King and the tyrant has in common that they both disregard others' opinions of them: The philosopher because he is more committed to truth, and the tyrant because his desires are more powerful than any commitment to honor, as we saw in the case of Leontius. Further, neither

⁵⁶⁹ 536c, 548e, both instances followed by a statement about calculations. On the notion of play in Plato see *Plato, Socrates and the Sophists: Plato's Protagoras, Euthydemus, Hippias and Cratylus*, trans. Joe Sachs, 1st edition (Focus, 2012). p. 4. Rørstadbotten, "Plato - A Voice for Peace. Political Accountability and Dramatic Staging." p.5.

the tyrant nor the king can go anywhere: In Book IV, we remember that Socrates added to Adeimantus' charge that he was not making the guardians very happy, that they were not able to go anywhere. In Book IX, right before Glaucon calls the winner, the same is said of the tyrant: He, of all the men in the city, can't go anywhere abroad or see things other men wish to see, for fear of his enemies. (579b). And, of course, they both surround themselves with armed guards who work for wages: While the tyrant hits upon "notoriously tyrannical request" (566b) for bodyguards at some late stage in their career, and sets up more armed guards when he gets more power (567d, wages: 568c) the king has at his command the well-bred and reared Guardians of the Kallipolis from the outset, who will work for their upkeep as for wages.⁵⁷⁰

Yet again, the situation would to the untrained onlooker seem very similar. The tyrant and the king are both autocrats, monopolizing political power and violence as well, they both have an army of hired hands at their disposal. Further, until the late 6th century, *tyrannos* still meant sole ruler, a relatively neutral term, before the tyrant increasingly became depicted as dangerous.⁵⁷¹ In addition, both kings and tyrants are heavily restricted in the external sense. Unless one was able to somehow count in the mental states of the two contenders, in the portrayal of *Republic*, there would be no way to tell them apart.⁵⁷² Their main differences are not on the outside. What sets them apart is not observable to the eye alone and does not comply with being discovered by looking upon them as one looks upon a statue, for instance. Their difference, if one at this point still concedes that there is a difference, lies mainly in their motivations and characters.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷⁰ The guardians must work for their upkeep from the other citizens "as wages" (*misthon*) (464c).

⁵⁷¹ See Dewald's discussion of the term in Herodotus, particularly p. 40. Carolyn Dewald, "Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus."

⁵⁷² It should also be noted that all Athenians, and even all Greeks, would, to some extent, be "untrained onlookers" in that the Greeks had no experience of Kingship themselves, while tyranny, understood as Sarah Morris suggest: unlawful seizure or use of power by a person or a state" was a rare and extreme occurrence. However, even though the Greeks never had any real experience of monarchs or kings – their ideas of them were imported ones, this did not prohibit them from imagining them "incessantly". Sarah Morris, "Imaginary Kings: Alternatives To Monarchy in Early Greece," in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn A. Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), pp. 1, 21.

⁵⁷³ The reading I put forth here also contributes to solving a puzzle about the incompatibility of the depiction of the tyrant in the *Republic* and the *Laws* by that the tyranny of the latter text is said to be the best starting point for political reforms, a puzzle pointed out by Giorgini and Arruzza, *A Wolf in the City*. p. 58 and n.18. If the aim of depiction of tyranny in the *Republic* is to expose to its readers the skills required to do so, then the explanation could indeed be that Plato knows very well that the line between tyrants and kings are very thin, and that the scope of the argument is that it is really difficult to tell them apart. A political problem is that people think it is very easy to tell them apart, relying on stereotypes such as lavish spending, and fancy dress. But if they were so easily recognizable one should think that e.g., Critias would have been politically neutralized before coming anywhere close to a coup.

One might want to interject that the tyrant can be recognized by his many unjust deeds, since he is characterized above all by lawlessness (at 571c, the lawless desires are, although rather implicitly, tied to the tyrant, for example). This is true, but let us not forget that the tyrant here is used in the wide sense; Socrates has depicted not only, or perhaps not even mainly, the man who is in a position of the monarchy, but a man who is a tyrant in his soul. At the point when the tyrant has become sovereign, it is rather too late to be able to recognize him, and certainly too late for this ability to have any value as a political skill. For up until that point, the tyrant hides behind smiles and flattery (566d-e). The notorious request of the tyrant is said to be an allusion to the story of Pisistratus: The tyrant who by staging an attack at his own person, manipulated the Athenians to provide him with a bodyguard which he then utilized to orchestrate a coup, securing sole power for himself (*Hist.* I. 59-60).⁵⁷⁴ It might also be extended to allude to the story of Deioces, the man who was ostensibly just, in order to secure tyranny for himself. When Deioces is asked to be King he immediately requests a bodyguard to protect him. (*Hist.* I. 97.)

The accusation that Thrasymachus made, that Socrates is either like Deioces, or is professing to be just out of fear from suffering injustice from others, is one that is impossible to defend oneself against. The hermeneutics of suspicion grants no refutation. As such, the likenesses between the king and the tyrant, or between the ‘ostensibly’ and the ‘truly’ just men are mutually enlightening. The kind of accusations that Thrasymachus directed at Socrates are fundamentally about his motivations and are, as such, of the kind that tend to linger: once spoken, they do not disappear. They are of the kind that cannot be identified by looking at them, as one gazes at statues. Their surfaces tell us little about who they are. Unless one is of the kind who can “creep into others dispositions” and see what is really there one might even be genuinely confused about their difference. This was the skill that is said by Socrates to be required to be able to judge between the king and the tyrant: Not only in order to tell which one is the happiest or most wretched, but as I have argued, to be able to tell them apart at all.

In showing how Socrates is the better judge of others’ motivations and desires, and that most people are actually pretty bad at it, the *Republic* almost unnoticeably weaves a defense of Socrates together with a critique of the political life and history of the city which condemned his tutor. While this should explain to us why the philosopher’s skill of being able to see others, as Alcibiades is able to see Socrates, is a valuable political skill, Socrates would be able to expose a Critias for example, but as Socrates seems to be able to see other humans in general, that is, to, through his midwifery, be able to make

⁵⁷⁴ See notes on this passage in Plato, *Republic, Volume II: Books 6-10*, trans. Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, 2013.

intelligible their inner states, appetites, desires, and fears, what should we conclude about Glaucon?

Glaucon Challenged

Through the argument of the *Republic*, Socrates has made plain for us the desires and ideas of Glaucon. For, as he is asked to judge between the two men, I believe we, the readers, are asked to judge Glaucon and assess his choices for ourselves. A third layer has emerged as well; it is not Socrates who gives a reckoning of Glaucon; rather he has brought to light Glaucon's own ideas for Glaucon to be able to examine them. The challenge Glaucon now faces is to be the judge of himself and what life to choose. By bringing to light the thoughts and ideas that were conceived in his soul, Socrates' art is to make ideas, thoughts, and notions such that they can be assessed, they are brought into a kind of being which makes them accessible, not only to others, but to the ones who birthed them as well, for their inspection. This is how the art of midwifery aids in knowledge-seeking. In order to help Glaucon see more clearly, Socrates instructs him to build a man, this time, not like a sculptor chiseling away on stone to reveal only an outside, but to mold him from within: First he is to mold a monstrous being, like a Chimæra, Scylla, or a Cerebus (588c), then a lion, then a human being. Finally, a human form is molded around all these three "so that to a man who's not able to see what's inside, but only sees the outer shell, it looks like one animal, a human being." The man who looks at himself from the outside is only able to see the human being, not being able to discern the snake and the lion which accompanies him, hidden underneath his human form. By way of this creature, Socrates wants to show Glaucon that Thrasymachus, who at this point in the dialogue is explicitly mentioned again (590d), encourages him to make the beastly part huge and strong, while the human in him, if he is to follow the advice of Thrasymachus and pursue power, will become small and weak (588e-589a). To be fully human then, or as human as possible, is according to this simile, to live a life of justice and virtue, a very different anthropology from the one they started out with, which included the beastly parts, but forgot to include what was uniquely human.

To be human entails being more than one's beastly desires, but it also entails being less than a god. But to be like "a god among humans" is precisely the allure of the tyrant for Glaucon, who uses this phrase about ancestral Gyges (360c). The god-likeness of the tyrant is extoled by the likes of Euripides, for which Socrates reproaches him (508b).⁵⁷⁵ At the same time, Socrates will offer for Glaucon's consideration another kind of immortality, –

⁵⁷⁵ The play in question is *Seven against Thebes* as Bloom informs us, incidentally a play to which Plato makes several references.

one which might be aspired to by the virtuous man. Having swum through the sea of arguments with Socrates, will Glaucon now like the sea-Glaucus become immortal?⁵⁷⁶ Or is the point of this reference that Glaucon's nature, like the sea-Glaucus' exterior have been maimed by the waves, as other things has grown on him "like sea-shells, seaweed and rocks, – so that he resembles any beast rather than that which he was by nature" (611 c-d)? This immortality, as Howland also argues, is brought about for the wrong reasons. It is by "looking elsewhere," Socrates says, by giving oneself entirely over to the love of wisdom that the soul will emerge from the deep ocean "in which it is now" and the rocks and shells will be hammered of "those which having grown around it in a wild, earthy and rocky profusion as a result of those feasts that are called happy" (611d-e).

The analogy of the statue is now inversed, and instead of trying to look at himself from the outside, looking – as did Cephalus – with an eye to assessing how he would look like in the eyes of another, Glaucon must emerge from the depths of the ocean and chisel away all the rabble which has attached to him during the submergent to reveal his true self to himself: a human self, which longs for wisdom and knowledge. Glaucon must turn his mind's eye inward, like he did in the 'Ring Myth,' but instead of looking in towards his desires, he might come to identify a nature that has become overgrown and hidden, but which nevertheless is there. In order to be saved, as the tale of Er implores him to (621b), Glaucon must learn to judge himself before he can judge others. Only when judging himself and his risks and vulnerabilities adequately can he sufficiently understand why he is pulled toward both Thrasymachus' and Socrates' accounts, and correctly judge between them. This skill might enable him to look into others as well, judging their motivations and desires more adequately. For this, as Socrates explains to Glaucon in the Myth of Er, is the most important skill of all:

Now here, my dear Glaucon, is the whole risk for a human being, as it seems. And on this account, each of us must, to the neglect of other studies, above all see to it that he is a seeker and a student of that study by which he might be able to learn and find out who will give him the capacity and the knowledge to distinguish the good and the bad life (618b-c).

Whether Glaucon ultimately chooses Socrates' or Thrasymachus' accounts, the dialogue remains silent about. It is tempting to do the same, for such considerations are not only speculative, but even highly personal due to the introspection they require, and no doubt is intended to require, of the reader. In this chapter, I have not argued for, but neither have I excluded the possibility that Glaucon, in the end, could have given in to his untampered side, drunken immoderately from the river, and upon crossing it, left behind

⁵⁷⁶ Howland interprets the reference to the Sea-Glaucos, the title of a lost play of Aeschylus, as a failed search for immortality. Howland, *Glaucon's Fate*. pp. 46-47.

Socrates' company which has been so intensely present for one full night. He might have woken up the day after, already forgetful of the night's impression. Turning souls is a precarious business as the story of Alcibiades shows and himself relates in in the merciless self-flagellation he engages in in the *Symposium*: "yet; the moment I leave his side, I go back to my old ways" (*Symp.* 216b)

Conclusion

In conclusion then, let me briefly sum up the argument. I have argued that the unclear ranking of the regimes in Book VIII is part of the overall critique of democracy which the *Republic*, in my reading, constitutes. The textual purpose served by keeping the internal relationship between the regimes unclear is to create a discursive space from which it is possible to claim that democratic ideals and desires generates, rather than is opposed to, tyranny. The way in which this textual aim is fulfilled is by revealing that Glaucon's ideals of ruling and power stands in an, at best, ambivalent relationship to tyranny. This is shown throughout the dialogue by first, offering Glaucon an ideal version of a sole ruler, or a small group, in the form of philosopher-Kings and Queens, and then by testing Glaucon's ability to tell the difference between good sole rulers, and bad sole rulers, in the form of the tyrant. As the argument of Book IX in my reading shows, Glaucon's ability to judge is informed by democratic discourse and ideals and limits itself to judging surfaces. It relies on stereotypes of the tyrant which posits him as recognizable as tyrant in part because of his conspicuousness. This in itself makes democracy vulnerable to tyranny in that the idea of the tyrant as easily recognizable causes them to overlook what the *Republic* teaches are the real threats: Pleonectic desires for sex, wealth and power, combined with an ideal of freedom which comes very close to equating freedom with power. When democratic ideals and institutions molds and shape individuals in the direction of honor-lovers this affects their preferences, their desires and aversions, in a way that through Glaucon's choices has been exposed as irrational, in my interpretation.

The question which the *Republic* thus poses for the reader is whether this exposition is successful in the sense that it enables Glaucon himself to shift his perspective from merely observing surfaces to be able to look into himself and others and judge what is beneath, judge their souls, so to speak. This is doubtful, because the ability to do so is portrayed as the philosophers' skill, and Glaucon, I have argued, is not a philosopher. He might yet become one, but final answer to this lies without the scope of the dialogue itself. Glaucon's textual role is fulfilled when the reader is confronted with the question posed by the Myth of Er: What kind of life will you choose?

I have argued that the theme of self-investigation is a prevalent one in the *Republic*, and one that is given political implications in that democratic political discourse first had outsourced problematic political desires to the tyrant; secondly had made the tyrant out to be an almost caricatured and easily recognizable figure; and thirdly had instilled as its principled ‘good’ a notion of freedom which turned out to make the tyrant’s position ideal. In making these arguments, the *Republic* relies on, and subverts, tropes from official democratic discourse, as well as dissident tropes. Ultimately, in this reading, the true political skill turns out to be the erotically motivated soul-assessment of the philosopher-midwife.

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