Plato's Notion of Justice in the *Republic* and its relation to Thrasymachus' Formula that "Justice is nothing other than the interest of the stronger".

Karyn Margaret Walker
(100102712)

Presented for the qualification of Master of Philosophy

(MPhil)

The University of East Anglia

School of PPL

June 2018

Abstract

Plato is generally taken to set out his notion of justice in Book IV of the Republic. Unfortunately, though, this has attracted much negative commentary for its apparently immoralist stance and the weakness of the arguments on which it is based. This has in turn led to its being widely discounted as a serious basis for conceptions of justice, and has damaged Plato's reputation more generally. I claim, however, that the almost exclusive focus on Book IV's picture is mistaken and that if Book I, and in particular the dialogue between Plato and Thrasymachus, is properly considered it will be seen to offer a significantly improved account of justice.

In Book I Thrasymachus defines justice as "that which is in the interest of the stronger", but this simple formula requires some sophisticated unpacking to be fully appreciated. I argue that establishing four key elements is necessary to its proper understanding. Firstly, rather than depicting four separate objects that correspond to the four cognitive levels, the Divided Line represents a single object (the Form) that is viewed with increasing clarity and sophistication as the subject ascends through the cognitive levels. Secondly, the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus is conducted at the very top of cognitive level III, and, thirdly, that the two key terms for strength and interest respectively, kreisson and sumpheron, are carefully chosen by Plato, and that it is through proper analysis of these specific terms that their full meaning can be ascertained. Fourthly, I argue that Thrasymachus identifies two principles which introduce a crucial distinction between the intrinsic and the instrumental.

The resultant self-sustaining notion of Justice within an operating society vindicates Thrasymachus and validates the formula. This, in turn, rehabilitates Plato's reputation amongst his critics and offers a number of potentially productive avenues of further research based on these findings.

Contents

Abstract 1
Introduction 4
Opening Comments 4
Key Positions 5
Key Findings 6
Outline of the Structure and Content of the Thesis 7
Chapter One: The Conception of Justice in *Republic* Book IV 12
Introduction 12
Opening Comments 12
The Account of Justice in *Republic* Book IV 20
Commentators on Book IV 24
The Picture of justice in Book IV 32
Summary and Conclusion 34
Chapter Two: The Divided Line 37
Introduction 37
The Platonic Position 39
The Historical Interpretation of the Divided Line 40
Modifications to the Historical Position 41
Analysis and Issues 48
The Divided Line Revisited 50
The importance of clarity 52
Historical Interpretation Revisited 60
Consistency Check of the New Approach 61
Conclusions 66
Chapter Three: The Issue of *Elenchus* 70
Introduction 70
Republic Book I 70
Elenchus 71
Commentators on *Elenchus* 72
Interim Analysis 81
Interim Conclusion 83
The *Elenchus* of Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1 83
Conclusions 88
Chapter Four: Unpacking the Formula at Level 3: Strength (Kreissōn) 90
Introduction 90

Commentary on Thrasymachus and his notion of strength 92
Thrasymachus: A Level 3 Interlocutor 97
Kreisson at Level 3 104
Conclusion 109
Chapter Five: Unpacking the Formula at Level 3: Interest (*Sumpheron*) 111
Introduction 111
The Traditional Reading of Thrasymachus' Position 111
Commentary on the Arguments 116
Analysis 123
Conclusion 134
Chapter Six: Towards *the* Just *Republic* 136
Introduction 136
The Formula at Level Four 136
Issues Revisited 141
A Holistic Reading of the *Republic* 146
Bibliography 150

Introduction

Opening Comments

This thesis may read as something of an anti-'orthodox'[1] account, and in many ways it is, but this was not my intention at the outset of the project. My principal aim has been to investigate and analyse the difficult and, to many, unsatisfactory relationship between the Platonic notion of justice found in the *Republic* generally and Thrasymachus' specific formula in Book I, which states that justice is nothing other than the interest of the stronger. My primary methodological principle was to bring my hypothesis to the text and to expose it to close and careful testing.

However, in seeking to understand how the widespread critical commentary on Socrates' and Thrasymachus' supposed conflicting notions of justice arose, I found that traditional interpretations of those two accounts of justice depended in turn on particular traditional stances on more fundamental issues. It was therefore necessary to broaden the research in order to investigate the integrity of these underpinnings. My analysis led me to argue for specific modifications to these particular foundational positions, both for their own sake and because the resulting revised frameworks provide a much more powerful and coherent general understanding of the notion of justice, one that goes a long way in reconciling what appeared to be two conflicting accounts from Socrates and Thrasymachus on the nature of justice and which, in turn, enriches the *Republic* as a whole. The thesis could therefore correctly be characterised as having an unorthodox thread running through it, but I stress that this is an outcome rather than an input or an intention – each of the specific stances taken are evidence driven and defended independently of their role in my project, although the overall coherence of my wider findings with these individual positions is itself an important outcome and one that argues in their favour.

My findings can be characterised as operating on three levels: at one level, I examine key elements of Plato's framework and take issue with specific positions of commentary identified; at another level, I research and develop my proposed solutions to offer a more coherent and deeper picture of justice, one that allows a number of the apparently unsatisfactory elements identified by these commentaries to be properly positioned and seen in a more positive light; thirdly, I show how that revised and enriched position in relation to justice and other key

[1] Where 'orthodox' is taken to refer to general, historical and traditional interpretations of the *Republic*.

frameworks can be extended to the *Republic* as a whole, to strengthen and deepen the wider reading of the *Republic*.

One of the principal additional benefits of reframing the *Republic* in this way, beyond the value of the interpretation itself, is that it offers rehabilitation, principally for Plato. In my estimation, Plato has often been poorly served by commentators in this regard, who have been quick to attribute the problems that they have found in the traditional accounts of his notion of justice to incompetence on the part of the author. However, my research demonstrates that it is the entrenchment of crucial orthodoxies which is principally to blame for these damaging interpretations. The revised perspective on these basic positions which I defend in this thesis, when fully ramified, instead argue strongly for Plato's possession of a level of sophistication and astuteness in his staging and argumentation which has been hitherto unappreciated. As a consequence, I claim that my thesis contributes to both a more sophisticated reading of justice in the *Republic* and a rehabilitation of its author.

My overall project amounts to an integrated way of reading justice in the *Republic* which, I claim, offers significant benefits without any obvious penalties. It explains a number of difficulties that commentators had routinely dismissed as errors on Plato's part and shows how a more careful reading of crucial aspects in the *Republic*, both in relation to justice and to other key frameworks, delivers a clearer understanding of what Plato was in fact seeking to achieve in relation to justice specifically and the *Republic* more generally.

Key Positions

Traditionally, in looking to understand the *Republic's* view of justice commentators have become wedded to the view that Book IV is both where Plato intends us to focus, and that it presents a poor and somewhat contradictory account of justice. The result has been that such thinking has failed to consider properly and appreciate the key role that Book I plays in the *Republic* as a whole. And when Book I *is* considered its interpretation and reception is tainted by that general negative judgement on Book IV. I show, firstly, that if we give careful consideration to Book I, and in particular to the dialogue with Thrasymachus, we discover the keys that not only unlock the mystery of what Plato meant by justice in the *Republic*, but also makes sense of a number of ancillary, yet important, issues which otherwise lacked a unifying framework.

My second claim concerns the Divided Line. The Divided Line is central in almost all commentaries on Plato and the *Republic* and offers a metaphysical framework which is central to Plato's thought. Traditionally, this framework or schematic has often been seen as comprising

four different cognitive levels and, four different objects in one-to one correspondence with those strata of understanding. A minority of scholars, of whom I am one, agree that there are four cognitive levels, but maintain that there is essentially only one object rather than four in view: the same object is seen at every level. This "single-object" view is central to my overall argument. Under this approach, a developmental and cumulative apprehension of the object occurs as subjects ascend through the cognitive levels gaining an ever increasing clarity that, in turn, enables ever increasing sophistication of discrimination of the nature of that one object (the Form). As a result, determining accurately the cognitive level of the participants in any specific dialogue is essential to a clear understanding of the degree of clarity with which they can see the object and the nature and sophistication of the discriminations which they can bring to bear on its understanding.

Key Findings

In addition to the two key positions outlined above, for which I argue throughout the thesis, I highlight here a small number of additional important findings and their underlying arguments. Each finding is premised on those two key positions.

The first finding concerns the nature of justice in the *Republic*. It turns out that what were generally taken by commentators to be inconsistent or even contradictory notions of justice between Book I and Book IV can be reconciled by a careful analysis of both Thrasymachus' claims in Book I and crucial elements of the wider *Republic*. Perhaps the most important key to this revised understanding is the distinction between the intrinsic and instrumental components of justice. I use this to show how the Platonic definition of justice that I recommend, that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger, can embrace both the means of achieving a just state and the intrinsic nature of that justice.

Secondly, and deeply embedded in the above intrinsic/instrumental distinction, is the notion of the *qua* practitioner. The idea here is that there is a distinction between a mere *r*uler, who would operate according to the cognitive limitations of the lower levels on the Line, and the *R*uler who would operate at the *noetic* Level 4. At its widest this embraces Plato's notion of people "minding their own business", and at its most specific it crystallises what it means to be a Ruler (operating at cognitive level 4) as opposed to a ruler. I argue that when all citizens, including the Ruler, are fulfilling their roles, all individuals are, in a sense, following a natural order which engenders something approaching a homeostatic and self-sustaining framework in which justice naturally persists. In light of this I claim that the amoral and accurately observed (by Thrasymachus) outcomes of tyranny and injustice under a ruler, which was the source of the traditional negative interpretation of Plato's justice and responsible for so much criticism of

Plato's position by commentators, can be seen in its proper perspective as both comprehensible and consistent with my new, wider, interpretation of justice in the *Republic*.

Outline of the Structure and Content of the Thesis

I start the thesis in Chapter One by examining the traditional and prevalent views of commentators in relation to the Platonic notion of justice in the *Republic*. It became clear that most commentators made their judgements on justice in the *Republic* based almost solely on the information provided in Book IV. As a result, before I could progress with my own analysis it was vital that I confronted the 'elephant in the room' that is Book IV and analysed properly how the received wisdom concerning Plato's justice arose. The picture that emerged from this examination was that of commentators forming a negative view of Plato's picture of justice, criticising both the arguments that they took Plato to be giving and the resultant picture of justice that they believed Plato intended to present. In my analysis I focus on the treatment of the city/soul analogy and the wages argument as crucial components which ultimately lead to an apparent unpalatable disjunction in which it seems that we must either accept the ineptness of Plato's argument or accuse commentators of incorrectly interpreting the text. My analysis shows, however, that such a critical position depends heavily on a particular way of reading the Divided Line, Plato's metaphysical framework for his *Republic*.

In Chapter Two, therefore, I explored prominent readings of The Divided Line, highlighting the division of opinion over whether there is one object in view across all cognitive levels of the Line, or whether each level deals with a corresponding and differing object. The choice is whether the shadow and the Form are different discrete 'objects', the former to be discarded as the subject ascends the cognitive levels (much like Wittgenstein's ladder, perhaps), or whether they are different perspectives of the same object perceived according to different levels of sophistication, discrimination and clarity, allowing a cumulative or additive interpretation in which the lower levels progressively contribute to the final *noetic* perspective. My position after analysis is that it is far more plausible and productive to hold that there is only one object in view ate every stage, and that as we as subjects rise through the cognitive levels we are presented with successive gradations of 'knowing' that one object. I further argued that, given that there is no intrinsic change in the object across each level, the more important aspect of the Line in analysis should be typically taken to be the determination of the cognitive level in play. I demonstrated clear textual support for the notion that each cognitive level has abilities and limitations which allow an accurate presentation of how an object would be understood or apprehended by a mind at a particular level. Of course, it would seem to the mind at that level *as if* they were apprehending an object different from that in view at other stages but, once a

mind reached *nous*, at the top of the Line, and looked back, it would be evident that each stage provided further clarity that had enabled the acquisition of essential features of the Form.

Consequently, I argue that the text strongly supports such a developmental reading of the Divided Line in which as a mind progresses through the levels it gains increasing awareness and clarity that allows for greater degrees of sophistication for understanding that one object, and that the information gained from one level becomes the initial basis for the next level's approach. No level is abandoned in the sense that each level progressively provides foundational and key information for a proper understanding that is ultimately to be found at the top of the Line when the mind has the cognitive ability of nous. In wider support of this position, I also provide evidence from the *Timaeus*, generally agreed to be written after the *Republic*, that Plato does have in mind in his writing outside the *Republic* this process of development from the senses to rational thought about the same object. Clearly, and in line with Plato's own thoughts in the *Republic*, not every mind can, or wishes to, progress to the very top. The particular importance of this new reading for the issues under analysis is that such an approach places heightened emphasis on determining the specific cognitive level in play and of analysing the dialogue against this background in order correctly to interpret precisely what is being said and its limitations.

With this metaphysical and epistemological positioning established I begin my examination of the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus. As this is generally considered by commentators to be a classic example of *elenchus* and the Socratic Method in operation it seemed initially that interpreting the dialogue in this light would be helpful to my analysis. However, my research soon uncovered some basic issues surrounding what constituted *elenchus* and whether Socrates had any such general method at all. I therefore examined the differing views on *elenchus* itself and the method ascribed to Socrates, finding that there is no consensus and much disagreement amongst commentators whose only common ground appears to be the single idea that, whatever it is that Socrates is doing when he confronts an interlocutor, his purpose is always refutation.

However, after a close examination of the specific discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus I was forced to conclude that even this minimal consensus is questionable and that the particular discussion does not, in fact, adhere to any of the so-called methods, patterns or taxonomies, including refutation, identified by commentators. I therefore argued that, whatever *elenchus* may be, if indeed it is anything at all, this crucial discussion is not an example

of it. Socrates, rather than being focused on refutation, is far more concerned with the development of his interlocutor and his ideas surrounding the notion of justice.

Having established that the discursive framework is developmental, entirely in line with the developmental reading of the Divided Line argued for in the previous chapter, I then turn my attention to the semantic understanding of the key definition proposed by Thrasymachus regarding the relationship between justice and strength and interest. This work, which forms the basis of Chapter Four, examines the use of *kreisson* for strength. I show that if the notion of strength implied by Thrasymachus is that of physical strength, merely manifested in power and might (as many commentators suggest it is), then Plato would surely have used the more apt semantic range of *dunaton*. But he does not, and I argue that this is a deliberate move, and that the term he does in fact use is chosen because of the specific meaning and consequent opportunities that such a choice offered.

I demonstrate that *kreisson* was used by ancient writers of Plato's time to indicate a particular strain of strength, a strength that was indicative of excellence and that would in turn engender admiration. I therefore argue that Plato deliberately chose this term in order to highlight that Thrasymachus is no ordinary interlocutor: he has a mind that operates at cognitive level 3 and, in virtue of this, can deploy accurately such sophisticated meanings. In addition, his understanding of strength incorporates within it not only the meaning indicated by *kreisson*, but also the perceptions of strength as might and power inherited under the cumulative interpretation from the levels below. This finding has the effect of elevating the whole of the Socrates - Thrasymachus discussion to cognitive level 3, and it is this, I claim, that is the first direct clue in unlocking the Platonic notion of justice itself.

The work for Chapter Five is, in my view, the most important part of the thesis. Here I turn my attention to the term that is the second component of the formula for justice, namely "interest". I examine the general commentary on interest and show that it tended to entrench the view that Thrasymachus is forced to move away from his original position and that, as a result, his stance becomes internally incoherent. Because of this, scholars criticise not only Thrasymachus but also Socrates, who is diagnosed as committing inconsistency and irrelevance, particularly with reference to his craft analogy and the wage earning argument. I argue, however, that, as with *kreisson* in the previous chapter, it is Plato's deliberate and particular choice of the term for "interest" that provides the clue as to what is going on. The crucial question is what Socrates has in mind when thinking of "interest" as represented by *sumpheron*.

In fact the term *sumpheron* is one of four terms initially outlawed by Thrasymachus, but this proscription is ignored by Socrates when he states that he agrees that justice is concerned with 'interest' and adopts the term '*sumpheron'* himself. This move invites a significantly different interpretation of the term and the wider dialogue from the one traditionally ascribed to it. On analysis, it can be seen that the term *sumpheron* does not only carry implications of advantage but also the idea of bringing together in harmony, a situation that encapsulates Plato's picture of justice in the ideal state. I use this interpretation of the term to re-analyse the discussion between the two men and show that Thrasymachus not only presents a consistent and coherent picture but, crucially, that he also identifies two key principles concerning the notion of justice. These can be identified as (a) the intrinsic principle (what I refer to as P^1) that justice is another's good, and (b) the instrumental principle (what I refer to as P) that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger.

I contend that these two principles, along with the concept of the *qua* practitioner of rule, explicitly referenced in the wages argument, provide the three necessary components of justice as understood by a mind at cognitive level 3. I also suggest that the sophisticated use of *sumpheron* indicates that Thrasymachus is actually displaying an instinct for the *noetic* which, though he cannot quite articulate it, guides him and cements his resilience in the face of Socrates' counter examples. Thus I argue that Plato has deliberately enabled Thrasymachus and Socrates to outline the notion of justice at the upper limits of Level 3 in order to set up perfectly the Level 4 discussion and resolution that is to come in the later books.

In the final chapter I bring together my findings and formulate my conclusions in light of all these. I argue for the importance of Book I as the vital key to understanding and unravelling the distinction between the intrinsic and instrumental principles and the identification of the three necessary components of justice, P P^1 and the *qua* practitioner, the Ruler who has achieved full clarity and 'sees' the fully revealed Form. Using these formulae I outline the Platonic notion of justice at Level 4 and then revisit Book IV to show that the idea of justice as harmony is rehabilitated under the conditions of P. I argue that the intuitive altruistic element of justice that other scholars claimed was missing from the Platonic notion is in fact the intrinsic principle P^1, that justice is another's good. I argue that an understanding of justice at Level 4 brings with it the realisation that, while the theory/praxis divide of P and P^1 is necessary to reach Level 3 principles, its attainment must then be collapsed at Level 4. This collapse is necessary because a Level 4 mind would understand that the idea that justice is another's good entails the interest of the stronger when and only when that stronger is the *qua*

practitioner of rule, the Ruler. Thus I argue that the three necessary components of justice at Level 4 have mutual entailment.

Through this interpretation of Platonic justice I suggest that an important aspect of the *Republic* itself, the Platonic picture of justice that it offers, can be rehabilitated, as it can now be seen to present a holistic and integrated picture of justice. Moreover, I argue that the set-up of the *Republic* itself requires the intrinsic and instrumental distinctions of Level 3 implemented by a Level 4 *qua* practitioner of rule until such a point that the state becomes self-sustaining. Thus I claim in this thesis that the *Republic* presents a picture of a homeostatic, organic state, brought about through the interest of the stronger, in which Justice naturally exists.

Chapter One: The Conception of Justice in *Republic* Book IV

Introduction

The focus of this thesis is Plato's conception of justice in the *Republic* but in order to approach any analysis of this conception it is first necessary to have a perspective on the voluminous commentaries on Plato, the *Republic* and justice as a starting point. Therefore, the thesis and this chapter begin by surveying the salient literature and highlighting the major stances and issues present. I will identify three main issues that arise from the literature: firstly, the negative attitude of commentators towards Plato's conception of justice; secondly, the issues concerning the meaning of the actual word that Plato chooses to denote 'justice' in the *Republic* and what implications the choice of that word has; and, finally, the issues surrounding the interpretation of whatever Plato thinks he is trying to do in the *Republic*. I will also show that within all of these issues there is a radical divergence of opinion amongst commentators.

However, I will also establish that there is one point of agreement amongst commentators and that is that, regardless of whatever interpretation is placed upon it, it is in Book IV of the *Republic* that Plato sets out his notion of justice. It is this point that will become the impetus for the rest of the chapter as it is necessary to engage in detail with Book IV in order to establish just why the received wisdom concerning Plato's notion of justice, represented by this negative response of commentators, has arisen. I will outline and examine what might be referred to as the 'vanilla' reading of Book IV, specifically focussing on the city/soul analogy and the wages argument. I will show how these particular 'arguments' are viewed by three prominent commentators within Platonic scholarship: Julia Annas, Nikolas Pappas and Bernard Williams. This examination will, in turn, enable a discussion of the dissatisfaction amongst commentators regarding these 'arguments' and the resultant picture of justice they engender.

I will demonstrate that this dissatisfaction leaves us with an apparent disjunction where we must either accept that Plato's arguments are weak and inept, or that we must accuse the commentators of inaccurately interpreting the text. In response I will show that, if we examine the wider *Republic,* it will be clear that neither of these positions need be accepted.

Opening Comments

Platonic scholarship generally agrees that the central message of the Republic, what the Republic is essentially *about*, is justice but any research into the notion of justice espoused by Plato in the Republic is likely to encounter an almost entirely negative perception of Plato's formula. Political and Platonic scholars are generally united in their criticisms of what they perceive to be a highly totalitarian and authoritarian approach to justice. In their view, Plato seems to condone a dictatorial regime in which the needs of the individual or minorities are

singularly dismissed. The warrant for this regime is based upon an argument for a single Form of Justice, an argument that has at its foundation the assumption that the soul and the city are analogous to each other, and that justice is the same whether in an individual soul or in the collective organisation of a city state. If this indeed *is* Plato's message then it is little wonder that it is typically met with rejoinders such as this:

> *Our first response is likely to be simple; it is also likely to be hostile. We are almost all going to find many of Plato's views unacceptable, even repellent. His ideal society is highly authoritarian. His ideal person is dedicated to a social ideal, and identified with a social role, in a way that we feel denies the importance and interest of the individual.*

This quote by Julia Annas, one of the doyennes of Platonic scholarship, is indicative of most commentators' views on Plato's notion of the just state and its ruler; a state that envisages justice as a collective issue and does not concern itself with any care or consideration for individuals or minorities; a state where justice is conceived of as keeping people in their place, assigned to tasks for which they are deemed fit by a ruler who pronounces laws and judgements from on high, a ruler who has no, and desires no, connection with the people he rules. Yet, surprisingly, Annas claims that the negative attitude of the reader is precisely the response that Plato intended. His purpose, she claims, is to shock his audience into a reaction; to be provocative and to force us into a response "because Plato would be less disturbed by an articulately hostile objection than by a passively uncritical acceptance."

While it would seem sensible to suggest that Plato wishes his reader to make a response, it is questionable whether his intention was merely to provoke such a reaction. If it were, then surely doubt could be cast on the authenticity of Plato's views. If Annas were correct then one could ask how close the points expounded in the Republic are to Plato's own views about justice and the just state. To consider his purpose to be mere provocation would surely be to consider the Republic as nothing more than a provocative story with no real substantive message about justice, merely a stimulus for discussion. Even more curious is that Annas herself states "he (Plato) is giving us the truth as he sees it". So one could ask Annas: is it truth or provocation? Or is it that the truth about justice is provocative and Plato has no qualms in presenting that truth? Perhaps it is helpful to bear in mind her qualifying statement that "it is a truth that each of us must rediscover for ourselves before we can properly be said to possess it." But, given that the message of the Republic is one that we will be hostile towards and given that the central message is 'justice', what is it about Plato's view of justice that lends itself to such hostility?

A careful analysis shows that even the supposedly simple claim that Plato's central message is 'justice' presents us with a problem. In ancient Greece, at the time Plato was writing, there were at least two different terms in use that, when translated into English, can mean justice. These two terms are *dikaiosune* and *ison*: the former is generally translated into English as 'justice' and the latter as 'equality'. According to Vlastos, it was *ison* that was the more commonly used word for justice at the time, which he takes to suggest that the ancient Athenians saw justice as being closely related to equality.[2] Yet Plato's chosen word for justice in the Republic is *dikaiosune* and we should therefore ask why Plato specifically chose this term, what he meant by it, and what such a choice means for his views on justice. In doing so, we should also seek to determine how closely his meaning for *dikaiosune* tracks our modern understanding of the term justice, as any divergence might explain part of the reason for the hostility from commentators. Equally, if Plato did mean justice by the term, we should determine whether there is something about the term itself that allows Plato to do much more with it than our present interpretation of justice would allow. As Annas aptly puts it "does the Republic give us a 'theory of justice' in the way that, for example, Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* does?"[3]

Liddell and Scott suggest that the correct translation for *dikaiosune* is in fact 'righteousness' and in particular a sense of legal justice, fulfilling the law.[4] However, if we examine the way in which Plato utilises the term *dikaiosune* it becomes clear that he wishes it to cover a much wider semantic range than the narrower sense of legal justice would suggest. And indeed if we look to the *Republic* itself we can see that Plato uses it to make comments on the way in which we live our lives, hence the quest for justice is concerned with the quest for the "right way to live" (352d). Solomon and Murphy consider the confusion surrounding the term for justice to be as much political as it is linguistic and they agree that the term that Plato uses is more in line with a sense of righteousness. They suggest that Plato's central claim that justice is "performing the functions for which one's nature is best fitted" makes much more sense when it is applied to righteousness rather than justice. Moreover, they argue that if we were to consider justice as "equality" in the way that was common in Plato's time, then it

---

[2] Gregory Vlastos, 'Justice and Equality', in *Social Justice*, ed. by R Brandt (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

[3] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981) p.11

[4] Liddell and Scott, 'δικαιοσύνη', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944.

becomes "more than odd that Plato notoriously defends an inegalitarian view of justice". They cite as their evidence for this claim the passage in the *Republic* where Plato speaks of democracy saying that it is little more than "distributing an odd sort of equality to equals and unequals" (558c).[5]

Certainly Solomon and Murphy are not alone in ascribing this inegalitarian view to Plato. It was passages such as the one cited by them on democracy that so infuriated and exasperated Karl Popper when he wrote "why did Plato claim that justice meant inequality if, in general usage, it meant equality?"[6] However, Annas warns that it is a mistake to think of *dikaiosune* as corresponding solely to a sense of morality, though she contends that "nothing crucial is meant to hang on this word."[7] The question is raised once again, though, that if the *Republic* is about *dikaiosune* but justice is not an entirely accurate translation for *dikaiosune*, then what is the *Republic* about? Is it about justice in a broad or in a narrow sense? Or is it even about justice as we would understand it at all?

As stated above almost all, if not all, Platonic scholars, Annas included, are adamant that it is about 'justice', and Annas goes further claiming that Plato, at least in his subject matter, is "not guilty of shifting between a broad and a narrow sense of *dikaiosune*. He is talking about justice throughout."[8] Her view is that Plato begins the *Republic* by responding to the narrow notion of justice discussing it in the context of equality and fairness. However, by the end of the *Republic* "we have had more than a theory of justice in the narrow sense. We have been told a good deal about the good life in general."[9] This is because she argues that Plato holds an 'expansive theory' of justice.[10] To hold such a theory is to believe that one cannot consider moral questions such as, "what is justice?" without also considering other central moral questions. Thus, for Plato, in order to create a just state there would need to be wholesale reform and, consequently, as Annas states, "the just life turns out to be the moral life after all – but not

---

[5] Robert C. Solomon and Mark C. Murphy, *What Is Justice? Classic and Contemporary Readings* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1990) p. 23-24

[6] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Third (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1957), I. p92

[7] Annas, p11

[8] Annas, p12

[9] Annas, p13

[10] Ibid

through any confusion in terms; rather through an insistence on the centrality of justice and the wide extent of its requirements."[11] At this point one could ask what issues one could possibly have with a theory of justice that "makes our relations with others central to the moral life".[12] Where, in the eyes of commentators did it all go wrong for Plato? Annas provides us with a clue when she comments that "because Plato's is an expansive theory, we can suspect from the start that he is going to pay less attention to individuality than western liberals have come to expect".[13]

It is this inattention to individualism and liberty that is the central issue for perhaps Plato's fiercest critic, Karl Popper, who presents a thesis that Plato's political demands are purely totalitarian and anti- humanitarian.[14] He states that Plato "used the term 'just' as a synonym for 'that which is in the best interest of the best state'. And what is in the interest of the best state? The arrest of change, by the maintenance of a rigid class division and class rule."[15] Thus Popper maintains that Plato's view of justice is one of class privilege, a view that is opposed to Western conceptions generally where justice would tend to break down such privileges. But he considers that there is an even deeper difference, in that we see in justice equality in the treatment of individuals while "Plato considers justice not as a relationship between individuals but as a property of the whole state, based upon a relationship between the classes."[16] Popper does not consider that this holistic view bears any resemblance to the view of justice prevalent in ancient Greece, and he claims that the ancient Athenians had a view of justice that bears a remarkable resemblance to the view we hold now; one based on equality. The only conclusion to reach, according to Popper, is that "Plato's holistic and anti-equalitarian interpretation of justice was an innovation."[17] In response to the query as to why Plato would make this innovation Popper

[11] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981) p13

[12] Annas, p13

[13] Ibid

[14] Popper, 86-119

[15] Popper, p89

[16] Popper, p90

[17] Popper, p92

replies: "to make propaganda for his totalitarian state by persuading the people that it was the just state."[18]

Popper is adamant that Plato knew very well what he was doing as "equalitarianism was his arch enemy and he was out to destroy it …….. But his attack upon equalitarianism was not an honest attack. Plato did not dare to face his enemy openly."[19] While Popper retained a respect for Socrates he charged Plato with being the philosophical champion of the closed society and therefore, of laying the groundwork for totalitarianism. He felt that in the *Republic* Plato devised an elaborate system that would arrest all political and social change and would turn philosophy into an enforcer, rather than a challenger, of authority. Popper argued that Plato's holistic view meant that the city state was prior to the individuals who resided in it claiming that, for Plato, "only a stable whole, the permanent collective, has reality, not the passing individuals."[20] This implies that the needs of the city supersede those of the individual, the source of what Popper refers to as Plato's 'ethical collectivism', "justice for Plato is nothing but health, unity and stability of the collective body."[21] This, for Popper, is profoundly dangerous, as he comments that the view that some collective social entity has needs that are prior and superior to the needs of actual living persons is a central tenet of all totalitarian systems. According to Popper a truly just society sees the state and other social institutions as human designed, subject to rational scrutiny and always serving the interests of individuals and never the other way round. True justice entails equal treatment of individuals rather than Plato's view which identifies justice as nothing more than a well-functioning state.

For Popper, Plato's stable and unchanging society has all the hallmarks of totalitarianism, including rigid hierarchy, censorship and collectivism – all of which would be reinforced through propaganda and deception, or as Plato called them 'noble lies' (414b-415d). Thus Popper held that by rejecting democracy, Plato's system destroyed not only individual freedom but also the conditions for social, political, scientific and moral progress leading him to claim that:

[18] Popper, p92

[19] Popper, p93

[20] Popper, p106

[21] Popper, p106

> *Ultimately, this (Plato's) claim is based upon the argument that justice is useful to the might, health and stability of the state; an argument which is only too similar to the modern totalitarian definition: right is whatever is useful to the might of my nation.*[22]

While this analysis is damning enough, Popper is not alone in his condemnation of Plato's view of justice. Certainly one does not need to look far before encountering comments such as this from Pomerlau, "what he (Plato) himself maintains justice is turns out to be a let-down. His conception of justice reduces it to order."[23] He (Pomerlau) goes on to suggest that while a sense of order is relevant to justice, "this does not adequately capture the idea of respecting all persons, individually and collectively, as free agents."[24] Heinaman goes further in his arguments that the notion of justice endorsed in the *Republic* is one that is not beneficial to almost all of its citizens. He believes that Plato's defence of justice is, in fact, seriously flawed in that, in order to prove that just action pays the just agent he must demonstrate that just behaviour is good in itself. The just behaviour for the philosopher, according to Plato, is to rule, and yet, Heinaman insists that Plato believes that ruling is intrinsically evil, so as far as the philosopher is concerned, justice does not pay. Not only this but the greater evil of lower forms of work also establishes "that for the producers as well as the rulers, in the essential case of performing one's own job Plato is committed to saying that justice does not pay."[25]

Roochnik holds a similar view in that he considers that the *Republic*, far from defending justice, actually teaches that perfect justice is neither possible nor desirable. Rather, it is an ideal where self-interest collapses into the interest of the community. Even though citizens would long for it, the very conditions under which it could be met would be insufferable.[26] Here once again Roochnik reflects the issue identified by Annas that the freedom of the individual, prized by western theories of justice is somehow, not only missing, but actively dismissed by Plato.

---

[22] Popper, p119

[23] Wayne Pomerlau, 'Western Theories of Justice', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/justwest/#SH1a>.

[24] Ibid

[25] Robert Heinaman, 'Why Justice Does Not Pay in Plato's Republic', *The Classical Quarterly*, 54 (2004), 379–93 (pp. 379–393).

[26] David Roochnik, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 91.

Culp suggests that the reason for this dismissal of the individual can be found in the idea that the main argument of the *Republic* concerning justice is a deliberate failure. He argues that in the *Republic* Plato raises expectations that common justice will be vindicated, yet provides no convincing argument that it does so. He also considers the *Republic* to be misleading in that it fails to accomplish what it purports to accomplish. Socrates speaks as though his argument has been universally successful but Culp is adamant that no such argument is forthcoming, even after one has conducted a careful analysis.[27]

In viewing these criticisms and commentary in the round, it is important to note the commentators' general reliance on Book IV as the definitive source of the notion of justice in the Republic. Popper, for instance, states clearly that "one cannot say that Plato's question 'what is justice?' quickly finds an answer, for it is given in the Fourth Book,"[28] Generally commentators suggest that this Book endorses a picture of justice conceived of as that which produces inner harmony in a person (433d-e), and is to the soul what health is to the body (444c-445b). This 'orthodox' position proposes that in this Book Socrates investigates political justice and arrives at the definition that justice is "the practice of minding one's own business" (*to ta hautou prattein*) (433a), though Roochnik suggests that a more literal translation is helpful such as "doing the thing that belongs to oneself": performing one's proper activities and functions.[29] Unfortunately, it is this definition, along with the city / soul analogy and the wider reliance on Book IV, that appear to be the cause of much of these negative critiques of Plato's views on justice, leading to comments such as this from Pomerlau: "the analogy between the state and the soul is too fragile to support the claim that they must agree in each having three parts, and as such proves on critical consideration, to fail."[30]

However, it is not only the city / soul analogy that comes under scrutiny but also Plato's insistence on a single form of justice that, as Annas identified, omits many elements of justice

[27] Jonathan Culp, 'Who's Happy in Plato's Republic?', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 31.2 (2014), 288–312 (pp. 288–312) <https://doi.org/10.1163/20512996-12340018>.

[28] Popper, pp 89-90

[29] David Roochnik, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[30] Wayne Pomerlau, 'Western Theories of Justice', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/justwest/#SH1a>.

that we have come to expect. This has led to outright dismissal of Plato's views encapsulated by this comment from Miller:

> *Any overarching theory that tries, Plato-like, to discover a single form of justice ..... will either be hopelessly inaccurate, leaving many aspects of justice unaccounted for, or else so vague as to be useless as a guide to practice.*[31]

So what have we learnt from this survey? We have found that any general examination of Plato's notion of justice will uncover negative responses from commentators, both Platonic and Political scholars. We have also discovered that these overall attitudes will eventually narrow and taper into a focus centred upon the city / soul analogy found in Book IV. Consequently, in order to fully engage with not only the *Republic* as a whole but also with the majority of Platonic scholarship concerning Platonic justice, it is now necessary to undertake a careful analysis of Plato's account of justice in Book IV. My approach in this assessment is to be evidence driven, being neither wedded to the orthodox view, or any particular version of it, nor predisposed to argue, at this stage at least, for any particular unorthodox position.

The Account of Justice in *Republic* Book IV

The account of justice in Book IV follows on from discussions with interlocutors in the previous Books surrounding the question "what is justice?" Socrates has considered this question from the perspectives of Cephalus, who offers the definition of doing the right thing as telling the truth and returning what we have borrowed (331b); Polemarchus, who maintains that justice is giving each man his due, harming only his enemies and not his friends (331e); Thrasymachus, who provides the formula that justice is nothing other than that which is in the interest of the stronger ruling party (338c); Glaucon, who argues that justice is merely a matter of convenience, a compromise to maintain social order but not one that men would choose for themselves; and, finally, Adeimantus who provides support for Glaucon's position stressing the unworthy motives that are generally given for right behaviour. While men much prefer to do what is wrong, they will only do what is right for the benefit that it brings in this life and the next (Book II).

It is at this point that Socrates is asked to demonstrate that justice is good in itself and is preferable to injustice. He begins this undertaking by describing how a perfectly good city

[31] David Miller, 'Taking up the Slack? Responsibility and Justice in Situations of Partial Compliance', in *Justice for Earthlings: Essays in Political Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 206–27.

would be organised and after dealing with the preliminaries, such as the class and education systems, in Book III, he turns his attention in Book IV to the demonstration of justice in the state and in the individual. There is a vast literature concerning this book and, while there are issues regarding the interpretation of the text, commentators are generally agreed on the broad factual points of the Book.

Socrates states that since this good city (Kallipolis) is completely good it must have all the virtues of a completely good city, namely, wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. This city will have wisdom because of the knowledge possessed by its Rulers: even though they are not the only citizens with knowledge of their role, they are the only ones whose wisdom makes the city wise. So to be a wise city is to have wise Rulers. There will be courage in the city because of the courage of the Auxiliaries: it is the courage of the army, their true opinions on what to fear, that constitutes the bravery belonging to the whole city. The city will have moderation because of *sophrosune,* a type of deferential, self-control that results in the harmony between all three Classes and their mutual agreement about who amongst them ought to rule.

According to Socrates the city that has been described is perfectly good and therefore it contains the four cardinal virtues. Given that the characteristics that define these virtues of wisdom, courage and moderation have already been identified then whatever we are left with must define the remaining of the city, that of justice. In order to find just what it is that "is left" Socrates, surprisingly, does not continue in the same vein in which he defined the characteristics of the other virtues, by looking at systems of social structure. Instead he states that justice is to be found in the principle that had been the underlying factor in the organisation of those very structures that identified the other three virtues. This underlying principle has become known as the Principle of Specialisation:

> *When each of our three classes (Rulers, Auxiliaries and Producers) does its own job and minds its own business, that is justice and makes our city just. (434c)*

Since the goal of this good city is not to make one group happy at the expense of others but to make everyone as happy as his nature allows, and that nature corresponds to the three classes of ruler, auxiliary and labourer, then it makes sense, according to Socrates, that these three classes will in turn correspond to the three distinct types of work that are necessary in order for a city to be just. Socrates urges that if everyone practises the craft (*techne*) for which his natural aptitude is highest and "minds his own business"(433a) then justice will be achieved. Justice is both "left over" and higher than wisdom, courage and moderation because it consists an overarching relationship between the three others. When the members of the three classes

are minding their own business, doing what they ought to do, ruling, guarding and producing, then they are being politically just, and the whole city will contain the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation and justice. Thus Plato's intention in dividing the classes in the city into parts was to demonstrate how, in a good and just city, those classes come harmoniously back together to form a good and just whole.

It is at this point that we encounter in full the crucial element of the argument in Book IV, the city/soul analogy. Having established how justice is found in the city Socrates moves by analogy to the way in which justice is found in the individual. He begins by reasserting the parallel between state and individual, since the qualities of the city are those of the component classes of rulers, auxiliaries and producers, we should expect to find three corresponding elements in the individual soul, reason, spirit and appetite. All three will be present in every soul but, as with the structure of the city, they are developed to different degrees in different types of character. After a warning that there should be no expectation of philosophical precision:

> *I must tell you that in my opinion we shall never find an exact answer by the method of argument we are using in our present discussion – to get one we should have to go much further afield but we can probably find one that will be satisfactory, (435d)*

Plato proceeds to explore the conflicting motives in the individual and reaches the conclusion that we cannot, without contradiction, assume the existence of fewer than three types of motive in the individual soul. Thus the core of the argument sets out a psychological theory according to which the soul has three 'parts' that are opposed to each other (436b-438e). Appetite is opposed by the rational part of the soul (438a-439b) and spirit is different from both desire and the rational parts (439e-441c). Therefore, we can establish that the parts of the soul are identical in both number and function with the parts of the city (441c). Thus virtue in the individual will be structured in the same way as virtue in the city (441c-442d). Let us now explore how this argument from analogy unfolds.

Plato begins with the premise that when one thing engages in two different actions at the same time then that one thing must contain more than one part (436b-437a). A consideration of the soul brings reveals that it does perform two different acts at once, when, because of desire, it advances towards an object while at the same time restraining itself from it (437a-438a). There then follows a lengthy argument to demonstrate that desires cannot regulate themselves, they are merely impulses, therefore, there must be a distinct part of the soul that

urges restraint from an impulsive desire, this urge being a motive of self-regulation and it must be the faculty of reason that advises against an action even when ones appetite craves it:

> *Now can we say that men are sometimes unwilling to drink even though they are thirsty?*
>
> *Oh yes; that is true of many people, he said.*
>
> *Then how are we to describe such cases? I asked. Must we say that there is one element in their souls which urges them to drink and a second which prevents them and masters the first? (439c)*

So reason is the part of the soul whose function it is to look after the welfare of the entire person. In itself it must not be considered as just another 'urge' but as that part of the soul that allows a decision to be made between and about urges. Consequently it is not just a simple case of acceptance or rejection but a qualitative difference between the two motives.

Into this rather simplified picture of conflict Plato introduces spirit (*thumos*), distinct from both reason and appetite yet showing traits of both these parts of the soul. Spirit involves heightened emotions and competitiveness, yet it can make one more likely to act as reason dictates. So by introducing spirit Plato presents the rational impulse with a strategy for good behaviour. Properly trained spirit can enforce the moral law in the individual soul because it is more than a match for the appetites in strength.

Thus Plato can now claim that given the similarity between the class structure of an ideal city and the motivational structure of the individual soul, a translation of the definitions of the virtues from one domain to the other is wholly justified. Just as the city is wise through the rational knowledge of its rulers, the soul is wise through the rule of reason; the city is courageous through the bravery of its auxiliaries, the soul is courageous when its spirited part acts bravely; the city is moderate when all classes accept the judgements of the rulers, the soul is moderate when all parts accept the rule of reason.

The analogy extends to justice and in both the city and the soul justice is the all-inclusive and additional virtue that is found when all parts adhere to the Principle of Specialisation, each part performing its own function and no other, and all parts working harmoniously in unity under the accepted rule of reason. It would therefore appear that the essence of justice, according to Book IV, is the existence of harmony and unity within a system that enforces specific roles for specific characteristics. When present this harmony and unity will be

responsible for making both a city and an individual person become truly just in that they become "fully one instead of many" (443e).

Commentators on Book IV

The literature on this topic is extensive, and, therefore, in seeking to give a sense of the principal positions commentators have taken in relation to Plato's argument I will focus mainly on three prominent responses, those of Nikolas Pappas, Julia Annas and Bernard Williams, although these will be supplemented by others at relevant points in the discussion. There appear to be two main issues for commentators with Book IV: the validity of Plato's argument and the concept of justice that ensues from interpretations of that argument. So I start by setting out in detail their analyses of the argument and I then consider the concept of justice and its apparent inadequacies that result from that argument.

Pappas identifies three substantial problems with the argument in Book IV:[32]

1. If the argument in Book IV is taken in isolation, it fails to deal with morality.
2. There is a need for an additional premise in the argument
3. There is a problem with equivocation and irrelevance that must be dealt with.

Pappas begins his analysis by examining the notion of the part of the soul that is attributed to desire and finds it extremely problematic. He asks which motives, other than hunger and thirst, should be considered as desire. Indeed what are the defining characteristics of a desire? He believes this problem to be exacerbated by Plato's use of inner conflict to demonstrate the parts of the soul. This inner conflict is explained as being pulled forward and being held back by two conflicting urges. But Pappas thinks that the situation is much more complex than Plato would have us believe and that what Pappas refers to as "the grab-bag of desire", would correspond to different parts of the soul, turning the individual soul into the following model:

Reason

Spirit

Hunger

Thirst

Sexual desire

[32] Nicholas Pappas, *Rouledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995). P. 90-98

Sleepiness

Greed

On this model Pappas suggests that "desire begins to look like a lazy thinker's umbrella term for several motivations, any two of which may come into conflict."[33] While Pappas does concede that Plato accepts that the appetites are a "crowd" or a "swarm" (573e-575a) and that Plato also thinks that the full theory may be more complicated than he has shown, Pappas considers that this multiplication of psychic entities "threatens to destroy Plato's theory and that the analogy between city and soul gets lost; even worse the primary conclusion of this section fails to follow."[34] For if all these conflicts occur at once then there would be nothing special about the conflict between reason and appetite. Reason must take its place in the conflict alongside hunger and thirst. For Pappas this means that "the soul resembles a democracy with no elected officials, in which politics has become a competition among all impulses to gain the upper hand."[35] Pappas considers that such an oversimplification of desire has two problematic consequences; it makes a mystery of Plato's insistence on harmony and it excludes too many other motives that then find no place in the soul. For example, Pappas asks where motives such as friendship and pity can be found. As both can conflict with reason there is no other place for them but to be assigned to the ranks of desire alongside hunger and lechery. For Pappas this is not a satisfactory position and places a considerable strain on Plato's ethical theory, "without them the theory fails as a description of human behaviour, with them included the meaning of 'desire' is stretched to the verge of vacuousness."[36]

The argument in Book IV seems to propose that justice means the harmony and unity of all parts of the soul and Pappas suggests that this has an amoral sound to it commenting that "to say that reason rules is to say barely more than that the person decides what to do and then does it."[37] But is this enough to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong? Pappas states that the answer must lie in the role reason plays in the just soul and he asks "how does

[33] Nicholas Pappas, *Rouledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 90.

[34] Pappas, p. 90.

[35] Pappas, p. 91.

[36] Pappas, p. 94.

[37] Pappas, p. 94.

the calculating part of the soul deliberate about what is just?"[38] If its role is purely limited to that described in Book IV then Pappas thinks we must reach an "absurd conclusion". This absurdity consists in the fact that "if I am Platonically just by virtue of my soul's non-rational parts serving my reason, then anything I decide to do will *ipso facto* be a just action."[39] It would seem that as long as spirit and desire are brought in line then that is just regardless of the act that results from that deliberation.

On this account justice would seem to be a "function of what happens *after* I have deliberated. We are left uninformed about what my deliberations look like."[40] This is the real problem for Pappas because an account of justice such as this "remains empty because it pins all the work of morality on the soul's administrator without giving that administrator any other goal but administration."[41] However, Pappas considers that this is only an issue if one insists that Plato's notion of justice is solely found in Book IV. As reason is the crucial element in the causation and maintenance of harmony and unity in the city and the soul, it is significant for Pappas that we learn a great deal about reason in the books that follow. Consequently for Pappas it would be wrong to consider this book to be the end of the explanation of justice, "On the view offered in Book IV, reason evaluates and ranks the options available to a person. On the view still to make an appearance, reason contemplates the truth and organises the soul in such a way as to make contemplation available to the person."[42] Thus for Pappas while the ethics of Book IV look empty he considers this to be a deliberate move by Plato who will use the later books to reveal the true work of reason, "the ethics of Book IV look empty not by accident, but because the dialogue has not yet reached the point at which it can reveal the work of reason."[43]

However, this point aside, Pappas also suggests that in order to make his argument in defence of justice convincing Plato needs to provide Socrates with an additional premise, namely that the regular practice of ordinary just acts implies a Platonically just soul. The problem as he sees it is that, as the argument stands, Plato has Socrates show that Platonic

[38] Pappas, p. 95.

[39] Pappas, p. 95.

[40] Pappas, p. 95.

[41] Pappas, p. 95.

[42] Pappas, p. 96.

[43] Pappas, p. 96.

justice is the good organisation of the soul and that this well organised soul will be the happiest possible soul. But this is not what Glaucon and Adeimantus had asked him to show, which was that justice, by itself in the soul, makes the just happier than the unjust. The trouble is that Glaucon presents an image of the "just man" who is identified as just through his actions (360b-362c) and wants Socrates to show that this man who performs ordinary just deeds is happy. Socrates' argument that the existence of Platonic justice in the soul brings about regular ordinary just actions will only account for some as not all those who perform ordinary just acts will have a Platonically just soul. Thus Socrates needs the additional premise that the regular practice of ordinary just action entails the possession of a Platonically just soul. Pappas concedes once more that according to most critics Plato not only never shows this to be the case but also that he does not even seem to realise that he needs it. Yet Pappas insists that this premise would establish a link between the two concepts that commentators suggest is missing and it would therefore go some way in countering the traditional accusations that Plato's defence of justice commits a fallacy of equivocation. If Plato does not employ this additional premise then the response to Glaucon's question, the entire purpose of the Republic, is without adequate response. Glaucon asked for an explanation of the ordinary justice for the ordinary man and all Plato has provided is an identification of Platonic justice with a well organised soul. Without this premise Plato would not only have allowed Socrates to commit that fallacy of equivocation he would also have rendered his own argument irrelevant.[44]

These issues identified by Pappas are indeed substantial but, as I said earlier, it is the city/soul analogy that is central to the argument so here I will look in detail at two differing perspectives on that analogy, Julia Annas and Bernard Williams.

Annas suggests that commentators have often approached the problem of the relation between justice in the state and in the individual by asking the question "which is prior in Plato's thought? State or individual?"[45] She observes that some commentators believe that Plato first worked out the theory of the state then applied it (with considerable difficulty) to the individual so that the individual becomes nothing more than a mini-city. Others conversely think that the theory of individuals came first and was then automatically applied to the state so that the state becomes a super-human.[46] She points to the following passages and asks whether they show

[44] Pappas, p. 98.

[45] Annas, p.146

[46] Ibid

that a city is V for any virtue V if and only if the people in it are V, and that it is V because they are V:[47]

> *Isn't it quite necessary for us to agree that the very same forms and dispositions as are in the city are in each of us? (435e)*

Annas thinks that the answer to her question is in the negative and that the passage suggests only that the nature of government, or way of life in a city will come to reflect the preferences of the individuals. She contends that for Plato it would seem that the city's being V does not just come down to there being V people in it, but is a fact about the city and the role it gives to V people.[48] Indeed she points to the following passage to support her views:

> *But if something different should turn up in the single man, we'll go back again to the city and test it; perhaps, considering them side by side and rubbing them together like sticks, we would make justice burst into flame, and once it's come to light confirm it for ourselves.*
>
> *The way to proceed is as you say, he said, And it must be done*
>
> *Then, I said, is that which one calls the same, whether it's bigger or smaller, unlike or like in that respect in which it's called the same? (435a)*

Annas argues that this passage shows that neither the soul nor state is prior, but that both have the same status. So Plato is claiming that justice in the person and the city is exactly the same thing, that the term 'just' has the same sense when applied to a city and to a person. In fact what makes a person just cannot be something different to what makes a city just: otherwise there would be two distinct kinds of justice and Plato could not accept this.[49] Justice itself as a Form must be singular in order to distinguish it from the multiple instances of just acts. If Plato were to admit a different justice for city and soul then he would either have to deny the very bedrock of his epistemological, political and ethical theory – the Forms, or he would have to say that we have not yet reached the definitive Form of justice, but that would deny any real purpose or relevance for Book IV. For Annas this is where Plato's difficulty lies in that his view leads to an infinite regress: if we ask "why is the city V?" and we answer "because the

[47] Annas, p.147

[48] Annas, p. 147

[49] Annas, p.148

citizens in it are V", but if they are V in the same sense that the city is, the same question can be asked about the sense in which they are V and so on.[50]

Annas also suggests that Plato has an "insuperable problem"[51] which is the idea that justice in the city and in the individual must have common structures; an idea she finds unacceptable. She feels that whether we begin with justice in the state and try to find it in the soul, or begin with the soul's justice and try to find it in the state, in neither case will it work out right and either way must be legitimate if city and soul are exactly alike.[52] For example, if each class in the city corresponds to some limited function of the soul then the citizens of the state will not share a common human nature. If we begin with the state and move to the soul, the parts of the soul will then be analogous to the members of different classes – so the soul has different elements, different ones dominating for different members of classes. So each part of the soul becomes tripartite. Thus we have a situation where one person is dominated by reason because his reasoning part is dominated by its reason. Hence a regress of explanation. Annas considers this a hopeless way to understand justice of the soul.[53] In light of the above Annas concludes that Plato cannot sustain the claim that the soul and state are just in exactly the same way, she thinks his argument is split down the middle.[54] In other words Plato provides an argument for justice in the city and another argument for justice in the individual soul but that these two arguments do not, and should not, map onto each other in the way that Plato presents it. There is for her no other conclusion that can be drawn than that the argument as Plato presents it is a failure.

She does accept that there is plausibility in the Principle of Specialisation but only in the context of pressing need.[55] For example, if the good of others depends on my doing what I do best and I don't do it because I prefer to do something else, then my behaviour is immature and selfish. However, she does question whether this should remain the case in a city where there is no such need, a point on which Plato is adamant that it should. She accepts that the argument

[50] Annas, p.149

[51] Ibid

[52] Annas, p.149-150

[53] Annas, p.151

[54] Ibid

[55] Annas, p.153-155

of psychic harmony only establishes a certain condition in your own soul – so it is clear that having that harmony benefits you – but ordinary justice concerns your behaviour to other people. So, like Pappas, Annas insists that Plato must show that there is a valid connection between Platonic and ordinary justice.[56] Unfortunately, Annas thinks that Plato nowhere seems to believe that ordinary justice entails Platonic justice but that he does believe Platonic justice entails ordinary justice. A person with a rightly ordered soul would never perform commonly recognised unjust actions. Even this point Annas considers to be assertion with no argument.[57] So she asks whether the main line of the *Republic's* defence of justice collapses as soon as it is introduced. Her own response to this question is to suggest that one should focus on the significance of the entailment from Platonic justice to ordinary justice. If there is such an entailment Plato will have defended ordinary justice because he will have shown that it is worthwhile having a state that has led to ordinary justice. However, she warns against any attempt to counter the accusation of equivocation through the identification of implicit links within the text.[58]

One commentator who does precisely what Annas warns against is Bernard Williams. He suggests that when Plato constructs the good city there is an assumption that we should be able to discover something about justice in the individual man; an assumption that when looking for justice the larger and smaller pictures will present the same message. Williams asks what Plato's reason might be for expecting the same message and suggests the answer is found in 435b, that justice applies to both cities and men, and that it signifies one characteristic. This idea of an analogy between cities and men in respect of their being just is a presupposition of asking 'what is justice?' in the full expectation that there is only one answer. Indeed Williams notes that at 434e Plato's strategy is to lay the two (city and man) side by side so that "we may make justice blaze out, like fire from two sticks." Williams thinks that this indicates a confidence that the strategy will work and he and suggests that Plato's confidence lies in what Williams refers to as the "analogy of meaning".[59]

---

[56] Ibid,

[57] Ibid

[58] Ibid

[59] Bernard Williams, *The Sense of the Past: Essays in The History of Philosophy*, ed. by Myles Burnyeat (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

However, when Plato turns to the division of the individual soul Williams believes he proceeds in a different way. Prima facie Plato appears to be supporting the 'analogy of meaning' as it looks as though it means that we call a city spirited because most or all its individual persons can be called spirited, but Williams argues that this idea, far from supporting the previous principle of finding a common characteristic, we actually have something that defeats it. His reasoning is as follows: if we have already agreed that a virtue 'F' is applied to a city just because it is applied to men then we already have an explanation of how the term is applied to both. To then go on to look for how justice can be applied to men seems pointless as it has already been explained. Also if the rule for applying justice to cities is taken as the common rule (and the analogy suggests it does) then Williams considers the search is not just pointless but also absurd. The reason for the absurdity is that the common account of justice must run something like "x is F, if and only if, x has constituent parts which are F," a form of reasoning that undoubtedly leads to a regress.

Williams does not seem to think that every term that could be applied to both cities and men must obey the rule given at 435e and he cites as evidence Socrates' claim that a city's happiness does not depend on any of its citizens being happy (419a). While Williams concedes that this clearly contradicts the principle he also suggests that it does contain a truth regarding two classes of terms: one which obeys the rule (what Williams refers to as the whole-part theory) and the other which does not. For example if you have a huge pack of wolves do you also have a pack of huge wolves? The obvious response is 'of course not' but if we change the predicate and ask: if you have a pack of hungry wolves do you also have a hungry pack of wolves? Then the response is 'yes'. So there are two ways in which terms can be applied, 'hunger' which obeys the rule and 'hugeness' which does not. But, says Williams, Plato does not utilise this distinction as it would appear he wishes to say both:

a) A city is F if, and only if, its men are F and
b) The explanation of a city being F is the same as that of a man's being F.

So how does Plato avoid the regress? According to Williams he does so by holding a) only for the city-man relation and not for the relation of man to any further elements. Thus the explanation of a man's being just, and the account of justice in general are given to us in the formula

c) Each of the elements (reason, spirit and desire) does its job, which of course implies,
d) Reason rules

If we now apply a) to the particular case of justice we get:

e) A city is just if, and only if, its men are, while at the same time, for a city, as for a man, we have the requirement that its being just consists in c) being true.

Williams then asks what c) could mean for a city whose elements consist of men. Here he thinks the whole-part theory must apply in that we shall have:

f) An element of the city is rational, spirited and appetitive if, and only if, its men are.

So the justice of a city implies that there must be appetitive men, in fact according to Plato's account there must be a majority of such men, since the lowest class is the largest. But the appetitive man is surely not a just man and if he is not then the city has a majority of men who are not just, and this contradicts e). it is this contradiction that Williams says is "powerfully at work under the surface of the Republic". he argues that, if we accept e) then, since men are just, for each man d) will hold to be true and reasoning will be at work even amongst the lowest appetitive class. There will be at least enough reasoning to be able to stick to one's task (mind their own business) and recognise the rule of the guardians. However, Williams thinks that if we read this result back through the analogy to the individual soul we reach another absurd result, that the appetite in a just soul obeys the rationality in that soul through itself having an extra rationality of its own.

Williams also believes that any attempt to weaken the whole part theory, such as the predominant section rule (Williams' term for the justice of a city being dependent on the leaders or pre-dominant citizens being just) fares no better. All that this achieves is the cancellation of any implication that the majority of citizens could be just, and it provides us with information we already knew, that the rulers are just. Thus Williams concludes that the analogy fails in its argument and form and further, that the use of this tripartite analogy is a "grave obstacle" to Plato's notion of justice and his political conclusions.[60]

The Picture of justice in Book IV

Unfortunately for Plato dissatisfaction with the argument in Book IV does not exhaust the criticisms. For even if we were to ignore the supposed defects and gaps within the argument, and further, to allow him the overall argument form of the analogy, the resulting nature of justice that is then produced is also far from satisfactory for commentators. We have already seen that Pappas considered the concept of justice delivered by Book IV to be empty and amoral. Annas suggested that there was no valid connection between ordinary and Platonic justice and,

[60] Bernard Williams, *The Sense of the Past: Essays in The History of Philosophy*, ed. by Myles Burnyeat (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

as a consequence, there was no motivation for ordinary people to be just. Certainly other commentators have continued this voice of dissatisfaction with this picture of Platonic justice.

The reader will remember the arguments posited by Heinaman and Roochnik criticising the notion of justice in Book IV, the former that the notion of justice would not benefit the citizens and the latter that The Republic teaches that perfect justice is not even desirable, and these views are generally representative. However, there are many who have attempted to present the notion in a more positive light. For example, Cooper suggests that it is possible to close the gap left by the analogy to provide a more coherent picture of justice that would comport with other Platonic views. He suggests that the philosopher who knows the Form of the Good will be "necessarily motivated to maximise the amount of goodness in the world".[61] Irwin claims that the philosopher who knows the Form of the Beautiful is necessarily motivated "to give birth in the beautiful" to propagate his virtue in others.[62] Kraut has argued that the philosopher who knows the Forms in general is necessarily motivated to imitate the harmonious relations of the Forms.[63]

While these are admirable attempts they are themselves riddled with inconsistencies. Cooper cites no evidence for his view but only infers that a devoted study of the Good would motivate a choice to want something other than the good of the self, namely the good of others. Irwin's view that one who knows will want to express his knowledge in action seems to depend on the speech of Diotima in the *Symposium* (209a). It does not appear to be at all evident that the *Republic* would want to explain just action as the effect of erotic desire in those who have knowledge. Kraut relies on the passage where Socrates describes the philosopher's motivation (500b-d), but there is no explicit reference to the philosopher being charged with a desire to help other people.

Brown cites unsubstantiated views, such as those exemplified above, to suggest that *Republic* II – IV can demonstrate that no such gap exists and that the picture of justice produced is acceptable. He attributes to Plato the following two beliefs: the sufficiency of good education for good motivations and the necessity of good education for perfect motivation. He proposes

---

[61] J Cooper, 'The Psychology of Justice in Plato', in *Reason and Emotion: Essays in Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).p. 145-146

[62] Terrence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).p,298-317

[63] Richard Kraut, *Socrates and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

that the sufficiency belief will establish that those who are raised well help others as justice requires and the necessity belief establishes that those who are not raised well cannot become psychologically just.[64] So, according to this view Plato believes that good education is both sufficient to produce motivations to do what justice requires and necessary to produce a just soul. But is Brown any more secure in his beliefs than those he criticises? Perhaps not as one could question whether these beliefs that Brown ascribes to Plato entail that harmoniously integrated motivations require motivations to help others as justice demands. If this is the case then Brown's attempt to close one gap has in fact highlighted another as he does not seem to have addressed the problems, identified by those such as Annas and Heinaman of non-philosophers and justice – where is the motivation for citizens to be just, either in the Platonic or ordinary conception of the term?

Thus we are still left with an unsatisfactory picture of justice that, however it seems to be presented, does not align well with our intuitive understanding of what justice should be. It provides no motivation to be just, it presents an empty or amoral ethical theory, and it can even present that which is generally considered to be unjust as the right thing to do.

Summary and Conclusion

So it would seem that, despite Plato's best efforts to demonstrate that what we were "left with" in Book IV was the notion of justice, what we are actually left with are significant concerns over the validity of the argumentation in Book IV and dissatisfaction with the ensuing concept of justice. A concept that, as we have seen, no matter how it is presented, does not fit with our intuitive understanding of what justice should be.

I identified a range of criticisms with regard to Plato's argument; that taken in isolation Book IV presents an amoral defence; that there is a need for an additional premise to allow that defence to make sense – a premise that Plato neither mentions nor appears to feel that he requires. In addition, the entire argument has been accused of committing the fallacies of equivocation and irrelevance. I also found that the crucial element of the argument from analogy fails in its application and its form. I established that according to the traditional interpretation of this analogy reason must control or subdue spirit and appetite in order for a person or city to be just, and I also demonstrated that, according to commentators, if the analogy were correct, it would necessitate a city of a few just men and no possibility of being just for the majority. There was also dissatisfaction that Plato nowhere in the argument shows

[64] Eric Brown, "Minding the Gap in Plato's *Republic*" p 283

any valid connection between ordinary and Platonic justice. This would deny any real motivation for the many to be just and as such the analogy presents an ego-centric view of justice.[65] This ego-centric view is contra to any intuitive ethical code.

There also appears to be a gap between the ways in which a city can be considered just and the way in which an individual can be considered just. The whole-part theory illustrated by Williams highlights the issues of regressive explanation and difficulties with viewing the soul as divisible within itself. Pappas also highlighted that dividing the soul into distinct multiple psychic entities and the ensuing conflict that would arise between those parts, so vital to Plato's notion of justice, is the very thing that threatens to destroy it.

I also found that the concept of justice that is provided by Book IV, a concept that is dependent on "the practice of minding one's own business" (433a) is one which does not sit well with commentators. It appears to reduce justice to a function, a harmonious unity that depends upon me doing my job and accepting unquestioningly the rule of others. This is a far cry from the altruistic and 'other' centred notions of justice that are deemed more acceptable to our intuitive understanding.

Perhaps the most damning findings surround the issues of argument form and the fallacies of equivocation and irrelevance. With regard to the city/soul analogy, if the analogy itself can be shown to have failed, and we have seen that most, if not all, commentators believe that this is the case, then the argument in defence of justice that is dependent upon it must also fail. With regard to the fallacies, Jonathan Culp is representative when he considers the *Republic* to be misleading in that it fails to accomplish what it purports to accomplish. He argues that Socrates speaks as though his argument has been universally successful but Culp is adamant that, even after careful analysis, no such argument is forthcoming. Moreover, he considers that the argument concerning justice is a failure because it raises expectations that ordinary justice will be vindicated, yet he believes that Plato provides no convincing argument that it does so.

If the viewpoints of the commentators outlined in the chapter are correct then it would appear that "what we are left with" is not the concept of justice that Plato promised, and that substantial issues exist surrounding the argumentation for, and the outcome of, Plato's notion of justice in the *Republic*. Faced with such a finding it would seem that we must conclude either

[65] Annas

that Plato's argumentation is inept or his notion of justice is flawed, or that the commentators are mistaken in their interpretation and analysis of Book IV.

In what follows I will argue that neither of these positions is correct. In doing so I will not deny much of the received wisdom of commentators as I acknowledge that they have raised valid concerns with Book IV. However, I will equally not accept that Plato's notion of justice has been discredited in the *Republic* generally by the issues that have been identified specifically with Book IV. My aim in this thesis is to show that it is the tendency of commentators to over-focus on Book IV that is the cause of the widespread negative conception of Platonic justice abroad. I will argue that a reading of justice that does not principally depend on Book IV yields a more robust notion of the concept that comports better with the *Republic* as a whole. This is the substantial focus of the thesis, but this new perspective will also allow, in the end, a more positive reappraisal of Book IV and an integration of its material into the Republic more generally.

Chapter Two: The Divided Line

Introduction

In Chapter One I established that it has been the tendency amongst commentators to rely solely on Book IV that has largely led to the negative response to Plato's notion of justice. I claimed that this offers us an apparent exhaustive disjunction: either we must accept the ineptness of Plato's argument (and Plato) or we must take issue with the way in which commentators have interpreted the text. I am reluctant to accept that Plato was a fool, even though Book IV appears to have significant shortcomings, and, rather than condemn outright as mistaken commentators' criticisms, I intend to explore an alternative option, one that can be found by looking to Book I and the wider Republic and which will, I claim, turn out to rehabilitate both Plato's notion of Justice and, to some degree at least, Book IV. This will in turn restore Plato's reputation... As a necessary first step I focus on Plato's epistemological tool that provides his metaphysical framework for the Republic: The Divided Line. How this framework is to be understood will turn out to be critical to my wider project.

Following the format of Chapter One I will first outline the reading of the Divided Line supported by a substantial strand of twentieth century thought, which has generally been interpreted as presenting the relationship between four distinct cognitive states and their corresponding, and equally distinct, objects. I will then set out and explore prominent past and current readings of the Line that will enable me to highlight the division of opinion over whether each level does indeed deal with a corresponding and differing object as the general interpretation has suggested, or whether there is one object in view across all cognitive levels of the Line. The choice is whether the shadow and the Form are differing 'objects' or whether they are differing perspectives of the same object.

I will argue strongly for the position that there is strictly only one object in view, the Form, and that we are presented with successive gradations of 'knowing' in terms of increasing clarity and sophistication of discrimination made in relation to that one object as we ascend the cognitive levels. I will maintain that the single object that is in view, with whatever degree of clarity, through the ascent of the cognitive levels is, in fact, the Form. I will argue that minds at each level *must* apprehend (partake of) some features or facets of the Form and, that the level of sophistication of discrimination achieved is driven by the relative abilities and limitations of the cognitive processes involved and not by the changes in the object itself. In other words I will show that it is a mistake to understand the limiting aspect of the Line in terms of the four different cognitive states having four different referents. Instead, the individuating criteria of what can be seen and known in relation to that one object is determined by the individual

properties of the particular cognitive state engaged, the limitations of which will produce variations of comprehension of the same object. I will further argue that, given that there is no *intrinsic* change in the object across each level, any analysis of what is understood in a particular context should focus on initially determining the cognitive level in play. I will demonstrate clear textual support for the notion that each cognitive level has abilities and limitations which will allow an accurate presentation of how an object would be understood or apprehended by a mind at that level.

As a result, I will show that the text supports an interpretation that lends itself to a "developmental" reading of the Divided Line in which as a mind progresses through the Levels it gains an increasing awareness and understanding of that one object. I will further argue that the information gained from one level becomes the initial basis for the next level's approach to the same object, and I will show that no level is abandoned but that each level progressively provides foundational and key information for a proper understanding that will ultimately be found at the top of the Line when the mind has the cognitive ability of *nous*. Thus, I will show that, while some ability to generalise takes place at all levels, the key distinguishing feature between the levels in relation to the single object, the Form, is the ability to discriminate in an increasingly sophisticated manner. The ability to deal with and see complexity increases as the cognitive levels are ascended, and, as my developmental reading of the Line will demonstrate, previous knowledge and less sophisticated discriminations are improved upon rather than lost. I will also show, however, that, in line with Plato's own thoughts in the Republic, not every mind can, or wishes to, progress to the very top.

Finally, I will show that the importance of this new reading for the issues under analysis will be that in analysing any dialogue there must be heightened emphasis on determining the specific cognitive level in play and analysing any dialogue against this background in order to correctly interpret precisely what is being said and its limitations, as well as the intentions of Plato. This will prove vital to my subsequent analysis, in chapters 3 to 6 of the thesis, of the notion of justice set out in Book I in the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus. Clearly the focus of this thesis is Plato's notion of justice in the Republic and there is limited opportunity for original research regarding the Divided Line in this chapter over and above my analysis and adjudication on commentators' positions. However, I do selectively extend the research of key commentators in my interpretation and argue from this amplified position for a reappraisal of a number of traditional issues, including the 'ratios' and 'proportions' problems. In addition, if the thesis overall proves successful in my major aim of establishing my views regarding Plato's notion of justice and, in doing so, shows that the single object position is a necessary condition

for this conception of Plato's notion of justice then it will constitute, in turn, a transcendental argument in favour of the single object position and make an original contribution to the debate on the Divided Line itself.

The Platonic Position

Having established, through the simile of the Sun, the distinction between two 'realms' and two 'powers' (the intelligible and the visible) Plato expands his explanation with the simile of the Line. In *Republic* (509d-511e) Glaucon is asked to imagine a Line that is divided into two unequal parts and then to bisect these sections once more according to the same ratio. The four segments are then labelled, in ascending order, eikasia, pistis, dianoia and noesis. Socrates explains that the first segment, eikasia, contains icons (images):

> *I mean first shadows, then reflections on water and other close grained, polished surfaces, and all that sort of thing, if you understand me (510a).*

The second segment stands for the objects which are the originals of the images in the segment below:

> *The animals around us, and every kind of plant and manufactured object (510a).*

The relationship between these two segments is said to be of 'image to original' and Socrates remarks that this relationship mimics that of the two main sections so that the visible realm of opinion is said to be the image of the original, the intelligible realm of knowledge. (510a)

Socrates then moves on to the subdivision of the upper section of the Line. In the third section, dianoia, we are told that:

> *The mind uses the originals of the visible order in turn as images, and has to base its inquiries on assumptions and proceed from them, not to a first principle, but to a conclusion (510b).*

In the top segment, noesis, Socrates explains that the distinction between the two types of thought is that noesis needs no assumptions or images but pursues its inquiry:

> *solely by and through forms themselves (510b).*

At this point in the text Glaucon interrupts to say that he does not follow the distinction between the two types of thought identified in the top section of the Line. Socrates is then forced to expand his explanation using geometry as his example. By relating students of geometry to the level of dianoia he can show that they would begin from an assumption, such as:

> *Assuming there are odd and even numbers, geometrical figures and the three forms of an angle (510c).*

These are regarded as known since they are "obvious to everyone". The point that Socrates is making is that while the geometers make use of the visible figures, for example the triangle, they are not *really* thinking about them but about the original or the Form that they resemble. This type of thinking cannot move beyond the assumptions made from the visible objects they use as images:

> *The actual figures they draw or model, which themselves cast their shadows and reflections in water – these they treat as images only, the real objects of their investigation being invisible except to the eye of reason (510d).*

We can, therefore, see a relationship of the original in the second segment, pistis, that has its own image in *eikasia* below it, becoming an image itself to the segment above it on the Line, *dianoia,* whereas the top section of the Line differs in that through the power of dialectic:

> *It treats assumptions not as principles, but as assumptions in the true sense, that is as starting points and steps in the ascent to something which involves no assumptions and is the first principle of everything (511b).*

Socrates then makes the final statement concerning the Line stating that, corresponding to the four sections of the Line there are these four states of mind, eikasia, pistis, dianoia and noesis and that they can be arranged on a scale which shows "degrees of clarity" (511e).[66]

The Historical Interpretation of the Divided Line

Historically the Line was interpreted as presenting a quadratic epistemology, with higher and lower realms to distinguish objects from epistemic states. The Line is seen to characterise both a type of knowing – *episteme* (how things are) and *doxa* (how things appear) – and a cognitive state representing a grade of knowledge. In ascending order these grades are *eikasia* (imagination), *pistis* (belief), *dianoia* (reason) and *noesis* (understanding). These then represent different sorts of knowledge that offer increasing accuracy and clarity. Thus, historically, the majority of scholars have favoured the interpretation of the Line that suggests that these different capacities must necessarily deal with different sorts of objects.

[66] This point will become crucial for my analysis and interpretation of the Divided Line.

According to this interpretation there are four divisions on the left hand side and four divisions on the right. As you transit from one division on the right towards a different cognitive state you will necessarily perceive a different object. This has led to a familiar way of explaining the differences between the two sorts of *doxa* – imagination and belief – and the two sorts of *episteme* – thought and understanding – in terms that rely on object analyses. Here each cognitive condition is individuated by reference to its unique object. This necessitates that each cognitive condition has its own unique object, and is limited to that object. On this view one could be in a particular belief state if and only if one were confronted with either, with a certain sort of sensible object, images for *eikasia* and physical objects for *pistis,* or, one were confronted with a certain sort of intelligible '*object',* – one gained through discursive reasoning for *dianoia* and one gained through direct intuition for *noesis*.

Modifications to the Historical Position

The positions of Gail Fine and W.W. Tait on the interpretation of the Divided Line may be termed a 'half-way house'. Both seek to establish that the relationship between cognitive state and object is not as clear cut as the above position contends and that it is not necessarily intended to be interpreted as a one to one relationship.

Fine finds difficulty in understanding the Line in terms of object analyses and cites the confusion over what to do with the objects of *dianoia* as an example of this problematic interpretation. Is the "square itself" a Form (as Fine suggests) or is it a mathematical entity that is distinct from Forms? She instead favours what she terms "content analyses".[67] On her view the differing segments of the Line are individuated not by their unique objects but by their distinctive sorts of reasoning – by what she calls their "cognitive content". On this analysis of the Line no state has unique objects but one's cognitive state is determined by the way in which one reasons about an object. So for Fine objects are only relevant to the Line in so far as they are used to determine one's cognitive level. She criticises the objects analysis by considering what is happening at the various stages on the Line, but for the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to report her findings from the first and last sections of the Line (what she terms L1 and L4).

According to the objects analysis one is in L1 (*eikasia*) *only* if one is perceiving images, but Fine argues that this makes no sense at all; *most* of us do not dwell continually on images and yet Plato says that *most* of us are indeed at L1. Furthermore, she points out that, contra the

[67] Gail Fine, 'Knowledge and Belief in Plato's Republic', in *Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed. by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 215–47.

objects interpretation, the perception of images is neither necessary nor sufficient to qualify for L1: "It is not necessary because the prisoner who is released in the cave and then looks at the artificial objects (not just at their images) is at first confused; he is still at L1, even though he is confronted with an object, not just with its image. It is not sufficient because ..... Plato says that the philosopher who returns to the cave will know the images there (520c); he does not lapse back into L1 when he looks at images."[68]

Fine seeks to overcome these issues through her suggestion of contents analysis. For her people are not at L1 because the only things they confront are images, they are there because "they cannot systematically discriminate between images and the objects they are of."[69] So they are at L1 not because of objects in L1 but because of the way in which they reason about them. While she acknowledges that objects are relevant to the Line they are so only because one's level of understanding about the objects is dependent on one being able to make distinctions about those objects. She also points out that this does not necessitate different objects for different sections of the Line, but rather it "plainly allows one to have different cognitive attitudes to the same sort of objects."[70]

Similarly when dealing with L4 (*noesis*) she attacks the historically popular view that L4 type of knowledge consists of "some sort of vision or acquaintance."[71][72] In other words that one knows the Form of the Good not by explaining it in terms of anything but "by a self-certifying vision, which is also what the knowledge consists in."[73] But, as Fine asserts, this approach "claims that knowledge does not require an account after all, but only a vision."[74] Yet Plato himself continually points out that the route to *noesis* is through dialectic. For example when he asks rhetorically "And will you not say that someone who cannot do this, in so far as he cannot give

---

[68] Fine, p. 232.

[69] Fine, p. 232.

[70] Fine, p. 233.

[71] Fine, p. 243.

[72] For an example of a favourable view of this acquaintance reading see F.M. Cornford, "Mathematics and Dialectic in the *Republic*, VI-VII", in R.E. Allen (ed), *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* (London, 1965). For a critique of the acquaintance view (or the 'intuition theory' as he calls it) see R. Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectics*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1953).

[73] Fine, p. 243.

[74] Fine, p. 243.

an account to himself and others, to that extent lacks knowledge (*nous*) about the matter?" (534b 3-6)[75] Thus if noesis is the ability to give an account then acquaintance cannot be sufficient for *noesis:* something else is needed – the account itself derived through dialectic. Instead of acquaintance Fine proposes a coherentist picture of the Line wherein she suggests that through the Line Plato "shows the point and interconnection of all things"[76]. I take this to mean that one must be able to have knowledge of sensibles in order to fully justify that one is articulating accurately the world of the Forms – it is indeed the case that part of this justification is the ability to explain sensibles. In light of this Fine understands Plato to be positing that one needs to refer to sensibles in order to justify propositions about Forms and thus he must allow knowledge of sensibles.[77] If Fine is right that knowledge of sensibles is necessary, and that it is contents analysis that sets differentiation in terms of abilities of discrimination, then the 1:1 relationship between cognitive states and objects suggested in the orthodox interpretation of the Line is called into serious question.

WW Tait sees a necessary relationship between *pistis* and *dianoia* – what we are doing when we use reason is taking something imperfect and perfecting it. Therefore reason must work on 'something' that is already present in the object, albeit in an imperfect way, in order for us to reason it through to perfection. What I take this to mean is that we would not be able to perfect anything if it were not empirically accessible in the first place – if what was empirically accessible did not 'share' in the Form then how would we ever be able to reason about them? He sees the Line itself as a 'rhetorical argument for foundations' and, by his own admission, his reading of Plato, compared to contemporary commentaries, is 'deflationary'[78]: "I understand him to be saying things that we understand quite well ….. and can agree with, although they were novel in his time. But also on my reading, and again in contrast with many contemporary commentators, Plato was a brilliant man of his times."[79] Thus when commentators have interpreted the Line in the orthodox manner they have ascribed views to Plato about distinct objects, distinct and separate realms and distinct and separate cognitive states that Tait

[75] See also 511b-c and 533a-d

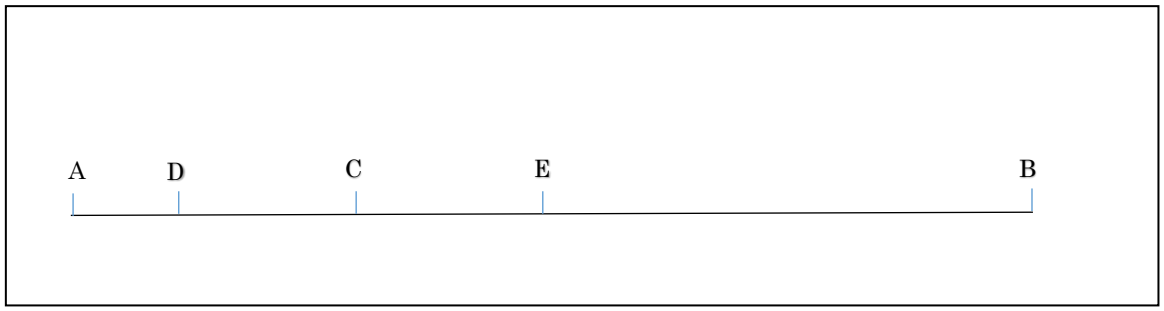
[76] Fine, p. 244.

[77] Fine, p. 245.

[78] WW Tait, 'Noesis: Plato on Exact Science', in *Reading Natural Philosophy: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science and Mathematics*, ed. by David Malament (Open Court, 2002).

[79] Tait, p. 12.

considers would be unthinkable for such a sophisticated writer. In his own understanding of the Line he divides the segments as follows:



As the diagram above demonstrates A-C is the sensible realm with C-B as the intelligible realm of the Forms. So the correlation is such that A-C represents the realm *to doxaston* (those things for which there is opinion) and C-B the realm of *to gnoston* (those things which can be known).[80] In this distinction Plato argues that sensible things 'are and are not' and that it is Forms that absolutely 'are'. Tait takes this to mean that Plato is arguing for the position that "true propositions about sensibles are never entirely true but true propositions about Forms are absolutely true."[81] Thus he agrees with Vlastos[82] in considering it a mistake to translate the "are" in these propositions intransitively as "exist": because, like Fine, he considers this to be connected to an understanding of Plato's knowledge of Forms as knowledge 'of' (through acquaintance) and not to be concerned with knowledge 'about' (through propositions). Tait believes that it is this mistaken interpretation that is responsible for positing the view that belief and knowledge are concerned with the existence of objects rather than about propositional facts. This brings with it the implication that belief must be about objects that exist and then cease to exist – so belief concerns only that which does and does not exist and so, therefore, are also both true and false. Knowledge, on the other hand according to this view, is "of" objects that are immutable and eternal hence they exist absolutely and are therefore, true absolutely. Tait is very unsympathetic to this view and suggests rather that Plato's understanding of knowledge should be interpreted as Forms being "true of a certain structure which the

[80] Plato has already argued for this correlation in Book V 477-8

[81] Tait, p. 15.

[82] Gregory Vlastos, 'Degrees of Reality in Plato', in *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, ed. by R Bambrough (London: Routledge, 1965).

phenomena in question roughly exemplify but which, once grasped, we are capable of reasoning about independently of the phenomena which in the causal sense, gave rise to it."[83]

So for Tait both 'halves' of the Divided Line are concerned with the truth of propositions rather than the ontology of objects. Moreover, he presents an obstacle that he considers to be problematic for *any* view that wishes to posit distinct objects for the sub segments of the Line. This obstacle is concerned with the expressions of the ratios of the Line in terms of both clarity/obscurity and truth/falsity.[84] In 509d-e, Socrates explains to Glaucon that the ratios of the Line are to be seen as expressions of relative clarity or obscurity: "This gives you in terms of comparative clarity and obscurity", but then in 510a-b he has Glaucon express the ratio in terms of truth and falsity: "Would you be prepared to admit that these sections differ in that one is true, one not". The ratio that Glaucon provides in response to this is expressed as:

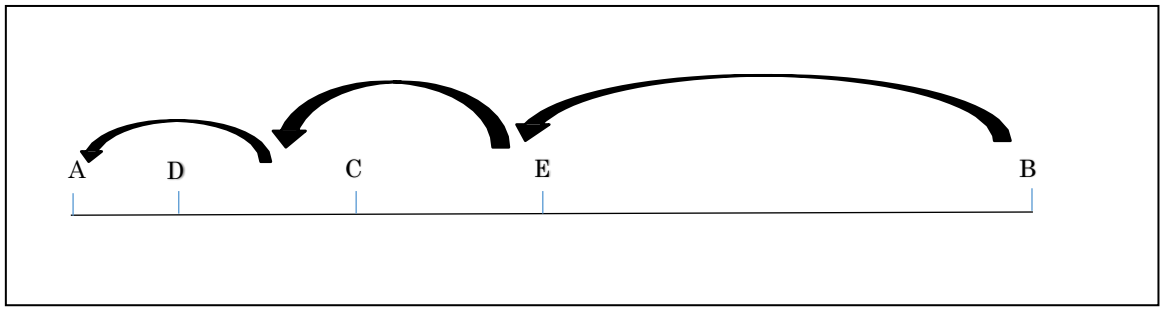
AD:DC=AC:CB

However, at 511e the comparison with respect to clarity or obscurity corresponds to the sorts of cognitive states, and the comparison with truth has to do with their objects: "And you may arrange them in a scale, and assume that they have degrees of clarity corresponding to the degree of truth possessed by their subject matter". The issue as Tait sees it is that if AC and CB each correspond to two types of cognitive state and two types of object, which of the four possibilities is the right hand side of the ratios meant to represent, either with respect to clarity or truth? Certainly some commentators would explain all the ratios within the Line in straightforward terms of the metaphor of images: so each segment and sub segment must represent a kind of object and therefore the ratios would need to be interpreted as expressing a comparison of image to model. But the only image/model that Plato considers is the one that involves sensible objects to Forms, and there are **no** sensible objects in CE. This leads Tait to conclude that in AD and DC we must be considering the sensible object and importantly in both CE and EB we must be considering the Form. In a similar vein to Fine the difference for Tait then is not to be found in the objects we are judging but in the way in which we are judging them. The very fact that the object in DC is the same as in AD is paramount for his case. When we are dealing with sensible objects (S) in AD we are dealing with the object "on the basis of S-as-imaged-by-I." So the objective correlate of the object S in AD "is not S as it is in itself, nor is

[83] Tait, p. 17.

[84] Tait, p. 21ff.

the basis of judgement simply the image I."[85] He continues this correlation for all stages of the Line: each stage is dependent on the stage that precedes it. Thus on my reading of Tait his image of the Line can be represented thus:



The arrows between the sub segments of the Line in the diagram represent the process "as imaged by". So the Forms are judged as imaged by sensibles and the sensibles are judged as imaged by images. Thus, for Tait, it stands to reason that the objective correlate that is presented in the Line is: Form – as imaged by – Sensibles.[86] In this way there is a reliance of Forms upon sensibles as the Form can only be reached through the reasoning of sensibles. If the Form were not present in the world of the sensibles then there could be no possibility of it being subject to reason let alone being 'found' by means of direct intuition. Thus for Tait the Divided Line should not be interpreted as a matter of ontology, rather it should be read as being concerned with the development of cognitive processes towards the absolute truth of the 'thing' in question.

Contemporary support for this position comes from Franco Trabbatoni,'s[87] distinction between *dianoia* and *noesis*. While it is true that Trabbatoni is only explicitly interested in the top half of the Line I see nothing in principle in his work that would prevent his conclusions from being applied down through the bottom sections of the Line. Trabbatoni has proposed that *dianoia* and *noesis* "stand in relation to one another as genus and species."[88] I take him here to be suggesting, in the manner of Heraclitus, that although thought is common to all, it is to be contrasted with the kind of thought which proceeds towards a principle, which only considers valid that procedure which demonstrates the need for everything it posits, and this type of thought is only achieved by a few. For Trabbatoni the objects of d*ianoia* and n*oesis* are

[85] Tait, p. 31.

[86] While I will agree with Tait on his view of the necessary presence of Forms within the entire structure of the Line I will disagree with him on his view that the relationship is presented through 'images'.

[87] Franco Trabbatoni, *Essays on Plato's Epistemology* (Leuven University Press, 2016), p. 139-189

[88] Trabbatoni, p. 147

clearly the same: this he claims is obvious because "they are both thought and thought refers to intelligible 'things'".[89] The objects of *dianoia* are sensible things used as images – so a person exercising *dianoia* in a way performs a hybrid activity, since they think of intelligible things through mental representations drawn from the sensible world. *Dianoia* is therefore a form of thought that still utilises directly objects of perception. This leads Trabbatoni to claim that, while those who possess dianoia know what they know through thought, this is not the thinking of first choice. "*Noesis* is introduced, not to identify a different kind of thought other than *dianoia*, nor objects of a new kind, but in order to mark out – within what can be described as thought in all its various aspects – a particular kind of thought possessing a specific method of its own."[90] For Trabbatoni then *noesis* as thought is *dianoia*, but not every kind of *dianoia* is *noesis*.

He interprets Plato's comment that the knowledge at work in the fourth segment of the Line is a "capacity of discussing" (511b4), to be suggesting that this capacity does not set hypotheses as principles but only approaches these as cues for defining the real principle which is un-hypothetical. So, for Trabbatoni, the difference between a hypothetical and an un--hypothetical is the fact that "the un-hypothetical carries its *raison d'etre* within itself and is not posited merely as a premise that is not justified, or only justified by the fact of wishing to develop certain arguments."[91] So for Trabbatoni the un-hypotheticals are ideas that are the principles that must necessarily be posited in order for there to be an explanation and understanding of reality. However, this knowledge is not an "immediate and direct apprehension of the un-hypothetical", but a "dialectical and discursive process that unfolds from the particular – from the multiple to the One"[92].

Thus Trabbatoni sees the Line as illustrating not distinct and separate segments, but a development. Ideas are un-hypothetical because it is necessary to posit the unity of the multiple, but this knowledge of Ideas is not immediate in the obvious sense of the term. It is immediate only in as much as when one has reached the stage of *noesis* knowledge of the Form is no longer mediated, but it is not immediate in terms of comprehension. Thus it is not immediately

[89] Trabbatoni. p. 149

[90] Trabbatoni. p. 149

[91] Trabbatoni. p, 147

[92] Trabbatoni, p.148

intuitive but rather it becomes intuitive through the gathering of the many into the One and the dividing of the One into the many. Trabbatoni argues that, for Plato, this constitutes "the activity of thought in its most majestic sense"[93], yet it is not the only type of thought and it is for this reason that the intelligible section is quite rightly divided into two. The element which brings together the cognitive procedures practised in the upper two sections of the Line has to do with the way in which thought develops and not with the referent of those thoughts. If both *dianoia* and *noesis* must have intelligibles as their object then, for Trabbatoni, there appears to be no textual or theoretical reason to posit the existence of two different types of intelligibles – only that there are two different types of thinking.[94]

Analysis and Issues

The three commentators that I have cited as modifications to the historical interpretation of the Line do not individually cover the whole picture but when considered as an aggregate they begin to present the position that I will argue for. That is an overall approach to the Divided Line that posits not only one object for all cognitive states, but that that single object must necessarily 'share' or 'participate' in the Form, just as Plato himself insists. If Fine, Tait and Trabbatoni are right then the one-to-one relationship between cognitive states and objects is not sustainable and, indeed, the key point to take from Tait is that what is being perceived in the lower 'half' of the Line is necessarily the Form, if our reasoning about it is not to be driven completely astray. Put another way, if we require as thinking beings data from the sensory bottom half for our reasoning, then, if the product of that reasoning is to approach how things truly are then that initial sensory data had better involve facets or features of the Form or the output of that reasoning process is likely to diverge markedly from the Forms that Plato believed in. Thus the kernel of this approach is that we have to reason about 'something', that that something is the sensory data that provides the inputs which are then refined by reason, and that if the sensory data has is not a product of the Form it is mysterious as to how such reasoning could take us to the Form itself.

Certainly the Line presents fundamentally different sorts of cognitive processes at work but all these different modes of knowing are directed towards one object, the individual Form in question, although they must deal with it according to the limitations of their cognitive state – that is, with different degrees of clarity. For example, Denyer provides the suggestion of

[93] Trabbatoni, p. 148

[94] Trabbatoni. p, 149

reflecting on the average age of an undergraduate which he provides as 19.8.[95] It is clear that the age of any actual undergraduate increases at the rate of one year every twelve months. No actual undergraduate could be identical with the average undergraduate whose age can remain static for many years and can actually decrease at the beginning of the year when young students are admitted. But Denyer insists that this does not 'require us to think of an extraordinary undergraduate only accessible through thought – it speaks only of ordinary undergraduates but in an extraordinary way.' While different processes are at work those processes are still dealing with undergraduates – there is no change in the object.

The issues that seem to surround the Divided Line are whether a cognitive state is sufficient for the comprehension of Forms or whether you also have to have the object, and whether it is necessary to posit different objects for each cognitive state. I argue firstly, that the object is a necessary ingredient but secondly, that the *same* object is necessarily present at all levels of cognitive ability. The potential consequences of this position are that a) from an epistemic position we have some beliefs about features of the Forms at the bottom level of the Line, even though we would be unaware that they were features of the Forms, and knowledge of the Forms at the top level; and b) the fact that we can have some perceptual apprehension of Forms at the lowest level implies that the object we are perceiving *must* intrinsically be the Form itself, however approximate or obscured, and that the sophistication with which we can discriminate aspects of the Form must increase as we ascend the levels.

This new approach will potentially solve a number of problems raised by the general historical interpretation. Firstly, on their account it would seem that one could never come to know what one believed, nor could one ever believe what one knew as the objects for both cognitive states are necessarily distinct. This would be a bizarre state of affairs and, as Tait comments, "Plato was indeed a very great man, a genius: they all affirm this: but then they go on to attribute to him views that would have been as foolish or unintelligible in his time as they are in ours."[96] Moreover this historical position does not appear to cohere with the rest of the text where Plato sees the journey of the philosopher as a **development** through the cognitive stages "he (the philosopher) will never ***come to the end*** of the greatest study and that which most properly belongs to him" (504c9). The philosopher must travel through all the stages of

[95] Nicholas Denyer, 'Sun and Line: The Role of the Good.', in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 288–94.

[96] Tait, p. 12.

the Cave in order to finally establish the Form of the Good. Therefore, the philosopher must journey through his belief to knowledge in order to finally know that which he had previously believed. Also, it is not evident at all that when one progresses up the Line one abandons entirely the cognitive states below: in fact the journey out of the cave is not the end of the journey, as Socrates makes it clear that the philosopher must return from the intelligible realm back into the cave from whence his journey had started.

Secondly, if these objects and cognitive states are distinct in a one to one relationship then one must ask the question: when someone at the bottom level of *eikasia* is perceiving, say, justice (exploration of which is my object in this thesis) – just what is it that they are perceiving if it does not involve facets of the Form of Justice? How is any relationship between justice and Justice to be explained? Thirdly, if the stages on the Line are separate and distinct then one must question the division of *noesis* and *dianoia* as two separate and distinct types of thought, one dealing *only* in discursive reasoning and the other *only* with direct intuition. Which of these types of thought encounters the Forms? If they are indeed separate then, according to the historical interpretation, they must deal with different objects – must we then posit different levels of Forms?

If the position that posits multiple objects has issues that need to be addressed then the work of such academics as Tait, Fine and Trabbatoni goes some way to indicating a way forward. Tait provided a platform for positing a single object approach to the Line, and while not explicitly positing the same approach, the single object stance underpins the work of both Fine and Trabbatoni.

The Divided Line Revisited

In my approach I will align myself with Fine, Tait and Trabbatoni at the gross level in claiming that there is strictly only one object in view but I will further refine their modifications to develop what I describe as the developmental/cumulative approach, which I will set out in detail below. This approach will argue that at each stage of the Line there is participation in the Form itself, just as Plato said there was.

But what is it that I mean by 'developmental'? I claim that the Line presents us with development on two axes. First, there is development of the apprehension of the object. It is my contention that at each cognitive level there is participation in the Form which increases as one ascends the levels. What that means is that what is, in a sense, apprehended at the lower cognitive levels is not thrown away when one ascends to the next level. So a developmental process continues as one rises through the levels in which what was learnt at the lower levels is

retained and incorporated, in ways to be discussed, at the next level until one finally reaches *noesis*. At this point, full knowledge of the object enables one to see the part played by the lower level perceptions and how they contribute to the overall meaning.

This represents a hypothesis about the Divided Line in general and I will presume this wider framework in my specific analysis of the specific conception of justice offered in Book I. If my work proves successful, it will in turn offer a concrete validation of the wider hypothesis in the form of a proof of concept of the general idea.

It is clear that central to the progressive development of the apprehension of the object is the development of the cognitive. As one rises through the cognitive levels ones cognition develops, and so one's ability to participate more widely in the Form grows. The examination of justice as proof of concept will also explore the crucial cognitive developmental role that, according to Plato, dialogue concerning the object has.

In terms of the apprehension of the object let us look in more detail at what that actually means. We are talking about a single object and the question is whether, when we look at it from any level other than 4, we apprehend anything from it in relation to the Form. I argue that we must because, were it otherwise, what we meant by a particular concept at Levels 1, 2 and 3 would bear no necessary relation to the Form, and ascending through the cognitive levels would bring us no closer to the Form itself until, mysteriously, we reached *noesis*. As a result, any testing of any *noetic* conception against the concepts that 'normal' people have would be completely pointless and irrelevant – indeed the conceptions arising from the lower levels might as well have not been referred to by the same name, and the objects could have been lower level perceptions of anything. This would render it mysterious as to why Plato would have Socrates engage in any dialogue with anyone who was not at Level 4.

I will show that in fact it is the developmental process of the Line that Plato is interested in and that at each level there is increasing participation in the Form that is the only object in view, but the Form itself is not *understood* except at Level 4. Crucial to this understanding is the role played by *sapheneia*, in that the journey upwards on the Line is one of increased sophistication of discrimination, due to an increasing degree of clarity, until full illumination is gained at the top level of *noesis*. I will draw upon Rowett and Lesher to support this interpretation of *sapheneia*, which will in turn provide considerable support for my developmental approach to the Line. I will demonstrate this through the detailed analysis of justice as proof of concept, but if my subsequent chapters can validate this approach for Justice,

it may well encourage further research, outside the scope of this thesis, to determine whether application of this revised framework to other concepts is likely to be similarly successful.

The importance of clarity

It will be remembered that I said earlier in the chapter that Socrates asks Glaucon to think of a line bisected unequally but I did not go into detail about the specific relative values or the implications of those values. However, this is both controversial and important for the points I wish to make regarding my position, and I therefore briefly sketch out in what follows Plato's guidance on the ratios and proportions. I, then, loosely following the work of Rescher[97] explain some of the difficulties and highlight the issues that arise from these proportions before looking at two contemporary interpretations that are important, not only for addressing these difficulties, but also for introducing specifically the concept of *sapheneia* and clarity upon which I will have more to say.

In obeying the instructions about proportions and ratios Glaucon is faced with a choice: should the Line be drawn horizontally or vertically? Socrates himself suggests that the correct response is to draw the Line vertically as he states:

> *The soul is compelled to use hypotheses in the investigation of it, not travelling* ***up*** *to a first principle ..... but using as images those very things of which images were made by the things* ***below*** *them (511a)*

A little later in explaining the Line he states that understanding deals with the "highest" section of the Line (511e). What is clear is that while the actual features of the Line appear arbitrary the ratios of the Line, and the subsequent proportions, are not. Socrates is at great pains to point out that the ratios within the two main sections are drawn according to the same division as the two main sections (509c). Following Rescher who states that "the interpreter of Republic 6-7 who leaves these proportions out of consideration is offering us Hamlet without the ghost,"[98] we can suppose that there is important information that can be abstracted from the mathematical proportions of the Line. Let us take as an example a Line and subdivide it according to the ratios that Socrates insists on in the text:

---

[97] Nicholas Rescher, 'On the Epistemology of Plato's Divided Line', *Logos & Episteme: An International Journal of Epistemology*, 2010, 133–64.

[98] Rescher, p148

Noesis	A
	Four
	Units
Dianoia	B
	2 units
Pistis	C
	2 units
Eikasia	D 1 unit

The Line I have chosen here is nine units long (if the exact ratios are adhered to then, mathematically, the implications of the Line will be the same for any length chosen). Following the text, the proportions of the Line are divided as follows: as the upper section is to the lower section so the division within those sections (that is the upper and lower segments of the upper section, and the upper and lower segments of the lower section) will be divided in the same way. This leads us to a ratio that expresses the following relationship between the four segments of the Line: as *noesis* (A) is to *dianoia* (B) so *pistis* (C) is to *eikasia* (D). We can express this ratio as follows:

As A:B :: C:D

On the model I have drawn above this ratio translates to the numerical ratio of:

As 4:2 :: 2:1

It is supposed that within the text we are led to assume that the four sub-segments will each differ in length due to Socrates' statement that each level offers a different degree of clarity. However, as can be seen from the ratio above, it is a mathematical fact that the second and third segments will have proportions of equal length. Now the scholarly reaction to this 'fact' is, contra Rescher, generally either to ignore it or to be negative about the Line or Plato himself. Gould states that the equal lengths of the two segments is "an embarrassing detail"[99] and Pritchard goes even further claiming that "it is an undesirable though unavoidable consequence of the conditions which Plato could have avoided if he had been able, and to which we should

[99] J Gould, *The Development of Plato's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p31.

attach no significance."[100] Hayward, Cardinal and Jones fail to even mention the equality of the lengths let alone any significance there may be.[101] Austin suggests that "no inference should be drawn" and that "no doubt Plato being a mathematician noticed the point, but so far as we know he attached no special importance to it."[102] However, this does not seem plausible as Plato was indeed a mathematician (as Austin himself admits) and as such we would expect him to be fully aware of the consequences of the ratios and so it seems reasonable to assume that the equality of the lengths designated to *dianoia* and *pistis* were deliberately intended. The question to be asked now is why the equal lengths of the Line cause such a problem for scholars?

If we look to the ratios themselves it becomes evident that the starting point for Plato is the idea of an analogy based on the pattern: as A is to B in the point of x so C is to D in the point of x. if we were to express this mathematically it becomes:

A : B :: C : D in point of x [103]

The analogy then becomes a mathematical equation and the Divided Line simile appears to change what is analogy into a quantitative equation. If we look back to the simile of the Sun (507a-509c) we can understand the basic proportionality on which this analogy rests to be:

Light : Physical Objects :: Good : Ideas in point of x.

In the case of the simile of the Sun the point of x is clearly illumination, but what is *x* in the context of the Divided Line? Not only would it seem a reasonable proposition, given the proximity of the Line in the text to the simile of the Sun, to suggest that the point of x remains illumination, but Socrates himself (as we have seen above) states that the stages can be arranged on a scale which shows "degrees of clarity" (511e). These points taken together allows an interpretation (one to which I will ascribe) that considers illumination in terms of increased clarity of understanding as one ascends the Line. But what is to be said of the equal lengths of the two middle segments of the Line? If one holds the four object view then the objects found in *dianoia* are no more 'clear', 'true' or 'real' than those in *pistis* and therefore Plato may be

[100] P Pritchard, *Plato's Philosophy of Maths* (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1995), p91.

[101] Hayward, Cardinal, and Jones, *Plato: The Republic* (London: Hodder & Murray, 2007) pp143-152

[102] J.L Austin, J.O Ormson, and G.J Warnock, 'The Line and the Cave in Plato's Republic', *Oxford Scholarship Online*, 2003, Chapter 13 <www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/019283021X>. p.291

[103] This is a much simplified version of the ideas first presented by Rescher (2010)

suggesting that sensory perception and mathematical reflection are co-equal in point of illumination so that the faculty of *pistis* has as much to offer by way of clarity as the higher faculty of *dianoia.*

There appear to be two issues for scholars here. Is it the position on the Line that is important or the length of the proportion? If it is the position on the Line that is important then *dianoia* is clearly superior given that it is adjacent to, rather than one step removed from, *noesis*. As it is higher on the Line it represents a higher level cognitive state. Certainly the text itself bears this interpretation out:

> *Join me, then, in taking these four conditions in the soul as corresponding to the four sub- sections of the Line: understanding dealing with the highest, thought dealing with the second: assign belief to the third and imagination to the last (511d).*

But if that is all there is to it why be so emphatic over the ratios of the Line? Why not just draw a Line that ranks the epistemological states, one over the other, without reference to any ratio or division? Given that Socrates is insistent that it is the epistemological states themselves that are ranked in order of degree of clarity it would seem that the clue to the proportions will be found in an examination of the importance of *sapheneia* as the crucial point of x, and the relative levels of clarity and obscurity found within the different levels of the Line that allow an ever increasing, and cumulative, sophistication of discrimination revealing more and more of the Form on the way.

Two scholars who take a similar view with regard to *sapheneia* and the Line are Lesher and Rowett. In *The meaning of "sapheneia" in Plato's Divided Line* Lesher states that his main aim is:

> *To make sense of what I regard as Socrates' most puzzling claim, namely that the differnet line segments provide a measure of the relative degrees of sapheneia and asapheia: clarity and obscurity*[104]

[104] J.H Lesher, 'The Meaning of "Sapheneia" in Plato's Divided Line', in *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Mark. L McPherran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 171–87. P171.

He argues that the relevant sense of *sapheneia* in this setting is "full accurate and sure awareness of an object",[105] and he asks "why should we be talking here about clarity?"[106] he questions whether instead of clarity we should, as some have thought[107] interpreted *sapheneia* as truth, which would imply that the intelligible and visible realms and their corresponding cognitive states would differ from each other in point of the level of truth that each stage could attain. But as Lesher says it would be "implausible" to think this since Socrates characterises as *saphestron* "the part of reality and the intelligible realm that is contemplated by the science of dialectic". It is entirely plausible for one "part of reality to be more or less knowable than another", in that we may be able to talk of greater or lesser degrees of truth, "but the parts or regions themselves cannot be more or less true."[108] Moreover, in his main characterisation of the Line at 510e, as elsewhere, Socrates sets *sapheneia* in contrast, not with error or falsehood but with *asapheia* – 'obscurity' or 'indistinctness'. Lesher uses this concept of *sapheneia* to reach the conclusion that the Divided Line, when it is understood correctly, provides "not only an explanation of his (Plato's) rationalist conception of knowledge but also a coherent line of argument in support of that set of doctrines".[109]

Rowett uses this concept of clarity to show that the general interpretation that the lowest segment of the Line holds no useful or relevant information is false. Instead she argues that "Plato means exactly the reverse: he is revealing not the poverty of information in shadows and icons, but their value."[110] She does not disagree that the Line posits different levels of clarity but she insists that this point of levels "does not count against supposing that the purpose of the diagram is to recognise that even the shadows have some clarity, albeit less than the originals."[111] For this reason Rowett wants to view the Line as a "chart of clarity" rather than a

---

[105] Lesher, p171

[106] Lesher, p174

[107] See especially J Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938) p.71, and CDC Reeve, *Philosopher Kings The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) p 78-80 .

[108] Lesher, p174

[109] Lesher, p171

[110] Catherine Rowett, *Knowledge and Truth in Plato: Stepping Past the Shadow of Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p150-1

[111] Rowett, p151

"lack of clarity", as she believes that "even the shadows at the bottom deliver some vicarious clarity about what is next-but-one above, in the upper part of the Line."[112]

Rowett concludes from this that the aim of the Line is to show that "Socrates no longer thinks of knowing as the ability to give a definition" but rather that "pointing to ordinary perceptibles, which was once dismissed as a useless way to answer the 'what is Fness?' question has now become a perfectly legitimate route – in fact *the* route – to acquiring a genuine knowledge of the forms, all the way up to the Form of the Good."[113] Thus Rowett, without fully addressing the specifics of the proportions, makes it very clear that the journey up the Line is one of increasing clarity in the acquisition of knowledge.

I w endorse the approach of both scholars with regard to the concept of clarity, but with some qualifications. As far as Lesher is concerned I agree with what he has to say about *sapheneia* but disagree with how he goes on to use it as a way of endorsing Plato as a rationalist, a position I do not subscribe to. More can be said building on Rowett's position, and indeed I wish to go slightly further than she, in that, I will emphasise the cumulative nature of the single object approach to the Line. I find that both approaches add weight to my contention and clarify my argument that, rather than there being any suggestion of separate objects, it is the increasing ability to discriminate and clarify in a more sophisticates manner what is understood when the Form is apprehended that is distinctive of any ascent through the cognitive levels, where the object in view remains, at all times, the Form.

I claim therefore that we can understand the limitations of cognitive abilities in terms of a pyramid of increasing sophistication, where the limitations limit the grain of discrimination and the level of sophistication with which what is perceived can be understood, which obscures to a large degree understanding. Hence, at the bottom, Level 1 has little clarity and so has a great many limitations that obscure understanding, whereas at the top, Level 4, there is full clarity and so there are no limitations of cognitive processes, the pinnacle of the pyramid. So what will be seen by the subject confronting the same object at each level will appear different, and yet, though limited, a uniting thread can nevertheless be discerned in each case that relates to the Form and which will only become clear in retrospect, once Level 4 is reached.

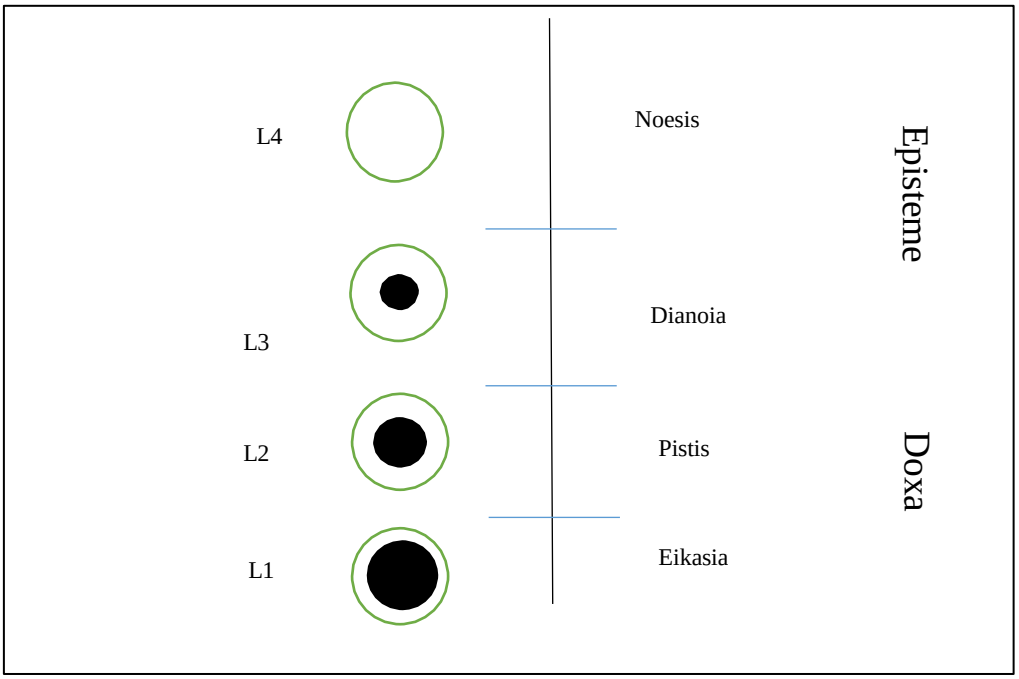
[112] Rowett, p152

[113] Rowett, p162

I will bring this idea to life later in the thesis by distinguishing between the 'object' being perceived as an object and as a formula. The objects will appear different to the person perceiving them at the various levels but that is because the constraints imposed by the relative cognitive abilities. Any formula derived from these limited observations will reflect what is seen. And yet, I will seek to show that, in the case of Justice at least, components of the final (Level 4) formulation for justice were present and recognised in those partial / inchoate formulae generated at lower levels. Indeed it is a key claim that when the *noetic* Level 4 is achieved and we look back 'down the Line', the formula remains the same across each level, and we can see that it was the limitations imposed by the differing cognitive abilities which made it appear as though a different object was in view.

What is clear from the above is that the information derived from the object depends heavily on the cognitive level of the subject and, therefore, any analysis of what a particular subject is perceiving must start with determining the cognitive level at which they are operating.

In summary, my approach offers a distinct alternative to the established orthodoxy, its central notion being that all levels view the same single object but, because of their various cognitive limitations, whilst the object does participate in the Form, those at the lower levels will not be conscious of the Form as such, although they can derive facets of it. This approach emphasises the importance of determining the cognitive levels in play. What I will claim is that when we look back from Level 4 we will see that there is a consonance between the apprehension of the objects at the lower levels and the Form. Thus we can represent this approach through the diagrammatic approach that Plato himself employs – a Divided Line:



This diagram represents my interpretation of the Divided Line, remaining faithful to the distinctions and segments that the text suggests. On the right hand side of the Line there are the differing faculties of *episteme* (knowledge) and *doxa* (belief) along with the cognitive states in their ascending order L1-L4. The circles on the left hand side of the Line represent the single 'object' (formula) in view across all levels. The white areas within the circles show the apprehension of the object, the Form, by the mind at that level, whereas the dark areas indicate the limitations of the differing cognitive processes. It is these limitations of capability and the level of sophistication of discrimination and clarity possible as a result that give rise to the obstacles to comprehension and not any difference in the object itself. Whatever the level of cognitive state there is no change in the object, there is only change in the level of cognitive process which in turn enables the varying degrees of apprehension. Just as Plato himself claimed, if we are able we can develop our cognitive processes in order to gain more clarity, and as we gain in clarity, we move up the Line and therefore the obstacles of the previous state's limitations are no longer in play, but we retain the apprehension received from the lower level which becomes the foundation of the next level's process. However, these processes and retentions are only clarified when looked back upon from a position of *noesis* at the top of the Line.

What is distinctive about this approach is that not only is it not necessary to presume four different objects, it is essential to assume that it is the Form, albeit obscured to different levels, that is in view at all four cognitive stages. This approach also provides probity for Plato's contention that the object must necessarily 'partake', or 'share', in the Form at every stage. Moreover, Plato tells us that *dianoia* must use sensibles and so these sensibles must be objects of thought as well as being the physical objects worked upon by *doxa*. Therefore it is not necessary to presume four different objects in order to explain the four different appearances of objects: the fact that there are such different perceptions does not argue for there being four different objects since different cognitive states cause the same object to be perceived in different ways. We might recall that one of the main difficulties for those who propose four objects was the equality between the values assigned to Level 2 and Level 3, the implication being that there was potentially no progress in terms of knowledge in ascending from one to another. If the ability to reach *noesis* depends upon the development of cognitive processes that use the previous Level's apprehension as its foundation, as I have claimed above, then those at

L4 must be able to understand it in those terms, and they can only come to that understanding through that reliance on the preceding cognitive stages, just as Rowett has argued.[114]

The clear message from all that has gone before is that there is participation in the Form at all levels, and indeed were there not it would mean that people at Level 1 could have no comprehension of objects. Such a position would go against everything that the Divided Line is set up to present in the first place: that Forms are objective, eternal and immutable and that full knowledge of them can **only** be achieved by first passing through the gruelling ordeal of dialectic. We must remember the issue that Fine was keen to point out: the fact that Plato tells us that "most" of us are at Level 1 – most of us are the prisoners in the Cave looking at the shadows on the wall. Does this mean that most of us have no comprehension of 'objects'? As I have already pointed out, if it were the case that those at Level 1 had no conception of 'objects', then any reasoning at a higher level that relied on lower level perceptions would likely be flawed, the product of such cognitive processes bearing no relation to the Form.

Certainly this was not Plato's position; this was not the distinction he was trying to elucidate through the Line. The clear message of the Line was that while you have a perception of an 'object' at Levels 1 and 2 you cannot say that you *know* what that 'object' is; your engagement with the 'object' is perceptual or sensory and, as a result, the most you can claim is that you *believe* it. At Levels 3 and 4 you apply reason, through dialectic, to the beliefs you had acquired, and then, and only then, can you claim that you *know* an 'object'. So my position has established that there is only one object on the Line and that that object perceived at all levels must of necessity include features or facets of the Form.

Historical Interpretation Revisited

Three issues were identified with the traditional position of multiple objects: that one could never come to know what one believed nor believe what one knew; that there are questions about what it is that is being perceived at the bottom level of the Line if it bears no relation to the Form? And that there are issues concerning what the separation of *dianoia* and *noesis* means for the Forms as objects. How can my approach that focuses on the cognitive at work on a single object address these issues?

If every level of cogniscence on the Line is sharing or partaking in the Form, in relative clarity and obscurity, then, on analysis, none of the above issues remain problematic. As Lesher

[114] Catherine Rowett, *Knowledge and Truth in Plato: Stepping Past the Shadow of Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp151-162

and Rowett also maintain, there is clearly a progression of clarity that allows for a greater level of apprehension as one progresses through the cognitive stages – a development from belief to certainty that demonstrates quite clearly that there is a movement from belief to knowledge and that the route to knowledge is dependent on your belief. If objects at each stage of the Line do partake in facets or features of the Form, say Justice, then it is also explicitly the case that the owner of the mind at the lowest level of *eikasia* is perceiving justice, albeit in some obscurity due to the limitations of that level's cognitive processes. Thus any reasoning from that point is likely to be moving in the right direction as it takes as its basis facets or features of the Form itself, albeit incomplete and potentially blurred. There is also no issue over the distinction between the two top sections of the Line if both are dealing with the same object as that perceived in the empirical section. There is not a different level of Form only a different level of understanding, from partial to full, that has developed from the perceptions of the features of the Form found in the bottom sections of the Line.

So I claim that my interpretation of the Divided Line can go a long way toward solving the significant issues that have dogged the traditional interpretation. Moreover, the approach remains faithful to, and in accordance with, all the distinctions Plato made and with the overall message of the Line: that knowledge and belief are by necessity different. In reading the Divided Line and its relation to objects and knowledge in this way, Plato's argument for the distinction between knowledge and belief gains not only coherence but validity. For this reason I further contend that it is probable that my revised interpretation of the Line was one that Plato intended.

One important final step remains: to check the consistency of this approach with Plato's wider position in the Republic and to do this I will examine perhaps the most prominent piece of Plato's work in the Republic – the simile of the Cave.

Consistency Check of the New Approach

There is a huge body of work on the Simile of the Cave (a potential thesis in its own right) and this is not the place for a lengthy exposition and analysis of the Cave. However, the alignment of the Line and the Cave is already a problem for the orthodoxy who, as we have seen, deploy the distinct objects approach to the Divided Line. If my alternative conception of the Divided Line ameliorates these difficulties it will represent a powerful reason for thinking that Plato would have endorsed my alternative approach and offer further validation for my position.

In order to illustrate this I will focus on an exemplar of the general position that posits four distinct objects for each stage of the Cave: the approach of Nickolas Pappas who not only

presents a traditional approach to the cave, but also highlights the issues that are encountered when one adheres to a four object interpretation of both Line and Cave.

For Pappas the allegory of the Cave presents a strict separation of the four stages of things that liberated prisoners see – shadows of statues (cast by fire), statues themselves; shadows (cast by the sun) of those things of which the statues are images, and then the things themselves. He further states that these things are meant to correspond to the four objects of cognition presented in the Divided Line.[115] He claims that the allegory of the Cave identifies a specific kind of 'thing' for every step on the Line, and thus he buys into the four objects approach: "the cave adheres to the strict assumption that for every kind of knowing there exists a separate thing that is known."[116] However, he contends that a close examination of the Cave suggests that there is no such alignment. He takes one of the main issues against the alignment of the Cave and the Line to be that of the position of the prisoners. He considers the idea that the position of most of us are prisoners at Level 1 of the Line, imagination, is a mistake on Plato's part: "Surely Plato has erred in claiming that most human beings remain beneath even the level of empirical knowledge."[117] Pappas thinks that this 'mistake' could only be accounted for either by the consideration that Plato has "overstated his case so egregiously in a furious wish to insult ordinary experience,"[118] or that he has "invented an image of the Divided Line that works only in its broadest outlines, and fails when we try to work out its details."[119] He concludes that either of these possibilities could be correct, but he does accept that eikasia could be taken metaphorically to infer that most people would be entranced by what the political demagogues and poetic artists tell them. From this he argues that, if the Cave describes the state of all human beings, within *kallipolis* or outside of it, then "even given the best political institution, most of a city's members will mill around poets and demagogues. The Platonic city will be as full of the ignorant rabble that Plato wants to escape as Athens was."[120] Thus, for Pappas, the Cave demonstrates that either the Platonic Kallipolis is far from utopian, kept by inevitable human

[115] Nicholas Pappas, *Rouledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 152.

[116] Pappas, p. 154.

[117] Pappas, p. 153.

[118] Pappas, p. 153.

[119] Pappas, p. 153.

[120] Pappas, p. 153.

weakness and ignorance from becoming a perfect community, or else "Plato has not thought through the implications of his analogy."[121]

This problem of the alignment of the Cave to the Line with respect to the cognitive states and their relationship to distinct objects leads Pappas to conclude that the allegory does not exactly match the Divided Line, then, but papers over its complications regarding the objects of cognition."[122] So for commentators like Pappas the problem is clearly with Plato's presentation of his distinction between knowledge and belief as presented in both the Line and the picture of the Cave, that differing cognitive states must deal with different objects.

I argue, contra the position exemplified by Pappas, that the fundamental presumption, either from the Line to the cave or from the cave back to the line, that there are four distinct objects is at fault for the non-alignment of Cave and Line. Had Pappas presumed that there was a single object in view at all levels of the Line then his issues concerning the Line and its alignment with Cave would be ameliorated. It will be remembered that Pappas' specific problems were (1) that the four objects view highlights the fact that the Line and the Cave do not align and as such (2) presents an issue for Plato's distinction between knowledge and belief and (3) that Plato's view that most of us are at Level 1 is a mistake on Plato's part and that, consequently, Plato had not thought through the implications of his analogy. However, my position that argues that both the Line and Cave posit a single object that 'participates' in the Form and is apprehended through cognitive processes with varying levels of limitation and varying levels of sophistication of discrimination renders the allegory of the Cave and the Divided Line entirely consistent. Both represent a 'journey' from sense perception to the Form with limitations and obstacles in the way, so the journey from belief to knowledge, as presented by Plato, remains coherent.

Furthermore, his criticism that Plato's suggestions that most of us are at Level 1 is a mistake on Plato's part as his Republic would be populated by an ignorant rabble, does not make sense. Those at Level 1 and 2 on the Line are still viewing an object that participates in the Form, they are not seeing something different. When the escaped prisoner encounters the real tree in the sunlight outside the Cave he is not seeing some 'thing' that is different, he is still seeing a tree albeit in a different way, and on a different level to the image of an image of a tree he saw

[121] Pappas, p. 154.

[122] Pappas, p. 154.

on the Cave wall. All in the Republic will be seeing a tree and perceiving or understanding it as a tree at some level.

So if the Line and the Cave do align, and thus are consistent in presenting Plato's epistemology, then it cannot be the case that Plato had not thought through the implications of his analogy. Clearly, the analogy of the Line and the Cave are intended to present a coherent and intricately woven depiction of the journey from belief to knowledge and the obstacles that must be overcome to move from an object's participation in the Form to the revelation of the full Form itself, and the development of cognition from perception to intelligence.

In addition to answering Pappas' specific problems, applying my revised conception the Divided Line preserves all of the fundamental messages that commentators, orthodox or not, maintain the allegory of the Cave is meant to impart, namely:

1. That there is a distinction between knowledge and belief represented in the distinction between appearance and reality: the difference between being and seeming to be. In the traditional presentation this is depicted in the Cave through the distinction of illumination by fire and illumination by the sun and the objects that are illuminated within and outside of the Cave.
2. That the journey through the cave is dependent upon differing cognitive states. This is presented through the objects that the liberated prisoner encounters at the various stages of illumination on his journey through the cave: shadows, statues, shadows of things the statues were the images of and the things themselves.
3. That most people think that what they 'see' is the truth – but that the whole truth can only be seen through the intellect. The concluding implications of 1 and 2: that the differing types of illumination and the differing objects they illuminate presents a partial or whole truth of the objects, dependent on whether the illumination is the temporary and obscuring light of the fire or the constant unmediated light of the sun.

If we refer back to the illustration of my interpretation of the Divided Line we can see that the object that is being perceived and then understood is obscured to a greater or lesser degree. What this shows is that within the Cave, while those at Level 1 and Level 2 of the Line are perceiving objects that participate in the Form, their perception is obscured, and their sophistication of discrimination is limited and so could only ever be said to be a belief; one can only be said to have knowledge when all obscurity is cleared. Thus the perception would have

every appearance of reality, and would appear different from the same object apprehended at a different level until the owner of the mind progressed to a developed stage of cognition, "the upward progress of the mind" (517b). This is when that which the prisoner had previously believed he could now claim to know. But it is not necessary to assume that the prisoner comes across different objects on this journey; rather he gains ever more clarity about the same object as his cognitive limitations decrease.

While the prisoners in the cave confront an apparent reality, it is not apparent in the sense that it bears no relation to reality; it is only apparent in the sense that it is limited to what their cognitive process can achieve with the object that they are presented with. The stages of the cave can, on my construal, legitimately be interpreted as the liberated prisoner gaining ever more clarity about the object he had encountered in the Puppet show. Stripped of all the limitations that dogged his cognitive processes and obscured the object, his apprehension develops from perception to understanding, true to the distinction between the empirical and the intelligible. You are 'doing something different' outside the Cave than within, but you are not doing it to a different object, the 'doing something different' being the higher level of cognitive process that ultimately has no limitations in its understanding.

The mistake seems to occur when the Cave is taken as a literal presentation of object and cognition, and not as the allegory or the parable that it was intended to be. The very fact that Plato begins the allegory with the command to "picture" or "imagine" (514a) the situation of uneducated men should be enough to inform us that the Cave is meant to be interpreted symbolically. As such it is entirely consistent to posit that there is one object in view at all points in the cave but that when it is perceived on the wall of the Cave the prisoners are unable to understand its full implications because they have not been educated enough to fully develop their cognitive processes. As the liberated prisoner *is* educated he 'sees' the same object as 2D images inside the cave and in 3D outside the Cave. This process of education that began with the puppet show continues through to the final acquisition of the Form of the Good, when all that had obscured the Form is removed. So the Form is present inside and outside the Cave, first as objects sharing in its features and then in its fully revealed state.

Moreover, the theme of illumination, so important in the Cave, also illustrates a development rather than a separation. The Form of the Good is represented in the cave by the Sun, a ball of fire that constantly illuminates; but there is fire and illumination in the cave as well. While it is true that the fire within the Cave casts a dimmer and flickering light, it is nevertheless a constant source of light within the Cave, a symbolic representation of the Sun.

Thus a direct (L)ine can be established between the Form in full illumination outside the Cave and the Form partially illuminated by fire inside the Cave, so that objects in the cave can only share in the light, a light that will be dictated by the limitations of the cognitive processes of one at that level . This approach suggests that the focus of the message of the Cave should not be on which 'objects' the liberated prisoner encounters on his journey but rather on the journey itself, the differing stages of cognition that allow for a development of cognitive processes that will enable a journey from perception to full understanding, a journey of sophistication of discrimination, from relative to obscurity to clarity.

Conclusions

The key message from the above examination of the Cave is that applying the single object approach to the Divided Line dissolves the problems that the position exemplified by Pappas encountered, and in doing so re-establishes Plato's reputation. In addition, this revised approach offers greater coherence between the Line and the Cave; neither is to be interpreted as a literal illustration but as a development of cognition. As such the Line corresponds with the allegory, depicting as it does the limitations of cognition within and outside the Cave.

In the context of my thesis and the consistency check that the analysis of the Cave was intended to provide, it seems that my hypothesis concerning a single object which partakes in features of the Form at varying degrees across the levels fits well with this exemplar of Plato's wider writing in the *Republic*. Not only is the consistency check satisfied, the proposed approach offers genuine additional benefits by being able to respond to the issue identified by commentators such as Pappas; namely that the Line and Cave will not 'fit' if they are presumed to depict four different objects for different levels of cognition. By assuming only one object, and by viewing the Cave as a symbolic pictorial representation of the development of cognitive processes through the varying stages of education, I have been able to demonstrate that there is no inconsistency between the messages of the Line and the Cave. All distinctions that were intended by Plato, the distinctions between knowledge and belief, reason and experience, appearance and reality, being and seeming to be, are accounted for.

These findings also encourage a reassessment of Plato's competence and reputation in these areas. Had it been the case that Pappas' and other commentators' criticisms had been upheld by my analysis, then it would have been difficult to avoid their conclusion that the simile of the Cave is incoherent and that Pappas was correct in his suggestion that the cave as an

analogy is, quite simply, just not thought through.[123] However, my conclusions provide concrete ammunition to commentators such as Tait who questioned those who propose this criticism of the simile and Plato himself, stating that not only would it be unthinkable for such a sophisticated writer, as Plato undoubtedly was, to make this kind of mistake, but also that these commentators make this accusation whilst simultaneously acknowledging his genius.[124] The proposed single object approach and my associated analysis of its application to the simile demonstrates that adopting this stance will both resolve some of the interpretive difficulties encountered by Orthodox commentators and, at the same time, restore Plato's reputation in their eyes. This gain in coherence in terms of the *Republic* as a work and Plato as a writer is a significant benefit and argues strongly for my case.

This chapter has exposed the limitations and shortcomings of the general historical approach to the Divided Line and some of the modifications to this position. I provided good reasons for my revised approach to the Divided Line but it will be the business of the rest of the thesis to cement my case through the detailed investigation into the nature of justice. I have argued for the probity of interpreting the Divided Line as an illustration of cognitive capability, arguing for the existence of one intentional referent for all cognitive states, and an increasing level of sophistication of discrimination gained through an increase in clarity as one ascends through the stages of the Line. The implication of this approach is that at each stage there is only one object in view and that the object at the lower levels of the Line does indeed 'share', or 'partake', in the Form just as Plato claims it does. The Divided Line should be understood as a development through all cognitive stages – each stage being a progression from the preceding stage – in order for there to be full comprehension of the same 'object' at the end of the ascent, the level of apprehension of the object being entirely driven by the limitations and abilities of the cognitive processes at each stage. I demonstrated the benefits of such an approach in relation to the Divided Line itself and also checked the consistency of this stance against Plato's wider writing in the *Republic* using the exemplar of the Simile of the Cave.

However, if anyone were still in any doubt as to whether Plato generally regarded sensible objects as necessary and that he developed this framework implicitly assuming that the Form was partaken of at every cognitive level, consider the following from outside the *Republic*:

[123] Pappas, p. 154.

[124] Tait, p. 12.

> *It follows from what I have been saying that sight is enormously beneficial for us, in the sense that, if we couldn't see the stars and the sun and the sky, an account such as I've been giving of the universe would be completely impossible. As things are, however, the visibility of day and night, of months and the circling years, of equinoxes and solstices, resulted in the invention of number, gave us the concept of time, and made it possible for us to enquire into the nature of the universe. These in their turn have enabled us to equip ourselves with philosophy in general, and humankind never has been nor ever will be granted by the gods a greater good than philosophy. (Timaeus: 47a-b)*

What this extract tells us is that without the data given to us about objects via the senses we could never hope to reason about concepts. Only through sensing the visible 'objects' of stars, sun, moon and planets can we come to understand (*resulted in*) the concepts generally of time and seasons, and, ultimately be able to philosophise about the nature of the universe. The ability to philosophise, according to Plato, is not divorced from the senses but is, in fact, dependent upon them.[125] Indeed, as he says philosophy would be "completely impossible" without them. The extract therefore directly supports my reinterpretation of the Divided Line.

The whole process from sensing to philosophising, documented in the extract, is presented as a progressive development. First we begin with what we 'see', in Levels 1 and 2, then we can reason through the resultant concepts of time and number at Level 3, which, in turn, develops towards the ultimate achievement at Level 4, noesis: the philosophical wisdom that brings with it the cognitive ability to understand the nature of the universe itself. So, just as my interpretation argues, the Line illustrates the development of cognition from perception to understanding, awareness to intelligence, via the one object acted upon first by the senses, then rational thought, to uncover the varying levels of participation in the Form. Just as the sensible objects of the stars, sun, moon and planets participate in, but do not encapsulate fully within themselves, the ultimate nature of the universe. Crucially, it is generally accepted that the *Timaeus* was written after the *Republic*, and so, if this is correct, then it makes perfectly clear that the direction of travel in Plato's intellect concerning the Divided Line was itself developmental and consistent and underwrites my picture of the Divided Line.

[125] This also supports Rowett's claim that the images and sensibles were the route to answering the question of the Forms.

This revised conception of the Divided Line that I have argued for in this chapter is central to my wider project on the nature of justice. Its key idea of a single object (rather than multiple objects) being in view at all four cognitive levels, and increased levels of clarity which give rise to ever increasing levels of sophistication of discrimination, will underpin the cumulative and developmental reading of justice that I will argue for in subsequent chapters. If I am successful in this undertaking, such success will provide a further strong reason and even something resembling a transcendental argument for the single object position. The principle aim of the thesis is to show that justice is concerned with both strength and interest, as expressed in Thrasymachus' formula, and I adduce considerable evidence in support of this position in subsequent chapters. If it turns out that presuming an interpretation of the Divided Line in which there is a single object that is the Form is a necessary condition for that wider position on justice, the case for this wider goal will offer, in turn, a strong argument for the position argued for in this chapter. This will, then, form a virtuous circle in which my positions on the Divided Line and justice, as a project in its own right and a 'proof of concept' of the revised picture of the Divided Line, reinforce each other and support a reconsideration of the stance on both topics.

Having completed the necessary prerequisites in identifying the dissatisfaction concerning the picture of justice presented in Book IV and establishing the metaphysical and epistemological framework in terms of the Divided Line, I now turn to my specific research on the notion of justice in Book I of the *Republic*, specifically targeting the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus.

My strategy for the rest of the thesis is as follows: having found that the notion of justice argued for in Book IV is seen to be deficient, as is the argumentation provided by Plato, I turn to the wider resources of the *Republic*. Book I is the obvious starting point as its subject matter is that of justice itself. Within that discussion there is a central dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus that is worthy of close examination. Armed with my revised account of the Divided Line, I will analyse this key passage in order to determine whether this approach yields a more satisfactory account of Platonic justice.

Chapter Three: The Issue of *Elenchus*

Introduction

In Chapter One I found that commentators were less than satisfied with both the arguments given for, and the resultant picture of, justice that emerged from Book IV. The arguments were deemed inconsistent and equivocal and the picture they presented was seen to be amoral, or even immoral, with little 'justice' or consideration for the individual with regards to liberty or rights. In Chapter Two I presented an interpretation of the Divided Line that, I argued, provides a crucial framework for understanding the *Republic* in general and Justice more specifically. Having established this background and framework it is clear that, if one wants to find the Platonic notion of justice that is coherent, consistent and in line with both the wider *Republic* and the genius of Plato, one must look outside Book IV. My central claim is that the core of the Platonic notion of justice is found within Book I and, specifically, in the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus.

In this chapter, therefore, I will focus on this dialogue. As there is considerable debate over whether this particular discussion is or is not an example of *elenchus*, it is important first to examine that debate to determine what is meant by the term *elenchus* and then what light can be shed by such a classification on the discussion in Book I. It will also be vital to evaluate the one feature of that dialogue that all commentators agree on, that its purpose, whether or not it is *elenchus*, is refutation.

Republic Book I

Book I initially presents the setting for the discussion that will become the text of the Republic. We are told that Socrates is returning home from a religious festival when he and his fellow travellers are prevailed upon by Polemarchus to accompany him to his father, Cephalus' house. The two older men, Socrates and Cephalus, begin to debate the advantages of old age when the topic turns to the notion of justice. Cephalus presents us with a basic Hesiodic conception that defines justice as living up to your legal obligations and being honest whereas Polemarchus defines justice as helping friends and harming enemies. While these two definitions may seem, at first, to be distinct they are, in fact, closely related. They share an underlying imperative of rendering to each what is due and of giving to each what is appropriate. This is clearly in line with the progression of popular thinking on the topic in ancient Greece.

Hesiod, in *Works and Days*, presents justice as a certain set of acts that must be followed. This traditional view depicts the reason for being just as being concerned with reward and punishment. Zeus would reward those who were good and punish those who were bad. In Athens of the late fifth century BCE this concept of divine retribution had lost credibility as it

could be seen that many unjust men were flourishing whereas many just men were not. The notion of justice, therefore, had become a controversial topic especially with the Sophists claiming that there is no such thing as objective truth and no such thing as objective standards of right and wrong. They were presenting the idea that law, morality and, therefore, justice should be regarded as mere conventions.

Cephalus and Polemarchus are presenting two strands of thought prevalent at the time, the former representing Greek tradition and the old establishment, the latter representing the young and ambitious. Socrates deals with Cephalus' example by pointing out a counter example: would you return a weapon to a madman? Legally the weapon belongs to him and so, in some sense, you owe it to him, but to return it to him would surely be unjust as you would be putting the lives of others at risk. So, according to Socrates, it cannot be the case that Cephalus has provided us with an exhaustive formulation for justice. In the case of Polemarchus' definition Socrates reveals a number of inconsistencies. Our judgement concerning friends and enemies is fallible so we could end up with a situation where we harm the good and help the bad. Socrates also points out that there is some incoherence in the idea of harming people in the name of justice.

So both Cephalus and Polemarchus have their positions refuted with Socrates acting in the manner to which commentators have assigned to him. The discussion so far has dealt with what justice is not, or at least no complete definition has been provided. Cephalus and Polemarchus also act in the way common to other interlocutors, Cephalus has to go and see to some business and Polemarchus is lost in inconsistency. But it is at this point that I argue a change occurs, both in the progress of the discussion and in the attitude of Socrates and his interlocutor. It is at this point that a frustrated Thrasymachus breaks into the discussion to claim that he has a better 'definition' of justice to offer. Justice, he says, is nothing more than that which is in the interest of the stronger. It is this discussion that I argue is crucial to the Platonic notion of justice. Whether or not this is an example of elenchus and all that term implies is the topic of the next section.

Elenchus

In what follows I will show that there is no generalised method or process that can be ascribed to *elenchus* and that the specific *elenchus* between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Republic 1 provides evidence that undermines any such claim for a unified schema. I will also demonstrate through this particular *elenchus* that the purpose of the discussion is not refutation but rather refinement and development of the same object. It will be seen that this

interpretation is not only consistent with, but also constitutes further evidence for, the conclusions reached in Chapter Two concerning the same object for all cognitive levels.

There is a general divide amongst scholars between those who wish to ascribe to Plato the use of a standard format that each of the instances of elenchus must ascribe to, and those who wish to deny any unifying method but instead propose some form of unifying feature. All commentators, however, at least agree that the purpose of every example of elenchus is mere refutation and it is this feature that has given rise to the so called 'problem of elenchus' that must be overcome by those who wish to support a unified schema for *elenchus*. I will argue that the elenchus between Socrates and Thrasymachus resists any call to standardised method and also defies the claim concerning refutation. If one example demonstrates evidence of non-conformity then the notion of generalised method and purpose is significantly undermined. As such I consider any such search for a unifying feature to be a red herring that has obfuscated interpretations of examples of elenchus, and thus the overall message of the subject under discussion. I argue that each elenchus should be examined within the context of the discussion and, in this specific example, with a close eye on the findings of the Divided Line, in order to have a clearer understanding of the concept that is under examination.

I will consider the position of commentators on the general view of elenchus who present what at best can be described as a 'mixed bag' and from this 'base' I will consider the specific elenchus of *Republic* 1 demonstrating how the development of the discussion in the text is consistent with the findings on the Divided Line and that the only conclusion available is that the Platonic notion of Justice is a refined and developed understanding of the Thrasymachean formula: that Justice is nothing other than that which is in the interest of the stronger.

Commentators on *Elenchus*

If, after investigation, I had found that the discussion *is* an example of *elenchus*, and that this term had clear features under which examples of *elenchi* could be subsumed, then it would have provided me with an extremely useful framework for my more detailed analysis of the dialogue. Similarly, the unanimous opinion of commentators that the purpose of such dialogues is refutation would, if found to be true, have helpfully constrained and shaped my analysis and interpretation. However, as will become apparent, I claim that the term *elenchus* does not stand up as a classification and that commentators are in error over the one feature that they appear to agree on. However, these negative findings will turn out not to be as unhelpful as they might appear at first blush.

The style of cross-examination which Socrates practised on his interlocutors is known as *elenchus* but agreement on whether this 'style' implies a consistent method, process or specific requirements is hotly debated. Plato, himself, does not refer to any method as such for the practice of *elenchus*, other than it being something that Socrates engages in to the general displeasure of his interlocutors. However, commentators have analysed the examples of *elenchus* across the dialogues and have arrived at differing conclusions as to what *elenchus is* but, interestingly, not as to what it is *for*. On this point there is general agreement that the purpose of *elenchus* is refutation.

Harold Tarrant attempted to bring empirical evidence to bear on these questions in his analysis of *elenchus* by using computer generated statistics regarding the occurrences of the forms and cognates, first of *elenchus* and then of *exetasis*, found in a collection of Platonic dialogues. Based on these results he makes the following claims: first, both *elenchus* and *exetasis* are practised on persons, but not on theories; second, *elenchus* describes a competitive dialectical activity between intellectual rivals (Tarrant considers that *elenchus* is in no way a friendly educative process and that we would be wrong to label any friendly process *elenchus*): and, finally, Plato's term for Socrates' interrogative activity generally is *exetasis* and not *elenchus*. So *exetasis* is for friends and foes but *elenchus*, a species of *exetasis*, is for intellectual rivals.[126]

Tarrant's main contention is that "*elenchus* was never a term, either in Plato or in his later interpreters, for all Socrates' investigations through question and answer, but that this noun and its corresponding verbs were applied only to those examples of interrogation whose *purpose* was refutation."[127] He begins his examination by identifying usages of the principal verb *elenchein* and its compounds *exelenchein* and *dielenchein*. He claims that there are two things that we need to find out from this data, first, did Plato himself think that in using this terminology he was assigning a description to the philosophical examination Socrates practised on interlocutors. Second, are those terms applied to the person or the thesis? Thus he sets out the following process of inquiry:

Establish who uses the terms – Socrates or the interlocutor.

[126] Harold Tarrant, 'Elenchus and Exetasis: Capturing the Purpose of Socratic Interrogation', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

[127] Tarrant, p. 63.

Establish who the subject of the verb is.

Establish who or what is being put to the test.

Establish what the usage of the verb tells us about the process.

Establish whether the verb is being used in its standard context, rhetorically, or is there anything that is typically Socratic about the usage.

He proceeds to tabulate the instances of usage under the headings of Subject, Mode, Object, Speaker and Category.[128] From this data he discovers that not only are the interlocutors just as likely to use the term as Socrates is, but also that Socrates is usually *not* the subject of the verb. Thus Tarrant claims "if *elenchus* had been the term for Socrates' activity, then both Socrates and Plato seem to have been curiously unaware of it." [129]

Tarrant's method also appears to establish that there is a distinction made that is dependent on the interlocutor. The interpretation of the verb when used with Socrates' companions is generally in the vein of "to find wanting", for example when it is used in *Hippias Major*, here all usages refer to exposure of ignorance but yet, according to Tarrant there is no suggestion of refutation. Tarrant can find no solid evidence to suggest that Socrates' companions had to undergo the same unfriendly process that was the fate of his opponents and rivals. Consequently he states that "elenchus was Socrates' aim in tackling rivals, while instruction was his aim when correcting his friends."[130] He turns to the *Apology* to claim that there is a more distinctive and appropriate term that Socrates applies to his own interrogative activity – *exetasis*.

Using a similar process as he used for elenchus Tarrant tabulates the usages of the verb *exetazein* and its cognates. He notes that in the *Apology* alone the verb is used 13 times and all of its usages are relevant to Socrates' inquiry compared to only half of the uses of elenchus being relevant. Even the most famous line in the *Apology* – "the unexamined life" (*anexetastos*) – uses the cognate of *exetasis* and not *elenchus.* Thus Tarrant constructs a list of occurrences for this

[128] Tarrant, pp. 64–66. Subject – the person whose use of the process is either affirmed or denied; Mode – whether the use involves assertion, denial or invitation; object – the person or thing being exposed or refuted; Speaker – the name of the interlocutor using it if not Socrates; Category – the context and manner of the usage.

[129] Tarrant, p. 64.

[130] Tarrant, p. 68.

alternative terminology under the headings of, who does it? What undergoes it? And whether there is any context of *elenchus*? From the results he identifies exetasis as a process of examination that has a very strong tendency to be associated with Socratic interrogation. While the term is occasionally coupled with elenchus there is no implication of the hostility or rivalry that is implied with the use of elenchus. Moreover, due to the frequent usage of exetasis in the Apology Tarrant concludes that "exetasis is specially associated with the examination of the extent of somebody's knowledge."[131] Therefore his claim is that elenchus is not the best term for Socrates' activities at all and that exetasis is usually preferable.[132]

However, James Lesher's work may pose problems for Tarrant's conclusions as he (Lesher) has claimed to have shown that *elenchus* and its cognates had uses at the time that Plato was writing, especially in philosophical contexts, which are non-confrontational.[133] Moreover Hayden Ausland observes that Socrates retained a friendly attitude towards even the most contentious of his rivals.[134] Both these points seem to blur the division that Tarrant claims, but what of the division itself? Tarrant proposes that *exetasis* is the correct general term for Socrates' interrogative activity and that *elenchus* is a species of that activity. But this division does not appear to be supported by the texts, for example, in the passage "The Sophist of Noble Descent" (*Sophist*: 231b) Plato uses *elenchus* and its cognates no fewer than 5 times in 28 lines with 4 of them occurring within 8 lines, so as Charles Young points out "Plato feels no terminological qualms whatsoever in describing non-confrontational *exetasis* as *elenchus*. If he doesn't neither should we."[135] Consequently we have no clear claim about *elenchus* from Plato, and no definitive light shed on the subject from the empirical data provided by Tarrant. Thus what we are left with is agreement amongst commentators that *elenchus* is 'something' but as we shall see in what follows, what that something *is* eludes agreement.

---

[131] Tarrant, p. 72.

[132] Tarrant, chap. 3.

[133] James Lesher, 'Parmenidean Elenchus', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

[134] H Ausland, 'Forensic Characteristics of Socratic Argumentation', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (United States: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

[135] Charles Young, 'Comments on Lesher, Ausland and Tarrant', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), p. 86.

From his own extensive analysis Gregory Vlastos argued that Socratic *elenchus* is a specific method and that there was a particular logical form to its argument that can broadly be characterised as refutation by counter example, but that the refutation is aimed at "a search for moral truth"[136] and not merely a pursuit for victory over an opponent. He claimed that the Socratic elenchus offers a unifying framework or schema that can be applied profitably across the dialogues. This structure, which he refers to as "Standard Socratic *Elenchus*", is presented as follows:[137]

The interlocutor asserts a thesis, *p*, which Socrates considers false and targets for refutation.

Socrates secures agreement to further premises, say *q* and *r* (each of which may stand for a conjunct of propositions). The agreement is ad hoc: Socrates is arguing from (*q,r*), not to them.

Socrates then argues, and the interlocutor agrees, that *q* and *r* entail *not-p*.

Socrates then claims that *not-p* is true, *p* false.[138]

However, Vlastos admits that two further, but hidden, premises are necessary if this argument is to go through, first the general assumption that one can't be consistent in immoral beliefs and secondly, that Socrates' own moral views are consistent. Given these premises Vlastos claimed that Socrates could conclude that all his own beliefs were true and, accordingly any valid inferences from moral premises in which he believed would also be true. He suggested that Socrates' method in *elenchus* was that of "question and answer adversary argument in which a thesis is debated only if asserted as the answerers own belief and is regarded as refuted only if its negation is deduced from his own beliefs".[139] In order for this search to be conducted along the lines of his description Vlastos proposed that there were two constraints to Socratic *elenchus*. First, the interlocutor must provide short, direct and unevasive answers. Vlastos considered this constraint to be obvious since he believed the elenchus was intended to be "a cooperative endeavour for mutual enlightenment", therefore he considered it unnecessary to

[136] Gregory Vlastos, 'The Socratic Elenchus', in *Socratic Studies*, by G Vlastos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1–28 (p. 4).

[137] Vlastos, p. 11.

[138] This is directly in contrast with Vlastos' earlier work where he considered that all the elenchus was designed for was to highlight inconsistency and confusion in the interlocutor. Here he is arguing for a Socratic truth being posited.

[139] Vlastos, p. 4.

justify this constraint.[140] He names the second restraint the "say what you believe requirement"[141] and he considers that, unlike the first constraint, this one is not so obvious and needs justification. Consequently he provides three reasons for this requirement:[142]

Unlike in *eristic* (where the prime object is to win so you can say anything that will give you an advantage) in *elenchus* the prime objective is the search for truth. Thus there is no freedom, you must say what you believe to be the truth even if one is faced with losing the debate.

The requirement is necessary to test the seriousness of the interlocutor. If you say what you truly believe you give your opinion more weight – it becomes a pledge that what you say is what you mean.

Vlastos claims that there is another dimension to *elenchus* which he provides as the third support for the requirement. This is the existential dimension that involves the examination of one's life, and the Socratic exhortation to examine that life and if necessary to change. How can one conduct a thorough examination if one is not examining one's actual belief.

All this suggests that for Vlastos *elenchus* has a dual objective, first, to discover how every man ought to live and then, to test the individual interlocutor to find out if he is living that life. Thus we have a general objective – how ought every man to live, and a specific objective – how is this man living. As such he proposes that, while there are many variations across the dialogues, there is still a discernible pattern across all serious argumentation, the purpose of which is always the refutation of the interlocutor's theses. Indeed it is this feature of *elenchus* that leads Vlastos to identify a serious issue that has become known as "the problem of *elenchus*", the issue being that Socrates claims to have refuted the interlocutors belief and yet he has done no such thing, "all he has established is the inconsistency of p with premises whose truth he has not undertaken to establish in that argument: they have entered the argument simply as propositions on which he and his interlocutors are agreed."[143] He redescribes the problem later as "how is it that Socrates claims to have proved a thesis false when, in point of logic, all he has proved, in any given argument is that the thesis is inconsistent with the

[140] Vlastos, p. 7.

[141] Vlastos, p. 8.

[142] Vlastos, p. 8.

[143] Vlastos.

conjunction of agreed premises for which no reason has been given in that argument."[144] Thus the problem of *elenchus* appears to rest on two independent and, prima facie, plausible theses:

Socrates claims to have proved that the apparent refutand is false and "In point of logic" the *elenchus* can only establish inconsistency.

Most commentators will agree with Vlastos' conclusion of Socrates' purpose in his meetings with interlocutors, to produce a refutation of the original premise, and therefore either they must solve the problem of *elenchus* or they must establish that no such standard method exists. To this end Thomas Brickhouse and Nicholas Smith claim there can be no single analysis of *elenctic* arguments for the simple reason that there is no such thing as 'Socratic *elenchus'*. Their view is that Socrates argues with people in different ways and the temptation to group those ways under one heading should be avoided. They consider that nothing in Plato's texts compels such a grouping. The very idea of **the** 'Socratic *Elenchus*' and thus the notion that there is a problem of the Socratic *elenchus*' is an "artefact of modern scholarship."[145] To invent a method for Socrates goes against the very heart of his mission, that he had no special tools or methods. They consider that to imagine there is a special method turns Socrates into a cleverer man than he was and denies the heroism of the man.

Michelle Carpenter and Ronald Polansky agree that there is no method but they concede that there is 'Socratic' *elenchus*. They see the obvious feature of Socratic *elenchus* as refutation but suggest that there are many purposes. In common with Brickhouse and Smith they argue that Socrates styles his approach according to individual requirements of specific interlocutors or contexts. In all of this difference of style there seems to them to be no sense to be looking minimalistically for the "thinnest of common logical strands" as they suggest Vlastos does.[146] For them no single method means no single analysis. However, they do accept that the *elenchus* that constitutes nearly all of Socratic conversation is his principal procedure for philosophical investigation.[147] Thus even amongst those who wish to deny a method for Socrates there is

---

[144] Vlastos.

[145] T Brickhouse and N Smith, 'The Socratic Elenchus', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (United States: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

[146] M Carpenter and R Polansky, 'Variety of Socratic Elenchi', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University, 2002), p. 99.

[147] Carpenter and Polansky, pp. 89–100.

general agreement with Vlastos that the purpose of Socrates' approach, whatever that approach was, was indeed refutation. So the first of Vlastos' theses may, with a little development, stand. It may be that the thesis is independent of any, or no method – that Socrates adapts his 'style' merely to achieve the goal of refutation.

Hugh Benson adopts this approach when he proposes that there is Socratic *elenchus* but, in agreement with the view expressed by Carpenter and Polansky, that there is no single method. Instead he suggests that the elenchus requires only what he calls the 'doxastic constraint'[148] (what Vlastos calls the 'say what you believe' requirement). The interlocutor must believe the premises of an *elenctic* argument are true. Contra Vlastos, Benson argues against the claim that Socrates himself had to believe the premises he used in his arguments. He further claims that the so-called problem of *elenchus* cannot be solved, but that it can be 'dissolved'. The *elenchus* is not, and cannot be, a method for constructive philosophical discovery. Given only the constraint requirement it cannot be that *elenctic* arguments prove any proposition true or false; at most they display an inconsistency in the interlocutors position.[149]

It is this constraint that is, for Benson, the most unique feature of *elenchus*, that any property is an acceptable premise in an *elenctic* encounter as long as it is believed by the interlocutor. Thus the doxastic constraint is not just a necessary condition, it is sufficient condition as well. No other property is thought necessary for premise acceptability, "the premise need not be self-evident, endoxic or even believed by Socrates himself. All that is necessary is that the Interlocutor believe it."[150] Here Benson raises an issue for Vlastos because 'being believed by the interlocutor' is also a property of the refutand, so an individual *elenctic* encounter can only ever establish an inconsistency among the beliefs of Socrates interlocutors. In light of this Benson thinks that Vlastos' first thesis needs to be re-examined because if Socrates does claim to have proved his apparent refutand false – he should not. Certainly, Benson does not think that he does and instead suggests that the conclusions of the encounters need only require that Socrates take his encounters to show that his interlocutor fails to have the knowledge he thought he had. If this is correct then the problem of *elenchus* dissolves

[148] Hugh Benson, 'Problems with Socratic Method', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), p. 105.

[149] Benson, p. 105.

[150] Benson.

because, while it is true that "in point of logic" the *elenchus* can only establish inconsistency, Benson argues that nowhere does Socrates ever claim to have established anything else.

While he is ready to assent to Vlastos' claim that there is a single method, John Beversluis ascribes to Socrates an unscrupulous use of that method, stating that "his questions often have a hidden agenda and are calculated to secure the desired responses."[151] Beversluis suggests that this method is used for one motive only and that is to secure victory. He does not accept that Socrates wishes to improve the well- being of himself or his interlocutors, nor does he wish to pursue truth – he just wants to win,"(T)he 'official' view (that) Socrates is hard on his interlocutors, but for excellent reasons – he is improving their souls – and he is equally hard on himself …….. is (for the most part) a mis-description of his actual goal – which is not to improve any-one, but simply to win arguments."[152]

Casting doubt on Vlastos' say- what- you- believe requirement and Benson's doxastic constraint Beversluis is sympathetic to the interlocutors and proposes that they are very rarely vanquished by Socrates as they are led to make responses that are not their own. So according to Beversluis, Vlastos was right in his insistence on a Socratic method, but wrong in his understanding of how it worked and also of its purpose and Socrates' motive in employing *elenchus*. Thus he argues that, while there is a method of Socratic *elenchus,* it cannot be the pattern that Vlastos identifies. He criticises the Vlastos schema as it does not appear to be applicable to all Socratic arguments and considers the say- what- you- believe requirement, that is so essential in the Vlastos schema, to be invoked so infrequently that a new formulation is necessary. Thus he presents his own schema of "standard *elenchus*" as follows:

The interlocutor asserts some thesis, say, *p*, which Socrates construes, i.e. misconstrues, as *p**.

Socrates secures his interlocutor's qualified, (sometimes heavily qualified) agreement to further premises, say, q and r.

Socrates then argues, and the interlocutor agrees, that q and r entail not-p*

Thereupon Socrates claims that not-p* has been proved true, P* false.[153]

---

[151] John Beversluis, *Cross-Examining Socrates: A Defense of the Interlocutors in Plato's Early Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[152] Benson, p. 36.

[153] Beversluis, pp. 57–58.

Clearly, from this schema, Beversluis can argue that the purpose of the *elenchus* cannot be mere refutation as the interlocutor is never 'refuted'. It is not the actual assertion that is subject to the elenchus but Socrates' misconstrued version. So he reforms the *elenchus* to become the unscrupulous refutation by tendentiously reformulated thesis rather than refutation by counter example preferred by Vlastos, and uses this as evidence that the sincere assent requirement "is neither as important nor as systematically operative as we have been given to believe."[154] As such there is no necessity to solve any problem with the *elenchus* as Socrates is not interested in premises, or beliefs, just victory.

Interim Analysis

The commentators cited in the previous section represent a sample of the debate that rages about the *elenchus* and the so called problem that is engendered by any appeal to a method or schema. Those commentators who ascribe to Socrates no consistent method but a unique approach that is entirely dependent upon context may be right. However, to deny that there is a standard *elenchus* does not deny that each individual *elenctic* encounter is method-less and I will return to this point in the following section. The questions that remain unanswered are what exactly *elenchus* is, does it have any defining properties or features common to all examples? Is there a method or process and if so what is the difference between those two? Is the motive for the employment of *elenchus* truth or victory? Grace Ledbetter sums up the present position on *elenchus* clearly when she asks "whether there is a viable constructive side to Socrates' philosophy?"[155] Does Socrates merely show that his interlocutors are inconsistent, or does he draw conclusions that he affirms are true and basic for moral reforms? Or as Beversluis would have it does Socrates mislead us into thinking he has made progress in defending moral positions when all he really does is catch his interlocutors out in logical inconsistencies?

Perhaps the more urgent question to ask is whether we really can undertake to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for Socratic *elenchus*. As Vlastos has noted, "Socrates never discusses his method of investigation."[156] Brickhouse and Smith have denied that a method or *techne* of any sort can properly be attributed to Socrates, while Tarrant has argued that Socrates' method is not even *elenchus*. Against the background of such indefiniteness how can one hope

[154] Beversluis, p. 59.

[155] Grace Ledbetter, 'Rethinking The Elenchus', *The Classical Review*, 55 (2005), 426–28.

[156] Vlastos.

to specify anything like necessary and sufficient conditions? Yet Benson suggests that the issues surrounding *elenchus* lead us in this direction whether we like it or not, and that we should look not for a method that unites *elenchus* but a defining feature – the doxastic constraint.

However, I consider that there is a serious issue with the doxastic constraint. According to this view no argument can count as *elenctic* unless the interlocutor actually believes the premises. But Socrates does not always require such a commitment from his interlocutors, for example in the *Gorgias* Socrates does not halt the argument the minute Callicles stops giving answers he claims as his own, neither does he do so in *Republic* 1 with Thrasymachus. According to Benson's view Socrates' arguments with interlocutors such as these may begin as *elenchus* but cease to be *elenchus* at the point the interlocutors fail to satisfy the doxastic constraint, but the texts do not support this as Plato's Socrates continues on in each case. While it is true that sometimes Socrates does ask for strong belief, for example, in *Crito* (49c-d), *Gorgias* (500b) and *Republic* 1 (346a), it is also true that in other cases he says nothing at all about this constraint. Moreover what happens in cases such as Euthyphro, where the interlocutor is lead from one definition to another? Which definition does he firmly believe? What would it mean to have a logical argument form where the strength of claim is varied? Presumably the belief must be absolutely firm if the consistency premise that Vlastos imputes to Socrates is to have any force. Yet this logically necessary condition clearly conflicts with the evidence adduced in relation to Socrates' somewhat relaxed attitude to the doxastic constraint. Therefore, not only is the doxastic constraint (the say what you believe requirement) undermined but so too is Vlastos' unified schema claim.

Thus, as we have noted, most commentators agree that *elenchus* is 'something' but we are still no further forward in identifying what that something is. Those who pick out an argument from *elenchus* take it to be roughly the same thing, but equally point out a number of issues arising from this view – the need for additional constraints or the inference of additional hidden premises. All point out the limitations of what can be inferred from *elenchus*. Where there is clear commonality between commentators is in the purpose of *elenchus*, and this appears to be the strongest defining property – refutation. Vlastos claimed that the purpose of the unified schema was clearly refutation by counter example and Benson argues that in many, if not most of Socrates' discussions with interlocutors the goal appears quite explicitly to be simple refutation. What is left hanging is whether the motive for that refutation is the search for truth or mere victory. If the motive is truth then Socrates has an issue because of the problem of *elenchus* but if the motive is victory then there is no such problem.

Those who want to claim the motive as truth, such as Vlastos, point out that Plato needs to rely on logical argument. In essence that argument rests on Socrates 'proving' the refutand false, but again the central problem remains that only consistency rather than truth can be derived from this approach, and, as we have seen even this conclusion requires additional premises and constraints. Those who wish to claim the motive as victory, such as Beversluis, fare even worse. The *Euthydemus* contrasts the Socratic style of question and answering with other forms, and the contrast appears to be more concerned with motive than style. Socrates seeks the truth whereas the *eristic* brothers seek only victory. So if the purpose of Socratic *elenchus* is victory then Socrates is every bit as *eristic* as the sophistry he so despises, but if this is the case then why is there so much text available to highlight the distinction that Socrates himself makes, that he is in pursuit of truth and well-being for himself and his interlocutor, whereas it is others who are solely interested in victory?

Interim Conclusion

As far as commentators are concerned, then, the *elenchus* is directed towards refutation and the form of argument presented has a semblance of consistent logic, but the argument cannot be relied upon for discovering truth. Beyond this it is open to question whether there is any further consistent feature that marks out *elenchus*. After all in discussing Plato and Tarrant we saw that neither Plato's 'view' of *elenchus* nor Tarrant's empirical research allowed any clear claims to be made. Against this background, then, I will turn to look at what is generally agreed to be a 'parade case' of elenchus: the *elenchus* between Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1. A detailed analysis of this dialogue ought to shed light on what it is to be an *elenchus* and whether commentators are justified in so classifying the passage. From this we will be better able to judge whether the term elenchus can bear the (limited) weight that commentators generally seek to place on it, and whether adopting such a classificatory framework assists in the analysis of the dialogue.

The *Elenchus* of Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1

From the earlier analysis I concluded that, after looking at a variety of commentators, there appears to be no agreed position on the nature of elenchus other than a general view that it is always about refutation. The purpose of looking at the nature of elenchus generally had been to ascertain whether there were a robust *elenctic* framework that could serve as a resource to frame analysis in looking at specific *elenchi*. However, as we have seen, this ambition could not be realised, and so I now focus specifically on one of the most prominent *elenchi*, that on justice, between Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1, in order to determine whether a detailed examination of what is generally considered to be a representative case of *elenchus*

provides further insight on the nature of *elenchus* or merely confirms the earlier largely negative findings. Such an enquiry will also to begin to uncover and analyse how Plato makes Socrates develop the concept of Justice through this framework, a key task for the wider thesis.

I will show that a detailed examination of what is taken to be a prominent case of elenchus confirms the earlier view that there are no robust necessary or sufficient conditions for elenchus generally, and that even the idea that the purpose of *elenchus is* refutation, the only common ground amongst the commentators analysed, does not fit this 'parade case' of *elenchus*. Instead of refutation, Socrates' 'method' turns out to be developmental, seeking to refine rather than repudiate the notion of Justice through a development of the contributory terms. In addition, this approach is only possible because of the implicit reliance on his wider position on the Divided Line established in Chapter Two - refinement of the terms is facilitated and allows the same object to be apprehended progressively more clearly as the subject ascends the cognitive levels.

Republic 1 opens with Socrates discussing the topic of "what is Justice?" with Cephalus ("telling the truth") and Polermachus ("give every man his due") during which time Thrasymachus has been waiting "like a wild beast" (336b) to enter the conversation. What is interesting about the beginning of this discussion is that it is Thrasymachus who attempts to back Socrates into a corner and not the other way round, as many commentators would have us believe. In his demand that Socrates provide his own answer to the topic he limits the possibilities of the response: "Tell us what you think justice is. And don't tell me that it's duty, or expediency, or advantage, or profit, or interest" (336d).[157] Socrates responds with "Am I to give none of the answers you mention? Even if one of them were to be true?" (337c) Indeed when Socrates does get Thrasymachus to assert his proposition, we find that he actually uses one of the terms previously barred to Socrates when he says: "Justice is nothing other than what is in the interest of the stronger party" (338c). It is at this point, according to Vlastos and other commentators, that Socrates should target the proposition for refutation if that is the consistent purpose of *elenchi*, but this is not what happens. Instead Socrates begins an examination of the two elements found within the proposition, namely strength (what kind of strength? Who are these stronger?) and interest (in what form and for whom exactly?). Through this examination Socrates is able to demonstrate that these terms can be interpreted in different ways, at first deliberately misconstruing them in an attempt to ascertain which interpretation Thrasymachus

[157] It is also interesting that Thrasymachus himself will employ one of these terms when he provides his own formula for justice.

himself adheres to. By meditating on the terms within the proposition Socrates can be seen to develop the understanding of those terms, as they are presented by Thrasymachus, towards a more Platonic notion of Justice. The structure of this discussion can be depicted as follows:

Socrates gets Thrasymachus to assert his formula for Justice, that *P*, where *P* is "Justice is nothing other than the interest of the Stronger".

P has elements *f* (interest) and *g* (strength) which lie in a particular relation with each other.

Socrates deliberately misconstrues *f* and *g* as *f** and *g**

Socrates agrees with the relation that Thrasymachus' formula presents but argues that if *f* and *g* can be interpreted as *f** and *g** the structure of *P* would not be altered but the understanding of its meaning would be.

Thereupon Socrates begins an in-depth examination of the terms in order to develop them to the Platonic interpretation to f^1 and g^1.

Thus *P* is correct but Thrasymachus will be found to have an undeveloped understanding of the elements within it.

The argument shows that Socrates is not disputing *P*, nor is he disputing the two terms within *P* or the relationship between those terms. Instead, it shows that Socrates thinks that Thrasymachus should develop his interpretation of the meaning of those terms which would then develop the meaning of *P* without changing its intrinsic nature.

A potential criticism of this interpretation from commentators who wish to maintain that elenchus involves refutation might run as follows. The formula for *P* consists of two terms and the relation between them. The relation is common ground but the meanings of the terms are disputed. If Socrates is right, and Thrasymachus has got the meaning of the terms wrong, then this is surely going to generate a different *P*. In other words it will refute the original. The key question is the sense in which Thrasymachus has got the terms wrong. What seems clear is that Socrates does not want to change the labelling of the terms (strength and interest) even though he wants to change Thrasymachus' understanding of their meaning, and so it seems as though, at least formally, he is not seeking to show not-*P*. Nevertheless, without recourse to further resources, Socrates' position looks vulnerable to the critic's orthodox interpretation of *elenchus* and the insistence that he (Socrates) should have focused on refutation. What Socrates seems to require is justification for maintaining that *f*, *g* and *P* continue to represent the same things even though their meanings might be developed under the clarificatory process in which

Socrates seeks to involve Thrasymachus, and Socrates' wider position on the Divided Line established earlier supports this stance.

Let us recall the findings of Chapter Two. We found that the four segments of the Divided Line indicate four different developmental cognitive stages from Level 1 (L1) *Eikasia* through to Level 4 (L4) *Noesis*. Each of these levels deals with differing cognitive properties or abilities which in turn lead to a more or less obscured apprehension of the *same* object. The degree of clarity of apprehension is directly related to the limitations imposed by the cognitive abilities in play at each of the levels. In the lower two segments of the Line (*eikasia* and *pistis*), the Visible Realm, cognitive processes are limited by sole reliance upon empirical evidence. Beliefs are based upon particulars that are observed within context, and as such are judged from an individual perspective. For example, any belief about justice would be garnered from observation of particular instances and their impact upon self or others closely related – family, community or city state. Thus any beliefs about justice would be partially obscured and partially informed.

The passage from the Visible to the Intelligible Realm, from L2 (*pistis*) to L3 (*Dianoia*), marks a significant and vital distinction. In L3 one must apply logic and reason to empirical evidence, to stand back as it were in order to best abstract from the data given by observation. At this stage one does not rely solely upon the empirical but one employs it and thus, through reason, one moves from the particular to general/universal rules. Consequently, this necessitates a move from the individual perspective towards viewing concepts in terms of the collective, so that one begins to see beyond self towards others. A person at this stage would have greater clarity and a greater sophistication of discrimination in their understanding about justice than those in L1 or L2, but is still reliant upon the empirical and cannot achieve complete clarity. There is still work to be done. The development upwards to L4 (*Noesis*) provides one with the cognitive ability to proceed merely with the abstracted rules that universally apply to concepts. This does not mean to imply that the empirical is irrelevant to this stage – for without it there could have been no development in the first place – only that one no longer has any need to refer *back* to it: that one can look *to* the particulars to understand them with complete clarity.

It is important to remind ourselves of the two principle reasons for these findings: firstly the necessity for the requirement of empirical data to 'kick-start' the upward progress on the Line and, secondly, the notion that, if there were different objects for different cognitive levels, the common people's view of what justice is, which is what primes the pump for the

development of the noetic understanding in the first place, would be different to what justice actually is. This would leave is in the paradoxical position in which the data from which the noetic sense of justice is built does not, in fact, refer to Justice itself. Were this to be the case it would be mysterious as to how data concerning something that was not justice could be developed into something that was Justice itself. It would also raise the wider question as to quite what it was that people at L1 and L2 meant when they talked about, or observed instances of, justice. On these two grounds alone it seems necessary, not just plausible, that the *same* object should be apprehended at each individual cognitive level. From these conclusions two claims can be made with regard to this particular *elenchus*. The first with regard to Thrasyamchus' position on the Divided Line and the second with regard to the impact this has on Socrates' position.

The first claim is that Thrasymachus must be at L3 on the Divided Line, the stage of *Dianoia*. As we know from the explanation above the crucial property of minds at this level is the ability to abstract from particular cases and apply logic and reason to present a general rule, and the text supports the claim that this is precisely the activity Thrasymachus is engaged in. For example when Thrasymachus needs to clarify the meaning of his formula he cites the existence of different types of government: "Well then, you know that some of our city states are tyrannies, some democracies, some aristocracies?" (338d) and then makes the claim that in all these particular instances "power is in the hands of the ruling class." (338d). So we have clear evidence that Thrasymachus is doing exactly what he should be doing for someone whose cognitive level is *Dianoia*: he is abstracting a general rule from particular cases, a process which allows him to reach the conclusion "if we argue correctly we see that "right" is always the same, the interest of the stronger party" (339a).

Given that Thrasymachus is at L3, what does this mean for the second claim concerning Socrates' position? The claim from the adduced evidence is that Thrasymachus is at the level of *Dianoia* and that *Dianoia* is a level of competency, but this does not preclude performance errors. So the key question here is whether Socrates thinks Thrasymachus has just made a performance error in exercising his competence or whether he thinks Thrasymachus has exercised the competency of *Dianoia* correctly. Socrates clearly does not think Thrasymachus has just made a performance error because he actually agrees with the terms: "I quite agree that what is right is an interest" (339b). Thrasymachus has not made a logical error and he has, within the limitations of his cognitive level, exercised his mind as well as he could. However, what Socrates does think is that while Thrasymachus' formula is not wrong, his interpretation is

underdeveloped in terms of its clarity of apprehension concerning strength and interest and therefore, Justice (*P*).

Ultimately Socrates is trying to develop Thrasymachus and his consequent understanding of the terms to L4 (*noetic* level), at which point his understanding of the meaning of the terms, and therefore *P,* will be fully correct. We can now see how it could be the case, given his cognitive status, that he could be both right about the formula and incorrect (only in the sense of being imprecise) about the meaning of the terms and therefore the meaning of justice. This fits very well with the manner of Socrates argument where he reassures Thrasymachus about the correctness of the formula and seeks to develop rather than refute the terms within it. For example when Thrasymachus makes the accusation that Socrates is just going to refute his position Socrates replies: "I assure you I'm not – you must explain your meaning more clearly" (338d). And if, as we have done, we stand back and look at the ways in which this might be interpreted in the wider light of Socrates' framework, the crucial link between his position on the Divided Line and his stance and method on Thrasymachus' position on Justice becomes clear.

What Socrates shows by his actions and argumentation is that the formula and the terms are correct but that, perhaps inevitably, the constraints imposed on the understanding of those components by Thrasymachus' being at the level of *Dianoia* prevents a complete understanding of the formula for Justice. But at no point does he suggest that Thrasymachus, being at L3 as he is, is looking at anything other than the appropriate objects. All Socrates is seeking to do, in line with the fundamentals of the Divided Line, is to elevate his cognitive state towards L4. So in many ways it would seem odd to classify this discussion as a disagreement at all – Socrates is seeking to develop an essentially correct set of terms and the formula that binds them. It is therefore even harder to see how one could plausibly define the exchange or Socrates' purpose as a refutation – not only does the argument from the Divided Line adduced above show that this would be inconsistent with what was established in Chapter One, but such a categorisation would also be inconsistent with his method and approach to Thrasymachus himself.

Conclusions

Two principle conclusions can now be stated. Firstly, the evidence is that any claim for a unified schema or standard feature of *elenchus* is difficult to support. Whilst commentators typically make minimal claims in this area, it turns out that even the idea that *elenchus* is always characterised by refutation is not supported. What is evident is that there is no generalisation that is helpful and that the only way to tackle *elenchi* is to examine each one in context and to

look at what Socrates is trying to do in each case. Secondly, the findings from the examination of the specific *elenchus* of *Republic* 1 concerning Justice, that Socrates presumes that a single object remains in view as cognitive abilities (in terms of clarity and sophistication of discrimination) develop, provides evidence in support of the conclusions reached in Chapter Two concerning the Divided Line.

So employing the term *elenchus*, it turns out, is of no help, but this is not as negative as it seems. We can now come to the discussion with no 'baggage' from commentators who describe it in terms of *elenchus*. It may also turn out that part of the reason for this dialogue being dismissed may in fact come back to reliance on this term elenchus, which turns out to have no meaning, at least not for the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus. Indeed the only thing commentators did agree on, that the purpose was refutation, turns out not to be the case.

One final observation concerns the object of Socrates' developmental work. On the face of it Socrates is seeking to develop Thrasymachus' apprehension of Justice but, as David Sedley[158] points out, what Plato is seeking to do as well is to educate the reader. He is inviting the reader to embark on the developmental journey as well, and the discussion with Thrasymachus is the method he employs for that purpose. He is allowing Socrates to be 'midwife' to the reader in bringing his or her own understanding to maturity, and therefore elements that may escape Thrasymachus are intended to be picked up by the wider audience – the reader.

It seems, then, that the idea of a generalised method and/or purpose of *elenchus* is a red herring, one that, even in its minimal refutational guise endorsed by most commentators, might nevertheless distort the readings of specific *elenchi*. By contrast, it turns out that the developmental characterisation of the *elenchus* examined in depth requires and reinforces the general position in relation to the Divided Line established in Chapter Two. As a result, a strong framework has been established to take in to the detailed examination of the specific developmental process in relation to justice that takes place between Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1. This analysis occupies Chapters Four and Five and will provide a refined basis for Plato's conception of Justice that is concluded in Chapter Six.

[158] David Sedley, *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 11.

Chapter Four: Unpacking the Formula at Level 3: Strength (Kreissōn)

Introduction

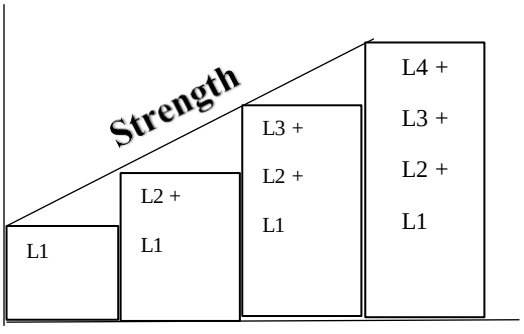
Chapter Three established that commentators were divided on the issue of *elenchus*, the name given to the activity Socrates employed against interlocutors. We found that there was disagreement, firstly, over the form of that activity; secondly, whether there was, in fact, a single activity that was characteristic of the process generally; thirdly, whether there were a variety of activities taking place in the dialogue of which *elenchus* was one; or fourthly whether there was any standardised activity at all. However, one thing all commentators agreed upon was that, whatever it was that Socrates was doing, it definitely had only one purpose and that purpose was refutation.

I argued through detailed analysis that any claim for a unified schema would be difficult to support from evidence and that it was far more probable that we are meant to examine each example of Socratic activity within the context of the discussion and with reference to the cognitive ability of the interlocutor. I therefore concluded that to identify *elenchus* with any single activity, form or purpose, including refuration, was to encumber it with a weight it could not bear, and that classifying a dialogue as elenchus was actually unhelpful to any analysis because it provided either an erroneous or, at best, an empty framework within which to proceed and might close the mind to alternative approaches.

However, whilst I showed that there was no standard form of *elenchus* that could act as a guide for interpreting the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus in *Republic* Book 1, in doing so I also demonstrated that the purpose of the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus was to establish the foundations for a developmental approach to the concept of justice in line with the cumulative approach I suggested for the Divided Line. I also argued that whatever is going on in that discussion it is taking place at cognitive level 3 and I argued that critics generally do not appreciate the importance of the Divided Line and its cumulative nature and, as a result, fail to give the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus the prominence it deserves, misconceiving it as an irrelevance or as being conducted as a Level 2 interaction. I showed, contra this view, that when, for example, Thrasymachus identifies the common element in all types of government he is applying logic and reason to abstract a general rule from particular cases. In so doing he exercises his mind in precisely the way we would expect of a mind operating in the cognitive 'realm' of *dianoia*, a capacity denied to those at Level 2. We also found that through both his actions and argumentation Socrates shows that the formula and its terms are correct and that at no point does he suggest that Thrasymachus is considering anything other than the appropriate objects, albeit that the terms need further development.

This chapter and the next, therefore, proceed on the basis that the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus is operating at cognitive level 3 and claim that by examining the content of the discussion, and the way in which it is derived, we will be able to see that not only is the discussion at level 3, but so too is the *content*. My analysis will focus on the two key terms in the formula for justice, 'strength' (*kreisson*) in this chapter and 'interest' (*sumpheron*) in Chapter Five. It will do two things: firstly, I will argue that the text further supports the view that as the argument progresses Thrasymachus demonstrates and deploys cognitive level 3 ability throughout; secondly, I will show that the etymology of the terms *kreisson* and *sumpheron* similarly supports a level 3 interpretation of the content of the term. My hypothesis for both chapters proposes that the terms in the formula must, according to my interpretation of the Divided Line, be single objects, and that we gain a more sophisticated, cumulative interpretation of those same objects as we progress up through the cognitive levels. This is crucial in understanding Socrates' strategy in the dialogue with Thrasymachus and to uncovering the definition of justice. It also has important positive ramifications for the appraisal of the Book IV definition of justice and the Republic more generally, as we shall see in Chapter Six.

According to my interpretation of the Divided Line, as one moves up through the cognitive levels one accumulates a progressively more sophisticated perception / understanding of the concept. At each level there is a perception / understanding of the concept commensurate with the cognitive limitations of minds at that level. However, in going from one level to the next the previous level's perceptions are not abandoned but are retained so that understanding is cumulative as one moves ever closer to a complete understanding of the same object, one that has been under consideration from level 1 through to level 4. The process in relation to the two key terms in the formula for justice is no different, and in this chapter and the next I will fill in the content of strength and interest respectively in line with this model and as represented in the diagram below:



What I will show is that a significant body of criticism has positioned the whole discussion and the formula at level 2, whereas we know from our investigations in Chapter Three that the discussion must be conducted at level 3, a finding that I will provide further grounds for. Because of this cumulative process of understanding a term, my ultimate goal is to uncover the *noetic* content of justice in order to articulate its ultimate Platonic notion. It is, therefore, vital, precisely because of the cumulative nature of Platonic discovery, that we properly characterise and understand what is going on between Socrates and Thrasymachus at level 3. This is the principal purpose of chapters Four and Five before, in Chapter Six, examining the complete (Level 4) notion of Platonic justice. I now turn to a detailed examination of the term 'strength' in the dialogue.

Commentary on Thrasymachus and his notion of strength

We have already seen that a substantial body of scholars do not consider the Book 1 formula P (justice is nothing other than the interest of the stronger) to be central to an understanding of justice, largely because they believe they have the Platonic notion of justice explicated for them in Book IV. As a result they do not actually focus a great deal on the formula and its terms, and it is therefore necessary at times to adduce, rather than simply read, what commentators think about the dialogue and its contents.

Historically the prevalent view amongst commentators has been that the debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus was incidental to the main purpose of the *Republic* and that the character of Thrasymachus himself was irrelevant to any central claims about justice. For example Jowett dismisses Thrasymachus as "a mere child in argument"[159] seemingly unable to offer a coherent or consistent approach. Sidgwick advises against taking Thrasymachus too seriously and comments that "justice is the advantage of the stronger is a plausible cynical paradox."[160] Both of these commentators, typical of their time, suggest that we should not take Thrasymachus or his arguments seriously but that we should view him merely as a foil to the Socratic intellect; a means by which the scene could be set for the serious work that would unfold in the rest of the *Republic*.

Admittedly, since the work of Strauss the discussion with Thrasymachus in Book 1 has been subject to a more positive approach, but although Strauss does acknowledge a central place

[159] Benjamin Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato Translated into English with Analysis and Introductions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1871), p. 6.

[160] H Sidgwick, *The Philosophy of Kant and Other Lectures* (London, 1905), p. 370.

for Thrasymachus within the search for justice, he also thinks that it is not so much what Thrasymachus says that is important but how he says it. He claims that Plato presents Socrates and Thrasymachus as mirror images of each other and that both represent necessary components of justice, reading the discussion between the two as an act of justice that highlights the joint roles of force and persuasion. He even sees this unity played out in the very context of the discussion: "We owe then the conversation on justice to a mixture of compulsion and persuasion, to cede to such a mixture is an act of justice."[161] So for Strauss justice has nothing to do with the formula *P* but is seen through the interaction between the characters of the two men, Thrasymachus identified with mere force and Socrates with persuasion, and this leads him to claim that the way of Socrates would only ever be appropriate amongst cultured Athenians and the way of Thrasymachus could only ever be appropriate amongst the many,[162] a position that firmly roots Thrasymachus in the bottom half of the Divided Line.

Modern scholarship has been more positive in its approach to the character of Thrasymachus but, as we shall see, scholars still see him as endorsing a forceful conception of power and as being in opposition to the Platonic stance. Annas, who we will remember sees refutation as the sole purpose of all Socratic cross-examination, views the debate with Thrasymachus as a prime example of the failure of Socratic argumentation. Apart from an acknowledgement that Thrasymachus' ethical stance has more merit than is typically acknowledged: "the thesis that injustice pays is not, after all, far-fetched or unconvincing,"[163] she focuses less on what Thrasymachus says and more on Socrates' responses. These responses she finds less than adequate, commenting: "none of these arguments, then, carries any conviction. They all seem to beg the crucial question."[164] She does not see in this any implication of credit due to Thrasymachus but merely faults the Socratic Method.

Moore responds to the view subscribed to by Annas et al that Socrates' arguments against Thrasymachus "are at best weak and at worst fallacious"[165] by suggesting that it leads to

---

[161] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 64.

[162] Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 16–17.

[163] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 55.

[164] Annas, p. 55.

[165] Holly Moore, 'Why Does Thrasymachus Blush? Ethical Consistency in Socrates' Refutation Od Thrasymachus', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 32 (2015), p. 321.

a contradiction. She points to the passage in the text where it is indicated that Thrasymachus blushes (350d) and asks: if Socrates' arguments were indeed that weak, what would cause Thrasymachus to blush? Her own interpretation of this is that the blush is caused by Thrasymachus recognising that he has been caught out in holding two conflicting principles, namely that *arête* is a matter of both knowledge and victory. Therefore she contends that the refutation of Thrasymachus is founded on an ethical rather than a logical contradiction.[166] Zuckert takes a different approach altogether, suggesting that there is much common ground between the two men. They both understand that someone can only obtain something advantageous or good if he knows what is truly advantageous and truly good.[167] She assents to the view that strength for Thrasymachus is identified with the ability to make and enforce the laws, but adds that he is not simply a conventionalist "if by conventionalist one means a person who says that the just is simply what the law says it is and recognises that laws differ from place to place and regime to regime."[168] She points out that Thrasymachus sees a fundamental uniformity in the apparent diversity of laws, his thesis being that the strongest party in any city shows that it is the strongest by determining what the law is, and in every case, the strongest party makes laws that benefit it at the expense of the weaker.[169]

Reeve has suggested that Plato presents Thrasymachus as an inverted Socratic figure whose purpose in the *Republic* is to highlight the limitations of *elenchus*.[170] However, somewhat contrarily, he does also recognise the importance of Thrasymachus citing evidence form Book 3 (545b) and Book 9 (590d) to suggest that "from early to late the position presented as in need of critical discussion is that of Thrasymachus."[171] He sees in Thrasymachus' original account a description of both a nominal and a real definition of justice. The nominal definition is the explanation of the meaning of the word justice in a particular city as consisting in obedience to

[166] Moore, p. 323.

[167] Catherine Zuckert, 'Why Socrates and Thrasymachus Become Friends?', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 32.2. pp. 163-185

[168] Zuckert, p. 175.

[169] Zuckert, p. 175.

[170] CDC Reeve, *Philosopher Kings The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 13.

[171] CDC Reeve, *Blindness and Orientation: Problems in Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 67.

the laws. The real definition is a more general account of justice as what is advantageous to the stronger which is invariant across constitutions (the same in all cities).[172] Although Reeve accepts that the nominal and real definitions are related, he considers it important not to conflate them. He also comments that while the nominal definition is a political one, defining justice as obedience to the law, Thrasymachus also includes a psychological idea that people pursue their advantage to the extent that their power allows.[173] Interestingly, Reeve states that both these ideas are returned to in Book 2 where Glaucon appears to accept both these Thrasymachean points.

Reeve considers that Thrasymachus presents both a fact-based and a theory-based account of justice. In 338c-d we have the fact - based account that is grounded in empirical observation of actual people and cities. The rulers involved are actual rulers; they are actually stronger and make actual laws. In 340d-341a we have the theory - based account where the rulers are ideal rulers; they are ideally stronger and make ideal laws. However, Reeve would consider it a mistake to think of these ideal rulers as creatures about whom we can make *a priori* or conceptual claims. Thrasymachus makes it clear that actual rulers are ideal at those times when they are practicing the craft of ruling and not making errors.[174] Perhaps a clarification Reeve makes in an earlier work is helpful here. Reeve proposes that we read Thrasymachus as making a distinction between rulers *qua* rulers (Reeve refers to them as Rulers), and rulers.[175] If we utilise this distinction it is possible to distinguish two views about ruling from Thrasymachus' argument. Either (a) a ruler is a Ruler (to employ Reeve's term) at a time *t* just in case he legislates in ways advantageous to himself at *t*. This allows a ruler to be only intermittently a Ruler. Or (b) a ruler is a Ruler just in case he always legislates in ways advantageous to himself. This view excludes the possibility of intermittent Rule.

Cross and Woozley think that Thrasymachus adopts the former view and point out that this leads to a serious objection.[176] If a ruler is only intermittently a Ruler then it is up to the

---

[172] Ibid

[173] Ibid p 68

[174] Ibid p71

[175] C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 12.

[176] R.C. Cross & A.D. Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary*, (London: MacMillan, 1964, 47-48).

subjects to decide whether a law was created under 'rule' or 'Rule' and as such the decision of whether or not to obey any law lies with the subject and not with the Ruler as Thrasymachus would wish.

It is clear from the above analysis that whether commentators hold a positive or negative view about the relevance of Thrasymachus they still uphold the view that he is refuted precisely because he presents a thesis that is dependent upon the physical might to enforce a law whether it is just or unjust. Today that view would be classed as suggesting that Thrasymachus' view of justice is dependent upon those in power having merely coercive power over their subjects. This modern approach, however, distinguishes between 'power to' and 'power over' holding that 'power to' concerns a ruling authority's or person's ability to achieve their desired outcome, whereas 'power over' is not related to ability at all but is viewed in terms of a relationship: the exercise of control by one person over another. Steven Lukes takes this distinction further and claims that power has, what he terms, 'three faces', in that power can involve the ability to influence the making of decisions; it may be reflected in the capacity to shape the political agenda and thus prevent decisions being made and it may take the form of controlling people' thoughts by the manipulation of their perceptions and preferences.[177]

This idea of power as decision making can be dated back to Hobbes where power is seen as the ability of an 'agent' to affect the behaviour of a 'patient'.[178] The view is analogous to physical or mechanical power which implies that power involves being 'pulled' or 'pushed' against one's will, which in turn suggests that those doing the pulling and pushing form some sort of ruling elite. Dahl presents three criteria that, if fulfilled, would validate this 'ruling elite' thesis. First, the ruling elite, if it existed at all, must be a well-defined group; second, a number of key political decisions must be identified over which the preferences of the ruling elite run counter to those of any other group; third, there must be evidence that the preferences of the elite regularly prevail over those of other groups.[179] In effect Dahl treats power as the ability to influence the decision making process. So power becomes nothing more than a question of who gets their way, how often they get their way, and over what issues they get their way.

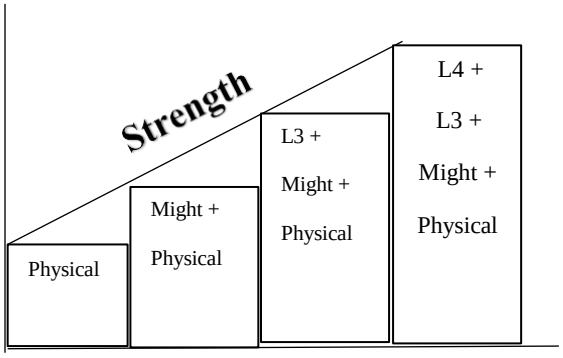
[177] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, Second (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[178] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Middlesex: Penguin Classics, 1985).

[179] Dahl

Interestingly, all the above political commentators class not only Thrasymachus but Plato himself as endorsing a view that is entirely in accord with a tyrannical power over the citizens.

So it would seem that commentators, both political and Platonic, support the interpretation that Thrasymachus' view of justice in relation to strength is a stance that is dependent upon physical, coercive force. As we found from the capabilities of cognitive levels on the Divided Line, this view would necessitate a mind that is not yet able to extract a general evaluative sense from the empirical data but rather acts as the data demands. In light of the above commentary we are now in a position to begin to populate the diagram of the Divided Line for strength from what might be called the orthodox perspective:



Thrasymachus: A Level 3 Interlocutor

In this section I will show two things. First, I will offer evidence to further support the characterisation of the discussion as being at level 3, and then, in light of that debate, I will examine the specific content of the first term in the formula 'strength'.

When the mind is expanded to cognitive level 3 it does not see something different, rather it sees more of, has a more sophisticated apprehension of, the content of the same concept. Likewise by identifying once more the properties of a level 3 operation we should be able to ascertain what properties we would expect to see in a level 3 process and, therefore, what we should expect to see from a level 3 understanding of strength.

A mind operating at level 3 must apply logic and reason to empirical evidence, abstracting from data given by observation. There is no longer a sole reliance upon particulars but they are utilised to formulate general / universal rules. What this means for the mind operating at level 3 is that there is a move from the sole perspective of the individual towards concepts being viewed in terms of the collective, one sees beyond oneself towards others. In

terms of strength one would expect to see an understanding that is based upon, but not exclusively bound to, a sense of physical strength. It should abstract from particular examples of physical power to include some element of the general evaluative worth of that strength. This process will not only provide general rules but also information on the essential properties, or essence, of the concept.

Thrasymachus, unlike most other interlocutors,[180] does not initially confuse a definition with the enumeration of examples. As this analysis unfolds the text will illustrate that he should be credited both with understanding that definitions are important and for understanding why they are so important.[181] He should also be credited for understanding that a satisfactory definition must state the character common to and the same (*tauton*) in every instantiation of justice. Beversluis thinks that in modern terms Thrasymachus could be distinguishing between two senses of 'is', the 'is' of predication (as in justice is profitable" and the 'is' of identity (Justice is X).[182] This latter approach would necessitate replacing X with the essential property or the defining characteristic common to all just actions and by which they are deemed just. In Beversluis' words Thrasymachus is asking Socrates to provide "a definition of justice in which the *definiens* and the *definiendum* are identical and inter-entailing; a definitional statement expressive of identity or 'essence'".[183] If this is the case then Thrasymachus has clearly grasped the logical point at issue and must therefore have crossed the divide to enable this kind of Level 3 operation. As I stressed earlier this ability to understand essence or essential properties is clear evidence of a mind at *dianoia*.

Admittedly, one of the main issues commentators have with Thrasymachus is that after having barred certain terms to Socrates, he unapologetically employs one of those very terms for his own definition. But if we borrow from Beversluis the idea that Thrasymachus is distinguishing between the 'is' of predication and the 'is' of identity we may be able to ameliorate this issue. When Thrasymachus proclaims his definition of justice as that which is in the interest of the stronger (*P*) he is not predicating a non-defining property of justice, which would

[180] With the possible exception of Callicles.

[181] This point is denied by Sparshott, pp. 422–23 as according to him Thrasymachus is not defining Justice, but re-evaluating the traditional concept and trying to provide a better answer than Cephalus and Polemarchus.

[182] Beversluis, p. 225.

[183] Beversluis, p. 225.

necessitate that it must be defined in terms of some other defining characteristic which is logically independent of and logically prior to it, he is defining justice ***as*** *P*. So "that which is in the interest of the stronger" ***is*** the defining characteristic or the essential nature of Justice.[184]

Thus "that which is in the interest of the stronger" (*P*) is grammatically identical to "Justice is beneficial" in that both appear to subscribe to a sentence form that involves a subject with a qualifying predicate, with both predicates referring to advantage. In this sense it could be viewed as if both were being used to explicate what justice is 'like', the kind of proposition for which Thrasymachus had faulted Socrates for, and indeed had barred to him. However, the logical status of *P* is quite different. The predicative statements would be Level 1 and 2 concrete examples that would be utilised and incorporated into a Level 3 understanding of essential properties.

Further support for regarding this discussion as operating at level 3 is Thrasymachus' outright denial of a level 2 interpretation of strength seen in his response to Socrates' example of Polydamas. After Thrasymachus has proclaimed his definition Socrates asks for clarification surrounding the terms that Thrasymachus has employed. He provides the example of a well-known athlete of the time and asks:

> *"If Polydamas the all-round athlete is stronger than us and the flesh of beef is advantageous to his body, then this diet is also for us who are weaker than he both advantageous and just." (338c-d)*

What we find in this example is that the view expressed does not fit the formula P, as Thrasymachus meant it on two counts. Firstly the strength of Polydamas is clearly not the kind of strength Thrasymachus is intending. Polydamas is an athlete who depends on brute physical force and, therefore, his diet is one that is designed to bolster muscle bulk. If Socrates, the weaker, followed that diet without practicing the corresponding physical exercise it would be disadvantageous to his health and, therefore, not just. Secondly, if Socrates, the weaker, also followed Polydamas' diet it is difficult to see in what way that would be of any benefit to Polydamas. True Polydamas would still be receiving benefit from his own intake of the prescribed diet, but he would not gain any further advantage from the fact that Socrates was following it too.

---

[184][184] Most commentators disagree see especially Nicholas White, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis, 1979), p. 67. and Annas, p. 38.

So on the face of it this example seems absurd, and many commentators have dismissed it for this reason, but, in fact, something more subtle is, in my view, going on. In positioning the example in the way that he does, Socrates is testing Thrasymachus to see what he actually means by the terms.

The crucial element about this Polydamas example does not seem to be concerned with the issue of beef, rather it concerns Thrasymachus' response to Socrates' test. He is almost scathing in his negative response to the example categorically denying that this was how he viewed strength and his reference to the different forms of government confirm his denial of Level 2 perceptions and provides evidence of a Level 3 mind at work. His counter example of the different forms of government shows that Thrasymachus intends his definition to provide the formal requirements for justice, which he consider to be universal. The criterion for justice in every case is that there is interest for the stronger party. This is the point of his declaration that "justice is the same everywhere". Whatever the ruling regime, democracy or tyranny, the universal element will be that the laws will be made to the benefit of the ruling party. This ability to think in terms of universals and the specific denial of a Level 2 response to strength is highly suggestive of a logical and rational mind at work. The ability to do the sorts of things that involve logic and rationality is direct evidence of a level 3 mind at work. We can see now how important Socrates' challenge in the example of Polydamas actually is.

More generally, it can be shown that there is a logical problem with the way in which many commentators have positioned Thrasymachus. This is particularly apparent amongst those who see Socrates and Thrasymachus as mirroring each other in the discussion. Perhaps the best way of exposing this problem is to be presented as a reduction ad absurdum. In what follows I will demonstrate that a contradiction can be generated, licensing (by RAA) one of the premises to be rejected (in this case, the positioning of Thrasymachus at Level 2). My argument schema is as follows:

Premise 1: Thrasymachus is at Level 2 – according to commentators

Premise 2: According to commentators Thrasymachus and Socrates are at the same level because both employ the same argument form and prohibit concrete examples

Premise 3: this particular argument form indicates Level 3 cognitive ability, and, in any event, Socrates is at Level 3 (adduced from independent evidence)

Conclusion: Thrasymachus is therefore at Level 3 contra Premise 1 which can be rejected.

In order for this argument to succeed I will need to show that both Thrasymachus and Socrates do employ the same argument form and that, in the arguments where he excludes concrete examples, Socrates is clearly operating at Level 3. This will allow me to demonstrate that when Thrasymachus also excludes concrete examples he is doing precisely the same thing as Socrates.

As we have seen Thrasymachus appears to elicit universal disapproval amongst commentators and it is often suggested that we as readers are also meant to disapprove of him. For example, Guthrie tells us that Plato disliked Thrasymachus[185] and Annas claims that Plato detested Thrasymachus and "intends us to dislike and despise him"[186] also. Yet the scholarly response described above and in the previous section appears to exhibit a *prima facie* inconsistency and somewhat circular criticism. On the one hand commentators are critical of Socrates' methods and argumentation but on the other hand they are also critical of Thrasymachus for criticising those very same methods. Curiously if Socrates' arguments are as weak as commentators say they are[187] and Thrasymachus has actually spotted some of those weaknesses then why do commentators not take Thrasymachus and what he says more seriously. I contend that once we conduct a serious examination of what Thrasymachus says then the text will reveal an interlocutor of a kind that is clearly advanced and situated at Cognitive Level 3 of the Line.

If we begin with the objection that Thrasymachus raises regarding Socrates' methods:

> *If you really want to know what justice is, stop asking questions and then playing to the gallery by refuting anyone who answers you. You know perfectly well that it's easier to ask questions than to answer them. Give us an answer yourself, and tell us what you think justice is. And don't tell me that it's duty, or expediency, or advantage, or profit, or interest (sumpheron). I won't put up with nonsense of that sort; give me a clear and precise decision. (336c-d)*

This objection is clearly in line with that of the commentators who regularly criticise Socrates for the very same reason, that his method gains nothing and that all his enquiries end up in *aporia*. Yet we find that Thraysmachus' objection has been characterised in a variety of

[185] W.K.C Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 297.

[186] Annas, p. 35.

[187] Annas has described them variously as "dubious", "irritating" and based on "rather odd analogies".

ways: as a protest against "stale and barren attitudes"[188], as "one-word equivalents"[189] and as a "definition by synonyms"[190]. Yet according to the text, Thrasymachus must be doing much more than this. He does not want Socrates to engage in a discussion of what Justice is like but to address himself clearly and precisely to the fundamental question of what Justice is. For Plato to use these words suggests that Thrasymachus is making a serious demand which underscores the idea that the definitional question is prior to every other.

This position finds further support in the text when Socrates employs the mathematical analogy to Thrasymachus' prohibition of certain responses and asks whether Thrasymachus wishes him to say something other than the truth:

> *You ask someone for a definition of twelve, and add "And I don't want to be told that it's twice six, or three times four, or six times two, or four times three; that sort of nonsense won't do." You know perfectly well that no one would answer you on those terms. He would reply "What do you mean, Thrasymachus; am I to give none of the answers you mention? If one of them happens to be true, do you want me to give a false one?" (337b-c)*

Two interesting issues arise from this vignette. First, Socrates wants to employ a term in Greek that covers at least one of the prohibited terms for interest because it ***is*** the truth and second, that in forbidding Socrates to make predicative statements about justice, Thrasymachus is not asking him to suppress truth, but he is making a specific request for the type of truth he wants. He recognises the distinction between how you get to twelve (six times two, three times four etc.) and the intrinsic nature of twelve, what twelve is. So he does not want an explanation of justice that is true relative to particular instances of justice, but, a general universal truth that is true in each and every instantiation of justice and which is true independently of these particular cases. Interestingly this is precisely the method that Socrates himself employs throughout the early dialogues where he disallows every appeal to concrete examples as an answer to his "What is F?" question. An obvious example of this approach is the case of Euthyphro whom Socrates engages in a discussion surrounding the question "what is holiness

[188] J Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 1:24.

[189] F.E Sparshott, 'Socrates and Thrasymachus', *The Monist*, 50, 421–59 (p. 456).

[190] Paul Shorey, *The Republic of Plato* (London, 1937), p. 1:39.

(piousness)?" Having elicited from Euthyphro the response that holiness is "what I am doing now" (prosecuting his father) Socrates continues the discussion:

> *Try to tell me more clearly what I was asking for just now, for my friend, you did not teach me adequately when I asked you what the pious was, but you told me that what you are doing now, in prosecuting your father for murder, is pious.*
>
> *And I told the truth Socrates.*
>
> *Perhaps you agree however, that there are many other pious actions.*
>
> *There are.*
>
> *Bear in mind then that I did not bid you tell me one or two of the many pious actions but that form itself that makes all pious actions pious ..... Tell me then what this form itself is, so that I may look upon it and, using it as a model, say that any action of yours or another's that is of that kind is pious, and if it is not that it is not. (Euthyphro: 6c-e).*

This is clear evidence both that Socrates is denying the sole use of particular examples to provide the truth of a concept, and of his focus on the form that is the general and universal rule, the standard by which all particulars will be judged. This in turn is clear evidence of a level 3 mind at work. This seems to be overlooked by such commentators as Cross and Woozley according to whom Socrates "not unreasonably points out it is unfair to demand an answer to a question and then preclude certain kinds of answers in advance."[191] But if Socrates himself prohibits concrete examples in the way that Thrasymachus is doing, then either we must accept that Socrates does ask rhetorical questions to which he knows the answer, a point that explicitly contradicts the Socratic stance of knowing nothing, or we must relegate Socrates to the same level of ability as that assigned to Thrasymachus by commentators, which would locate Socrates in the bottom half of the Line.

Clearly Socrates can operate at that level, but the evidence is that he does not treat Thrasymachus in the same way as other interlocutors and neither is operating at that level. Thrasymachus takes control and has recognised the failure of the method that Socrates was deploying with Cephalus and Polemarchus earlier in the discussion. He changes the way in

[191] AC Cross and AD Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 21.

which the discussion progresses, searching for essential properties and general rules which requires Thrasymachus to have the cognitive ability necessary for one operating at Level 3.

Kreisson at Level 3

In what follows, an in-depth analysis of kreisson, the specific term used for strength, will primarily elucidate the content, but, because of its sophistication and semantic range, employment of such a term will be seen to further bolster the claim that the discussion is taking place at level 3.

An investigation into the use of the term *Kreissōn* in *Liddell and Scott* provides us with the information that the term is used both as a comparative of *kratos* (power) and also frequently as a comparative to *agathos* (good and admirable). They record that it can be used either to refer to a sense of strength in terms of being powerful in order to get 'stuff',[192] but also that it is frequently used in the sense of 'better' or in doing the 'excellent thing'. What this highlights is that the term had always had a range of usages and that the dual meaning of strength in the sense of 'might' and strength in the sense of 'excellence' was being utilised by ancient philosophers and poets who were contemporaries of, or indeed pre-dated, Plato. For example, in Antiphon's *Third Tetralogia* we come across a usage for *Kreissōn* that does refer to physical strength: "Even if his defence was stronger than the attack made upon him because there was more strength in his hands, you cannot justly condemn him" (Antip:4.7). We can find a similar use of kreisson in Thucydides "*kratista pote meta akraiphnous*" (Thuc: 1:19:8) here referring to those who are "more powerful". However, both Thucydides and Pindar use the term as a comparative of agathos to introduce a meaning more comparable with "better" or "excellent". Pindar states "*neikos de kreisswn*" (Pi.*O*.10(11).39) where the term is being used to refer to ones betters, especially in terms of rank, so it has a meaning more closely related to "superior" than "strength". Thucydides also employs the term in the sense of that which is good and beneficial, "*ta huparchonta hemin kreissow kataprodunai*" (Thuc:4:10) where the term is being used to refer to one's advantages. The comic writer Aristophanes also utilises the term in his play *Clouds*[193] when discussing the ability of philosophy to assist in winning any argument. In the play Strepsiades claims "*einai par autois phasin ampho to logo, ton kreitton, ostis esti, kai ton hetonna*." (Aristophanes: *Clouds*: 113) "For they say that among them there are both accounts, the better, whichever that is, and the worse." What is interesting in this text is that

[192] Presumably wealth, power, glory.

[193] Ironically this play is a satire of philosophy and in the main involves the philosophy practised by a much caricatured Socrates.

translators differ on how to interpret *kreitton*; some like Hickie translate it as "better" as I have chosen to do, while others have translated it either as "stronger/weaker" or even as "right/wrong". So does the 'Thinkery' help you to make the worse argument the better, the weaker argument the stronger or the wrong argument the right one? Each of these options has different, albeit subtle, connotations from the others, but which did Aristophanes mean us to use?

So we can identify texts where *Kreissōn* is used to convey physical power and also texts where it is used to denote value or excellence and it would be implausible to assume that Plato would have been unaware of the ambiguous connotations of *Kreissōn* in such writers as Homer, Thucydides and Aristophanes and therefore, that that specific range of meanings was not open to him in using the term.

In the text Plato has Thrasymachus employ the term *kreittonos* (κρείττονος), the singular genitive of *Kreissōn* (κρείσσων), which is translated by the orthodox commentary into English as the 'stronger'. Consequently this translation has led to an interpretation of the type of strength in question to be understood by the orthodox commentators in terms of power and force, as the ability to coerce others into doing your will. Certainly this word *Kreissōn* is being used here, along with the superlative *kratistos*, as a comparative of *kratos*, from *krateo* which does mean 'to be powerful'. However, what appears to have been overlooked is that this word *Kreissōn* can also be used as a comparative of *agathos* (good). What this suggests is that the strength in question could also be interpreted in terms of what is good and admirable. So by choosing *Kreissōn* Plato could be introducing an evaluative perspective on strength for both Thrasymachus and Socrates.

Even if we grant this usage it might still be relatively easy to fall into the trap of positing that this is, nevertheless, a simple case of Thrasymachus thinking in terms of physical strength and only Socrates thinking in terms of that which is morally good. But there is evidence that suggests that this approach would be mistaken. If this was all Thrasymachus was meant to convey then Plato would have him use a word from the semantic range of *dunatos*? This would convey the interpretation of strength in terms of having the ability to be strong and powerful.

So why does Plato not use *to dunatotaton*, the ablest-bodied men, or *to dunatoi*, the chief men of rank and influence? He does use the semantic range of *dunatos* elsewhere in the *Republic*, for example in the distinction between knowledge and opinion where the powers related to each field are defined, and also when discussing the qualities that distinguish the philosophic from the non-philosophic nature. Thus Plato utilises dunatos when he wishes to

deploy the meaning of power in terms of the ability to bring something about but if all that Thrasymachus was meant to convey for strength was the physical ability to bring about the coercion of others, to bring a situation into being that benefits you, then given that Plato uses the term *dunatos* elsewhere to show precisely this ability, it seems more likely that he would also use *dunatos* here, but he does not.

So why does Plato use *Kreissōn* and not *dunatos*? It suggests that he wishes to employ an evaluative sense of strength, in that there is something admirable and good about these *Kreissōn,* and the semantic range of *dunatos* would not allow him to do that. Perhaps we can make even more sense of the use of *Kreissōn* if we consider it in the light of the discussion on the infallibility of the stronger. Socrates manages to elicit an agreement from Thrasymachus that rulers sometimes make mistakes. However, Thrasymachus qualifies this view by stating that rulers qua Rulers (to employ Reeve's distinction of ruler v Ruler)[194] are indeed infallible in their judgement of what is to their advantage. So when actual rulers are ruling correctly they are ideal and admirable Rulers. These admirable Rulers could never make errors. If the strength of these Rulers is evaluated in terms of being ideal and admirable, the best rulers that there are, then *dunaton* would not be applicable and the term *Kreissōn* makes perfect sense. As we saw previously this ability to evaluate in terms of essential properties is a key attribute of a level 3 mind.

Thus by employing *Kreisson* and not *dunatos* Plato can allow Thrasymachus to inject into his interpretation of strength an evaluative sense which would firmly establish the type of strength being described as the 'object' at Level 3 and Thrasymachus himself as an interlocutor with a mind operating at Cognitive Level 3. We are therefore in a position to unpack a Level 3 understanding of *kreisson* as Thrasymachus meant it.

Kreisson then is associated with being the best in every sense and thus for Thrasymachus 'the stronger are the better' in that you are the best you can be because you have this admirable strength. So Thrasymachus is employing the comparative and superlative senses of *krateo* and *agathos* and as such he is concerned with the strength to achieve and in the goodness of what is achieved. Thus he is endorsing the position that the best of men should have power because they are strong. But this is not to be interpreted as power that is merely coercive, a brutal crude form of power that looks to the short term benefits to you within particular cases, as this would be a perception of power that we would expect to see in the bottom half of the Divided Line and

194

if the cumulative interpretation is correct then this view of power, while present, must only be part of the picture.

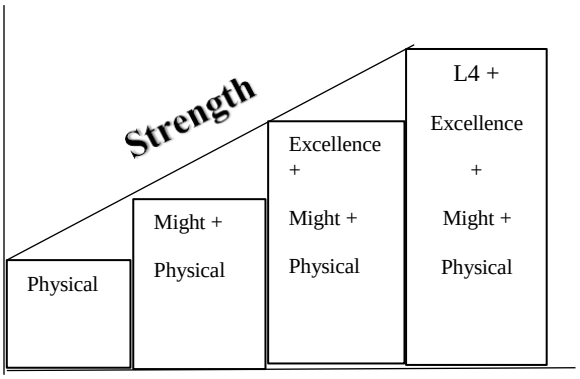
According to this cumulative interpretation, and if we are correct in placing Thrasymachus in cognitive level 3, then we must stop thinking of power simply in terms of coercive force. If we think instead of an idea of power as the admirable ability to present people with what appears to be a good idea, albeit not fully developed, then we will have the *kreisson* that are so admired by Thrasymachus: those with the qualities of excellence that the people are naturally drawn to, and that can, therefore, carry the people along with them. They are also those with the strength to establish a system of justice that is based around achieving their own interests, and while they are the better people their rule is not a coercive one. Rather Thrasymachus envisages voluntary compliance of subjects towards an openly admirable ruler. Consequently it becomes obvious that a Level 3 interpretation could not endorse a principle of justice that is merely concerned with 'might is right', the position traditionally ascribed to Thrasymachus. A position that it would seem has been obstructive in understanding Thrasymachus and therefore the *Republic*.

What I am suggesting here is that the traditional commentary on the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus becomes a vicious circle in that the arguments are based upon assumptions of translation that in turn inform assumptions of meaning that become what could be referred to as a 'rabbit-hole' interpretation: because *kreisson* has been traditionally interpreted only in terms of physical strength (a level 2 instantiation), then strength has only been understood in terms of coercive force, so Thrasymachus is operating at Level 2, inferior to the cognitive ability of Socrates, and is, therefore, defeated by Socrates.

It may be that this obstructive cycle of interpretation has been caused by commentators translating the term *kreisson* in light of *kratesis* which does mean power and dominion, but this meaning of the term was only in use in Hellenistic times and not at the time Plato was writing. If the term *kreisson* is translated in light of *kratos* then we gain an interpretation of 'outdoing' or 'surpassing' which fits this Level 3 interpretation better. This word, while still referring to control, can also be interpreted within the semantic range of 'winning'. So the understanding of *kreisson* at Level 3 is that it refers to being the strongest in terms of excellence and now we can add to that the sense of being a winner. Justice then, for Thrasymachus, is not merely about the powerful coercing of others into obedience at all. It is not merely about power, but also about

winning and losing. Strength is about being the best and being the stronger is about being one who is able to achieve excellence and win.[195]

So now we are in a position to populate the Divided Line for strength up to and including level 3:



As we can see at level 3 we do build upon the idea of physical strength to produce a character who, through excellence, becomes the ruler Thrasymachus endorses, one who can win and achieve voluntary compliance from an admiring citizenry. In light of all this 'might is right' would seem to be a misleading interpretation of Thrasymachus' position and it may have to be changed to the more appropriate 'winning is right'. For Thrasymachus, the winners are good because they are winners, because they have the strength to achieve excellence, an obvious deduction for one at Level 3 of the Line. His stronger are admirable for what they have managed to achieve, they are winners in terms of being able to have others willingly comply with their will.

I claim that my interpretation, that is dependent on both the deliberate use of *kreisson* for a specific interpretation of strength, and the positioning of Thrasymachus and the discussion at cognitive level 3, presents itself as a virtuous circle in that: Evaluation and the search for essential properties are key attributes of level 3 cognitive ability, and we have already established that Thrasymachus is working at Level 3. The evidence demonstrates that the term *kreisson* includes a semantic range for evaluative processes, so I have raised significantly the probability

[195] This interpretation should come as no surprise as we only have to look at the Athenian society of the time to understand how competition underscored the entire culture. Drama, poetry, rhetoric and comedy were all judged on how good they were by entering into the competitions at festival times. The whole society from its festivals to its political and legal systems were based around the idea of mass adjudicators (the citizens) and elite performers, be they actors, authors, orators or politicians.

that the term *kreisson* has been deliberately chosen precisely because it allows for those characteristics. Thus I can show that the *reductio* argument has been correctly discharged in that there is clearly a contradiction within the position presented by the general commentary. I have shown that Premise 1 of the orthodox position is false and can therefore be rejected. This establishes the pertinence of my conclusion that Thrasymachus presents a Level 3 understanding of strength.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to establish the interpretation of strength as Thrasymachus himself would have meant it to be understood. In order to achieve this I analysed the content of the discussion to cement the claim that throughout the process Thrasymachus demonstrates abilities that we would expect to see in a mind operating at cognitive level 3. From this starting point I explicated a level 3 meaning of strength through an examination of the etymology of the term *kreisson*.

I claimed that the historical representation of Thrasymachus was misleading as it appeared to rest on a number of false moves. It did not credit Thrasymachus with a central role nor did it pay sufficient attention to the importance of his use of *kreisson*. It isolated the search for justice from the central role of the Divided Line and its focus on cognitive levels and its cumulative nature regarding increasing clarity. It therefore underestimated Thrasymachus' cognitive level, presenting him as someone we would expect to encounter in level 2. As a result, it attributed to Thrasymachus a concept of strength that was merely cashed out in terms of might and coercive power. I was able to demonstrate that the text does not support this interpretation, as the deliberate use of *kreisson* rather than *dunatos* by Plato bears out.

I argued instead that the text clearly indicates that Thrasymachus is almost unique amongst interlocutors in that he is operating in the dialogue with a mind at cognitive level 3. His understanding of the need to reach the essential nature of things such as justice show him to be a man who deals with universals and generalisations from inductive processes, and his absolute denial of a level 2 interpretation of strength as merely coercive physical might, and his ability to operate according to the same rules that are laid down by Socrates, place him clearly in the top half of the Line.

I found that the term *kreisson* was already in use in an ambiguous sense by noted and sophisticated writers at the time Plato was writing, and that it has a semantic range that incorporates the evaluative sense of excellence and the competitive sense of winning. As such it

is clearly a word that could be used in a developmental sense and would suit Plato's need in the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus.

What all this reveals is that a Level 3 interpretation of strength could not endorse a principle of justice that is merely based on the proposition 'might is right', the position traditionally ascribed to Thrasymachus, but that it involves an evaluative understanding of strength that is cashed out in terms of admirable qualities that produce excellence and a competitive character with the ability to win in all he does. *This* type of strength, at Level 3 as it is, will, far from employing physical force, be able to promote voluntary compliance from the people.

Of course this provides us with only half the picture of justice at Level 3. The formula *P* involves two terms and their relationship with each other. Thus in the chapter that follows I will focus on the second term in the formula *Sumpheron* in order to establish what Thrasymachus means by Interest at cognitive level 3.

Chapter Five: Unpacking the Formula at Level 3: Interest (*Sumpheron*)

Introduction

This chapter is the second, and perhaps more important, part of the detailed investigation into the two crucial components of the formula for justice announced at the start of Chapter Four. Just as in Chapter Four, it, too, will confirm the nature of the dialogue between Thrasymachus and Socrates is developmental rather than refutational. It will also demonstrate significant support both for the earlier stance taken on the Divided Line, in which a single object (the Form) is assumed, and for the positioning of the dialogue at cognitive level 3.

I will offer an etymological investigation which will demonstrate that Plato chose the particular term used for 'interest', '*sumpheron*', with care and intent. This investigation will also include the analysis of two further key arguments (the wage earning argument and the craft analogy) which will enable me to bring out the clear distinction between instrumental and intrinsic meanings that, I argue, is crucial to a proper understanding of Plato's conception of justice.

Overall it will become apparent that each of the individual conclusions and stances is consistent with, and mutually re-inforce, each other. This in turn provides a robust picture that fully utilises the cognitive ability available at Level 3 and provides an excellent platform for the development of the *noetic* position in Chapter Six.

The Traditional Reading of Thrasymachus' Position

Some commentators hold, for example Hourani, that during the first part of the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus (when the focus is on a discussion of strength) Thrasymachus holds a position closely aligned with a legalist or conventionalist stance, expressed through the formula (P) that 'justice is in the interest of the stronger'. That is to say that either he holds that justice is reducible to obedience to the laws, with no ethical consideration, or that the fundamental principles of justice are grounded on agreements in society rather than on any external reality. When the focus of the dialogue turns to a discussion of interest Thrasymachus appears to shift his position to one that aligns itself more readily with an immoralist stance, a system of thought that does not accept moral principles. A position that defines justice as another's good and injustice as one's own good. Because of this shift in position Thrasymachus is accused of holding two opposing and contradictory ideas of justice. The progression of his argument(s) can be presented as follows:

a) The assertion of the formula *P* that 'justice is the interest of the stronger' (338c-d), leads to his explanation that,
b) In each type of government the rulers enact laws that are designed to benefit themselves and as justice "is the same thing in all states, namely the interest of the established government; and government is the strongest element in each state" (338e-339a), then the stronger are to be identified with the rulers or the government.
c) As those stronger introduce the laws to be of benefit to themselves, and it is just for the weaker to obey those laws, serving the interests of their rulers, then justice becomes "namely the interest of the stronger party or ruler, imposed at the expense of the subject who obeys him" (343c). Thus Justice is 'another's good' (343c), and bad for oneself as "the just man always comes off worse than the unjust" (343d). This being the case then it pays better to be unjust – especially on a grand scale. The bigger the injustice the greater the benefit to self, "when a man succeeds in robbing the whole body of citizens and reducing them to slavery, they forget ugly names and call him happy and fortunate" (344c). So injustice or immorality is good for oneself then
d) 'a moral (just) person is worse off than an immoral (unjust) one" (343d), and so it would be more beneficial to practice injustice as 'a life of crime is better than a life of integrity' (347e).

Commentators have identified a number of issues with Thrasymachus' position(s), which will be analysed later, including whether he "changes his mind" and therefore admits inconsistency and contradiction into his original position (*P*): specifically whether he appears to suggest that justice does not pay but injustice does, and whether the benefits of 'justice' are necessarily material and the motivation to act is always for one's own good.

Within this discussion Socrates deploys two further arguments that are also subject to criticism from traditional commentators (such as Pappas) the craft analogy argument and the wage earning argument. Both of these are employed by Socrates to challenge Thrasymachus' position that justice is in the interest of the stronger and that injustice pays better than justice.

After having agreed with Thrasymachus that justice is a kind of interest, Socrates, instead of explaining what he means by interest and in what way it would differ from

Thrasymachus' view, sets out to explain that the position that Thrasymachus has articulated is "internally incoherent."[196] His argument, contained in 339b-d, is as follows:

i. Obedience to rulers is just
ii. But rulers are fallible and prone to error, rightly enacting some laws, but wrongly enacting others.
iii. A rightly enacted law is one which is to the ruler's advantage, whereas a wrongly enacted law is one which is not.
iv. Since obedience to rulers is just, it follows that it is just to obey all laws – including those which are not to the rulers' advantage.
v. Such a conclusion is contradictory to *P* since the weaker are obeying laws that are not in the interest of the stronger.

Thrasymachus responds to this by insisting that he does not apply the term 'stronger' to any ruler who errs in his judgement any more than he would apply the term 'doctor' to a practitioner of medicine who makes a mistake when treating his patients. For Thrasymachus a ruler who enacts laws that are not in his interest is not a mistaken ruler; he is not a ruler at all. He distinguishes between a loose and strict way of speaking and strictly speaking a doctor who makes a mistake in treating his patient, is, at that moment, not a doctor.

This strict account of *techne* is strict because it forces us to abandon common-sense interpretations of what it means to have a job. In ordinary speech we would speak of *technai* as if they belong to people – a doctor is a doctor because it is what she does. The strict account considers doctors as doctors only insofar as they are acting as doctors: it views the worker from the perspective of that which makes her a worker. This means that, rather than understanding the *techne* within the context of personal motivations belonging to the worker, the account will only consider the worker insofar as she is motivated by the *techne*. In Thrasymachus' first statement, which is controlled by the strict sense, this focussing has a temporal sense. He will consider the worker to be a worker only when she is actually working and is under the discipline of the *techne* (340e). So no practitioner of a *techne* ever makes a mistake *qua* practitioner. Since a ruler who makes a mistake is not a ruler in the strict sense, the laws they enact when mistaken are not laws in the strict sense either and, therefore, there is no compulsion for them to be obeyed.

[196] John Beversluis, *Cross-Examining Socrates: A Defense of the Interlocutors in Plato's Early Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 228.

Here Socrates agrees with Thrasymachus that ruling is a craft or skill (*techne*), and that a real ruler makes no mistakes. Thus Socrates agrees with Thrasymachus' qualification of his position and at this point *P* remains intact. This is because an expert has full knowledge and a mistake would be a failure of that knowledge. Socrates then presents the Craft Argument (341c-342e) which can be summarised as follows:

i. Every craft has its distinctive end, which is to serve the good of its subject matter (what the craft is about).
ii. Real experts serve the good of the craft's subject matter. Real craft or skill is not self-interested but other-interested.
iii. Ruling is a craft.
iv. An unjust tyrant, as in Thrasymachus' view, serves his own good.
v. So, Thrasymachus' ruler does not practise a real craft; he is not an expert.

Socrates uses this analogy to show that Thrasymachus cannot be right that justice is the interest of the stronger. The examples used by Socrates, a doctor and a ship's captain, highlight the point that the interest of the craft (doctoring or captaining) overrides that of the practitioner. A craft, such as medicine, aims to produce a benefit that will improve or advantage the domain over which it has control. Socrates can then conclude from the analogy that no one in any position of rule, insofar as he is a ruler, seeks what is in his own interest but what is of advantage to his subjects. As ruling is a craft it must have the feature that all other crafts have, namely, that it looks to produce advantage for, or improvement of, its domain.

Socrates focuses on the *kind* of knowledge a *techne* is and claims that it stands in a particular relationship to the object over which it is set. Each techne is meant to seek and to furnish what is of benefit to its subject matter (341d). The subject matter is deficient in some way which is why it needs the attention of the *techne*, but a *techne* is not deficient as its whole purpose is to attend to the advantage of the object. This relationship of seeking and attending to a need leads Socrates to conclude that the *technai* rule over and are stronger than that of which they are *technai*, and that this relationship carried to its logical conclusion shows that the ruling-ruled distinction, which Thrasymachus understood as occurring between two distinct groups of people within the *techne* of ruling, is a universal feature of *technai*. At this point Socrates considers that Thrasymachus' definition of justice is in jeopardy. If ruling in Thrasymachus' sense is only a particular species of ruling that belongs to all *technai* and, if this ruling is essentially concerned with attending to the advantage of what is weaker than itself, then a ruler, precisely insofar as he is in the possession of a techne, is not guided by his own advantage.

Several features of this argument are noteworthy. Thrasymachus appears to accept the idea, implicit in Socrates' questioning, that ruling is a craft and that, as such, it has to share the features of other crafts. The feature that Socrates emphasises here is the relation between the craftsperson and the object of that craft – the thing the craft rules over. So, medicine rules over bodies, and horse-breeding rules over horses, and shoe-making rules over shoes. In all these cases the principal aim of the craft is to produce or modify the things of which it is the craft. So the shoemaker rules over shoes and their materials in order to make good shoes, the horse-breeder rules over the horses to produce better horses. Thus for Socrates' argument to be effective, ruling must be a craft and it must have the same important features of the other crafts. Also implicit in Socrates' questioning is the idea that all the crafts are the same in these respects and this is where Thrasymachus begins his response.

He posits the examples of shepherding and cow herding as counter examples to the assumption that all crafts are alike in seeking the good of whatever they rule over:

> *Because you suppose that shepherds and herdsmen study the good of their flocks and herds and fatten and take care of them with some other object in view than the good of their master and themselves.*

He considers Socrates naïve to think that such crafts consider only that which is of benefit to their herds. While it may be the case that they are seen to provide care that would benefit the sheep and cattle, it is not the benefit to the animals that is their true concern. Their primary reason for taking care of their charges is to ensure maximum profit for themselves. The better the care taken, the better the final product, the better the price achieved. There is no sentimentality in farming as such, at least not as a primary concern: the sheep and cattle are treated as commodities, perhaps as precious commodities, but commodities nonetheless. If Thrasymachus is right, then since shepherding and cow herding are widely accepted as crafts, this would pose a serious challenge to Socrates' argument that *all* crafts work for the benefit of the patient and not for the agent themselves.

Socrates' responds to this challenge by distinguishing between the craft of shepherding and the craft of wage earning. His argument runs as follows:

i. Every craft has its own distinctive end. So, for example, medicine and navigation are distinct crafts whose ends differ.
ii. Wages can result from both medicine and navigation.
iii. So, wages are not the end of either medicine or navigation.

iv. So, wage earning is the end of a further craft, viz. the craft of money making.

By employing this argument Socrates can accuse Thrasymachus of not speaking about the shepherd or the cowherd in the same strict sense as he spoke about the rulers. Just as the doctor in the strict sense never promotes his own interest but that of his patient, so too the shepherd in the strict sense never promotes his own interest but that of his sheep. He now asks Thrasymachus if it is true that each *techne* differs from every other because of its unique function and Thrasymachus agrees. Thrasymachus also agrees that it is this function which enables every *techne* to provide its unique benefit. Socrates then claims that if the unique function of every *techne* is defined by the end (interest) at which it is aimed then every practitioner in the strict sense aims at that end in the hopes of producing that benefit. Just as the *techne* of the doctor should not be confused with that of the wage earner, which aims at collecting a salary, so also the *techne* of a the wage earner should not be confused with that of the shepherd, who aims at caring for his sheep. Thus it follows that the shepherd in the strict sense, the true shepherd, does care about his sheep. If he only cared about collecting money he would be a wage earner and not a shepherd.

So Socrates concludes that Thrasymachus' position(s) not only contains an internal contradiction, but also that it is untenable and that both the views (that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger and that justice is another's good) are refuted.

Commentary on the Arguments

Thrasymachus

George Hourani considers that there is no contradiction within Thrasymachus' position as he does not believe that the first statement, (P) is meant as a definition at all. He thinks that Thrasymachus only stated it as such because "it is more arresting in that form".[197] Hourani sees in the developed discussion between Thrasymachus and Socrates an argument based on empirical grounds of business and government, so that by the end of the discussion Thrasymachus' final conclusion, (which he considers is at 344c, that justice is the interest of the stronger party, injustice the interest and profit of oneself, a combination of steps a) and c) of Thrasymachus' argument),[198] is a "synthetic one. It is no longer even disguised as a definition."[199]

[197] George Hourani, 'Thrasymachus' Definition of Justice in Plato's Republic', *Phronesis*, 7 (1962), 110–20 (p. 112).

[198] The argument is found on page ?

[199] Hourani, p. 114.

According to Hourani the evidence for this interpretation of Thrasymachus' position is clear from the progression of the discussion:

> *Thrasymachus starts with a bang by affirming that Justice is in the interest of the stronger, and he thinks he is defining justice, as Socrates had requested him to do. But it soon appears that behind his major assertion lies another one, which is more truly a definition, that justice is obedience to the laws. Socrates' dialectic soon forces him to modify this to 'obedience to those laws which are in the real interest of the stronger'. The later part of the discussion moves more and more away from any question of definition, and is about two closely related synthetic questions, whether justice (whatever it may be) is to the interest of the stronger, and whether justice or injustice is more profitable to oneself. The definition of justice is left in suspense to be resumed later by Socrates as a necessary basis for providing that justice is more profitable.*[200]

Thus for Hourani, Thrasymachus is led to his final position through the tactical manoeuvring of Socrates' questioning. His actual definition presents a legalist position that he is then forced to abandon to accommodate a discussion on crafts and wage-earning. This is the reason he ends up apparently presenting an immoralist stance, but for Hourani, this is never intended to be a definition of what justice is for Thrasymachus, but is, rather, a consequence of the Socratic approach.

Annas disagrees and insists that Thrasymachus is not led *into* confusion but is led *from* a muddled state to a more precise stance. She also does not consider that Thrasymachus is presented as changing his mind but rather that he presents the view that justice has a real existence and is embodied in laws and institutions but that anyone with any sense will see that it is a bad thing to conform to it.

> *The conventionalist tells us that justice is not what we think it is, the immoralist tells us it is exactly what we think it is but we are wrong to think it is a virtue – there is nothing admirable about it.*[201]

[200] Hourani, p. 120.

[201] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 37.

She agrees with Hourani that Socrates is forcing Thrasymachus but she does not think that Thrasymachus is forced into a conflict between his two statements: that justice is in the interest of the stronger and that to be just is to obey the laws of the rulers. The point that Socrates forces is whether Thrasymachus assumes that the ruler will always be the stronger. She considers that Socrates is making Thrasymachus choose between tying justice to what is, at any given time, actually in force and legal, so that the ruler is always identified with the stronger party, or that he is not primarily concerned with a numerical identity between rulers and the stronger and that his focus is not with ruling as such but with strength. Annas suggests that Thrasymachus chooses the latter, that the ruler is only the stronger if he is the one with the greatest command of resources and power. She thinks that this is a reasonable assumption on Thrasymachus' part as a weak government is one "on its way out."[202]

Contra Hourani, Annas argues that Thrasymachus violently rejects the sole conventionalist option because when he is offered that escape route by Cleitophon he prefers to remain with the stronger (340b). This then leads him to the view that the stronger as rulers would make no mistakes at all as to what was in their interest. The Ruler *qua* ruler cannot make mistakes about his interest as once he does he ceases to be Ruler *qua* ruler. Strictly speaking no one who practises a skill (*techne*) makes a mistake as that would contradict his being i.e. a skilled practitioner. "The doctor or ruler who goes wrong *eo ipso* ceases to be a doctor or ruler in that respect."[203] Annas takes this to be a position that Thrasymachus is forced into but that he saves the consistency of his position overall by a verbal move that makes this true of all rulers and all practitioners of any skill. She sees this as evidence that Thrasymachus has essentially given up the idea that the stronger can be equated with the ruler.

Annas thinks that Socrates takes advantage of Thrasymachus' distinction between rulers and Rulers qua rulers to argue that each skill in the strict sense has its own object and sphere of activity and works for the good of this and its interest. While she admits that the argument itself is artificial she does concede that it serves its immediate purpose because the claim, that ruling is essentially concerned with the welfare of the subjects and not the ruler, provokes Thrasymachus to respond with, what Annas claims is, his true view of justice.[204] His response is that the role of a shepherd or ruler, while taking care of their subjects, remains basically

[202] Annas, p. 41.

[203] Annas, p. 41.

[204] Annas, p. 43.

exploitative and this allows him to reach his conclusion that justice is another's good and injustice is one's own good (343c). The just man acts in a way that provides benefit to others whereas the unjust man successfully serves his own interest. It is these unjust men that Annas says Thrasymachus considers the stronger.[205]

In light of this position Annas thinks that justice as another's good formally conflicts with Thrasymachus' original position of (*P*) that justice is in the interest of the stronger,[206] and that it provides evidence for the idea that (*P*) was made in too limited a context. However, she insists that underlying all his changes in wording runs the thought that acting justly is not in the agent's interest.

Beversluis argues that the thesis that justice always promotes another's good whereas injustice always promotes one's own good is presented at the level of "complete generality"[207], and that it is important to recognise that it comes with an important disclaimer. This disclaimer is that this thesis is not true of *all* unjust men but only of those capable of *pleonexia* (overreaching on a grand scale), and Beversluis suggests that it is this notion of *pleonexia* that binds Thrasymachus to his original position of (*P*). The strong unjust man can use trickery and force to gain more of what he wants and usurp what belongs to others. The ordinary unjust man does not have this strength and so must proceed cautiously to at all times appear just. "It is not fear of committing a wrong but of suffering it that prompts men to praise justice and to revile injustice."[208] However, since injustice on a grand scale is better and more profitable than justice, then justice, properly understood, is what promotes the interest of the sufficiently strong man.

Thus Beversluis does not consider that Thrasymachus has shifted ground at all but thinks that he remains faithful to the original sentiment expressed by (*P*). He does, however, think that Socrates believes that Thrasymachus has changed his position and this is why Socrates invokes the 'sincere assent requirement'. According to Beversluis this invocation of the sincere assent requirement is followed by an exchange which, in his opinion, is "unprecedented

[205] Annas, p. 43.

[206] Here Annas is not alone see also AC Cross and AD Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 41, who consider that this new assertion is inconsistent with Thrasymachus' previous definition of justice as the advantage of the stronger. See P.P Nicholson, 'Unravelling Thrasymachus' Arguments in the Republic', *Phronesis*, 19, 210–32 (pp. 212–17). for a counter argument to this view.

[207] Beversluis, p. 232.

[208] Beversluis, p. 232.

and without parallel in the early dialogues."[209] When Thrasymachus asks what difference it makes whether he sincerely believes or not we expect Socrates to say it makes all the difference in the world because Socrates is meant to be able to examine the interlocutor's life as well as their thesis. However, Socrates says nothing of the kind and intimates that it makes no difference at all and he is willing to proceed if Thrasymachus believes or not. After this point Socrates employs the tricks that Thrasymachus had decried at the beginning of the discussion to lead Thrasymachus so far away from his original thesis that a demotivated Thrasymachus begins to respond in the form of a "yes-man" rather than as an active participant in the discussion.

Beversluis is convinced that Thrasymachus is not led to any contradiction or inconsistency. However, he does agree with Annas and Hourani that the way in which he is led through the discussion by Socrates is by means of false and invalid analogies and argumentation on the part of Socrates. It is therefore important to now examine the discussion in detail to ascertain just how Socrates leads Thrasymachus apparently from his original position (*P*) to his final conclusion that injustice pays and justice does not.

Socrates

Within the dialogue it is generally accepted that it is Socrates who is the cause of Thrasymachus' movement from the position of *P* to a supposed contradictory stance that justice is another's good. However, the tactics used to facilitate the journey that Socrates causes Thrasymachus to take are themselves subject to criticism. Annas finds Socrates' wage-earner argument "very artificial" and thinks his claim that every *techne* is practiced for the sake of some "proper object" is "absurdly optimistic".[210] Both these judgements are based on the fact that the account goes against our normal intuitions about why people work. Bloom also finds fault with the *techne* of wage earning claiming it is a Socratic "fabrication" and the basis for one of several "dishonest arguments".[211] While it is important to note that there are those commentators who find something valid in the arguments,[212] in general the arguments are perceived as weak.

---

[209] Beversluis, pp. 236–7.

[210] Annas, p. 49.

[211] Alan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 334.

[212] See especially J Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 41 who thinks the argument contains an analysis which is new and invaluable in itself." So too H.W.B Joseph, 'Plato's Republic: The Argument with Thrasymachus', in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by H.W.B Joseph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 15–41 (pp. 25–26). according to whom the

Both Annas and Reeve consider that at times Thrasymachus' arguments withstand or destroy the arguments that Socrates employs. They both see merit in Thrasymachus' argument concerning the advantages of injustice with Annas commenting that "the thesis that injustice pays is not after all far-fetched or unconvincing."[213] Reeve suggests that Thrasymachus' argument actually destroys the Craft Analogy and claims that "if we take the craft analogy seriously we end up supporting not justice but injustice."[214] They cite the fact that Socrates fails to understand these points as evidence of the failure of his argumentation.

Annas attacks Socrates' arguments saying "none of these arguments carries any conviction. They all seem to beg the question."[215] She thinks that Socrates puts forward a rather artificial argument to the effect that no skill or art includes the idea of doing well for oneself out of it. The possession of a *techne* positively excludes self-aggrandisement. No skill includes as part of itself the skill of making money as this is quite a separate skill. Thus rulers do not rule in their own interests, for if they get anything out of ruling they are not *qua* ruler. This idea of extreme altruism on the part of the ruler is, according to Annas, an artificial claim, and while she concedes that the basic point that regarding ruling as a skill is sound, ruling is not essentially exploitative, and in his desire to refute Thrasymachus, Socrates has overstated his case.

Sayers agrees with Annas that the wage-earner argument is mistaken and he insists that wage-earning is not a separate activity. Instead he suggests that doctors who charge fees are not performing a second activity over and above that of treating patients. Sayers considers that their work has become a commodity and as such its social and economic form has changed.[216] Beversluis agrees and is perhaps the most damning in his attack on Socrates' arguments against Thrasymachus, claiming: "As always Socrates argues with great confidence but his argument is open to several objections".[217] He sees three main issues with the Socratic argument: firstly, there

---

Socratic art of the wage-earner, although seemingly far-fetched, is in fact "profoundly important" and an anticipation of (what Aristotle calls) "the architechtonic art" of ordering one's life so as to achieve happiness.

[213] Annas, p. 55.

[214] Reeve, p. 19.

[215] Annas, p. 55.

[216] Sean Sayers, *Plato's Republic: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

[217] Beversluis, p. 234.

is no such thing as a distinct skill of wage earning, secondly, Socrates indulges in "sentimental imagery"[218], and finally, that the argument is logically flawed.

Beversluis states that there is no such thing as a *techne* of wage earning and therefore, *a fortiori*, no such thing as a wage earner. People do earn wages but they are not wage earners in the Socratic sense. He claims that the *techne* of wage earning is vaguely described as accompanying *bona fide technai* and that it is allegedly distinct but somewhat shadowy:

> *The distinction is a bogus one. Wage-earners are people who are paid for services rendered, but earning wages is not one of them. No sane employer has ever advertised for a vacancy of wage-earner. A person cannot be a wage-earner simpliciter.*[219]

The fact that doctors and shepherds earn wages for practicing medicine and caring for sheep does not show that wage-earning is a distinct *techne*, it merely shows that people earn money for work. Nor does it show that a practitioner of a *techne*, such as a doctor, practises two skills, one which enables him to heal, and another which enables him to earn wages.

Beversluis considers that Thrasymachus is right and that it is Socrates who is mistaken in thinking that shepherds care, in any ordinary sense of caring, for their sheep. He thinks that the plausibility of Socrates' claim depends on "sentimental images of idyllic pastoral scenes."[220] For Beversluis, Thrasymachus rightly gives no credence to such romantic stereotypes.[221] As Beversluis somewhat graphically comments:

> *One might as well claim that mallet wielding employees of slaughter houses and factory farms entertain benevolent sentiment towards the steers whose skulls they routinely smash.*[222]

---

[218] Beversluis, p. 235.

[219] Beversluis, p. 234.

[220] Beversluis, p. 235.

[221] It is important to note here that Terrence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 176–77 points out that Thrasymachus' claim that shepherds are more interested in profits than the welfare of the sheep does not undercut the proper end at which the techne of the shepherd aims, it merely underscores the possibility of abusing that techne. However, Socrates does not avail himself of this argument and rests his case on the techne of the wage earner.

[222] Beversluis, p. 235.

The third point with which Beversluis takes issue is that the argument can be faulted on logical grounds. If wage-earning is a craft, and Socrates does call it one at 346c, then wage earning is itself a counter example to the claim that no craft benefits its practitioner. The benefit provided by wage earning is the wages that the practitioner receives. Insofar as the wage earner collects a salary for practising his alleged *techne*, he is its sole beneficiary and from this it follows that the *techne* of wage earning exists solely for his sake and not for the sake of anyone else. Thus Beversluis concludes that the craft analogy and the wage earning argument employed by Socrates establish nothing.

Interim Conclusion

The discussion on interest, according to the above analysis, leaves us in a position where both Thrasymachus and Socrates are deemed to be at fault, having failed convincingly to establish their positions. Thrasymachus is forced to move further and further away from his original position admitting inconsistency and contradiction into his views that cause his stance to become internally incoherent.

As regards Socrates, the artificial and absurd nature of his arguments is seen as the cause of his failure to convince Thrasymachus that his views are mistaken. Socrates appears to commit himself to two ideas: first, that wage-earning is a craft and second, that wage earning provides a benefit, wages, to its practitioner. Within these two ideas Socrates is said to unwittingly provide a counter example to his own argument. This causes a dilemma. *Either,* both wage-earning *is* a second craft and Socrates is right that shepherding seeks the advantage of the ruled (sheep) *or*, wage-earning is part of shepherding and Thrasymachus' counter example holds. If wage-earning is a craft, but no craft can benefit its practitioner, then there is also inconsistency within the Socratic position. Thus Socrates' own response is seen to undermine his craft analogy as a method by undermining the presupposition that all crafts are analogous in the requisite aspects.

What we are left with, it seems, is a position of extremes, where either self-interest is the sole motivation in human life, or complete altruism, and inconsistency. It is therefore no surprise that Book 1 is said to end in *aporia,* with Thrasymachus unconvinced and reduced to the position of an uninterested 'yes-man' and Socrates bemoaning the fact that they have yet to achieve a clear and precise definition.

Analysis

Based on the analysis set out above, it is easy to see why commentators generally pay so little regard to Thrasymachus' position on justice and interest, and, as a consequence, attach

little importance to Book I with respect to the determination of justice within the *Republic*. The second half of this chapter will show that this widespread dismissal of Thrasymachus' position is unsound and that, when considered with the, equally heterodox, position established in the previous chapter regarding strength, there are increasingly cogent reasons for regarding Book I as central to Plato's position on justice.

The structure of what follows will continue many of the same lines of argument as those discussed in Chapter Four, but will also, using a detailed analysis of the above discussion of interest as a catalyst, seek to rehabilitate Thrasymachus' position and start to prepare the ground for the consolidation of a number of the important findings from previous chapters. This will in turn serve as a preface to the *noetic* account of justice and the wider conclusions regarding the *Republic* that will be developed in Chapter Six. I will, therefore, by way of introduction, firstly set out the main conclusions that I intend to draw in this chapter and outline the tools, arguments and components that will be examined and utilised in the detailed analysis and consolidation that then follows.

From the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus regarding interest I intend to draw the following main conclusions. I will show that neither Socrates nor Thrasymachus, when evaluated in the round, are acting in the unintelligent or inconsistent way in which they have been depicted by commentators. In fact, just as in the discussion on strength in Chapter Four, there is clear evidence from the sophistication of the arguments and positions employed, particularly by Thrasymachus, to support the idea that the dialogue is, in fact, being conducted at cognitive level 3, rather than the implicit assumption made by most commentators that little more than level 2 cognitive ability is being displayed. This is a key reconceptualization of the individual's abilities which, in turn, sheds a different light on the specific arguments employed by both Thrasymachus and Socrates, as well elevating the role of the dialogue in the discussion of justice and the *Republic* more generally. The detailed analysis that follows shows that, as far as the specific arguments offered by Thrasymachus and Socrates are concerned, the apparent inconsistencies or contradictions, taken as read by commentators who regard the participants as not far from bumbling fools, can be resolved and, indeed Thrasymachus can be seen to be remarkably steadfast in the face of Socratic inquiry, presenting a consistent position until he finally loses interest in frustration.

However, although the resulting clarification rehabilitates both Thrasymachus and Socrates/Plato, it necessarily (given that Thrasymachus is at Level 3, as indeed is Plato's intended audience) does not produce a final answer. Instead the Level 3 discussions in Chapters

4 and 5, whilst refining the definition of justice, are ultimately necessarily constrained by the cognitive abilities in play and, to the discerning reader at least (and possibly to the participants), demonstrate the need for the Level 4 *noetic* solution to come, highlighting the probability that the entire dialogue has been orchestrated by Plato to show that the Level 3 discussion has gone as far as it can go. Thrasymachus is butting up against the glass floor of the *noetic* Level above, but, because of his inherent cognitive limitations, is unable to express or attain it. This will underline the importance of the developmental conception of the Divided Line, argued for in Chapter 2.

A key aspect of the analytic strategy employed in what follows consists in the examination of the key propositions in play. In particular, I will clarify more formally the key positions articulated by Thrasymachus: not only P, about which we have heard much, but also two further elements, which I will call P^1 and 'the addendum', which were contained in Thrasymachus' original argument but which were not clearly individuated in the orthodox account and the commentators' analysis. By doing so, sense will be made of Thrasymachus' dogmatic adherence to what appears to be an inconsistent position by understanding that the three constituent parts are not in conflict and, instead, represent (respectively) instrumental (P) and intrinsic (P^1) principles, and empirical or contingent positions. Key to establishing this is the utilisation of the distinction made by Plato between intrinsic (P^1) and instrumental (P) principles. These distinctions, and the conclusions they enable, are further bolstered by an understanding and analysis of the semantic range of the key term chosen by Plato for interest, *sumpheron*.

Let us now analyse Thrasymachus' core argument. The reader will recall that the 'vanilla' representation of the argument set out earlier is as follows:

a) The assertion of the formula *P* that 'justice is the interest of the stronger' (338c-d), leads to his explanation that,
b) In each type of government the rulers enact laws that are designed to benefit themselves and as justice "is the same thing in all states, namely the interest of the established government; and government is the strongest element in each state" (338e-339a), then the stronger are to be identified with the rulers or the government.
c) As those stronger introduce the laws to be of benefit to themselves, and it is just for the weaker to obey those laws, serving the interests of their rulers, then justice becomes "namely the interest of the stronger party or ruler, imposed at the expense of the subject who obeys him" (343c). Thus Justice is 'another's good' (343c), and bad for

oneself as "the just man always comes off worse than the unjust" (343d). This being the case then it pays better to be unjust – especially on a grand scale. The bigger the injustice the greater the benefit to self, "when a man succeeds in robbing the whole body of citizens and reducing them to slavery, they forget ugly names and call him happy and fortunate" (344c). So injustice or immorality is good for oneself then

d) 'a moral (just) person is worse off than an immoral (unjust) one" (343d), and so it would be more beneficial to practice injustice as 'a life of crime is better than a life of integrity' (347e).

What commentators principally concern themselves with within this argument is the principle that I call P (that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger) and with, what they read as, a conflicting principle that presents an immoralist position (c)/(d). While they make comments on the idea that justice is another's good, they do not consider it to be the principle under discussion, only that it leads to the real principle of the immoralist stance – that injustice is admirable.

I will argue instead that the argument should be read as containing two principles, P (justice is the interest of the strong), P^1 (justice is another's good) and what appears on the face of it to be a third principle (injustice is admirable) but which is, in fact, an empirical generalisation attached as what I refer to as an 'addendum'. Commentators do, in fact, identify the three elements but they play down the importance of P^1 and elevate the addendum to the status of a principle. My position regarding the elements will be as follows:

- The content of P is common ground between myself and the commentators, but the nature of the principle, crucially, is instrumental.
- P^1, however,, although its content is largely not a matter of dispute between commentators and myself, is the crucial principle and represents the intrinsic nature of Justice.
- The addendum is not a principle but is instead an empirical generalisation describing the then current state of affairs in the country, and it is the reading of this observation as a statement of principle that causes much of the apparent incompatibility noted by commentators.

In order to make the case for P^1 it will be necessary to step outside the four clauses of the argument to find support in an interchange between Glaucon and Socrates at the beginning of Book II (357b-d), and a restatement of Thrasymachus' position by Adeimantus (367c). By doing this I can show that what appears to be a throwaway statement by Thrasymachus, that:

"justice or right is really what is good for someone else" (343c), is actually central, not only to Thrasymachus' position, but to the notion of justice in the *Republic* more generally.

The discussion of the text and the commentators' interpretations above exposed what, on the face of it, is both a confused and confusing picture. At the heart of the problem appears to be Thrasymachus' apparent support, at various stages of his argument, for the idea that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger (P), and that justice is another's good (P^1). If both principles were in play, as they would have to be if one wished to maintain that Thrasymachus was consistent throughout the dialogue, it is not clear how one might completely reconcile the implications of combining an axiom (P) that privileges a particular community (the strong) over others (the weak) with one (P^1) that explicitly seeks to serve the interests of the others.

Admittedly, consistency is not an issue if only the position of the weak is considered. From the perspective of such a community the strong are the "other", and so, in their aim to satisfy the interests of the strong, P^1 and P are consistent. However, P and P^1 are intended to have general applicability, and, looked at from the position of the strong rather than the weak, the inconsistency between P and P^1 is immediately apparent. From such a perspective the "other" is the weak (the vast majority), and so it seems impossible to serve both P^1, which requires the interests of the weak to be the goal, and P, which gives priority to those of the strong.

Those wishing to defend consistency between the two propositions might suggest that the issue stems from an inaccurate understanding (by commentators) of the meaning of the term "other" which was prevalent at the time. However, examination of the contemporaneous usage of the term indicates that this is unlikely to be a profitable avenue of argument. The notion of the "other" is, perhaps, most clearly seen in the work of Euripides, a contemporary of Plato. In his play *Medea*, the other is a recurrent theme that is used to suggest those who are not like an individual or a group, likeness or otherwise thus being the determinant of belonging or otherness respectively. Applied to P and P^1, it seems clear that no amount of straining of interpretation will enable the weak and the strong to be seen as "like" each other, and so this potential strategy fails. P and P^1, therefore appear to be inconsistent.

However, this is not the case if an important and relevant distinction utilised by Plato elsewhere in the *Republic* is employed, one which distinguishes between intrinsic goods and instrumental goods. In Book II of the *Republic* immediately after the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus, Glaucon continues on the theme of justice and asks Socrates about different kinds of goods:

> *Tell me, do you agree that there is one kind of good which we want to have not with a view to its consequences but because we welcome it for its own sake? For example, enjoyment or pleasure, so long as pleasure brings no harm and its only result is the enjoyment* it brings?
>
> *Yes, that is one kind of good.*
>
> *And is there not another kind of good which we desire, both for itself and its consequences? Wisdom and sight and health, for example, we welcome on both grounds.*
>
> *We do. I said.*
>
> *And there is a third category of good, which includes exercise and medical treatment and earning one's living as a doctor, or otherwise. All those we should regard as painful but beneficial; we should not choose them for their own sakes but for the wages and other benefits we get from them?* (357b-d).

Glaucon is here recognising a distinction between an intrinsic good, worthwhile for its own sake and representing an ideal target, and an instrumental good, not worthwhile in itself, but valuable because it enables or leads to an intrinsic good. This distinction is of crucial importance for the interpretation that I am going to take in ascribing an intrinsic and an instrumental aspect to Platonic Juctice. Indeed, Glaucon and his brother Adeimantus hold Socrates to account at the beginning of Book II. Restating the Thrasymachean position that "justice is another's good, the interest of the stronger party " (367c), they then charge Socrates with the task of proving that justice is good in itself and because of the benefits it brings:

> *Prove to us therefore, not only that justice is superior to injustice, but that irrespective of whether gods or men know it or not, one is good, and the other evil because of its inherent effects on its possessor (367e).*

If we stand back at this point we can see that this challenge is the impetus for the response from Socrates in Books II-X, that documents the establishment of *Kallipolis* and its ideal ruler. But also it becomes clear that the challenge itself has come about *because* of the exchange on justice between Socrates and Thrasymachus, that initially identifies the intrinsic and instrumental components of justice.

Thus *P* expresses the instrumental good in that it provides the means by which the virtue of justice can be achieved – it is necessary, according to Thrasymachus, that the interests

of the strong are served in order for the just outcome expressed by P^1 to be realised because it is only the strong who have the means to effect such a goal. Construed in this way there seems no reason why *P* and P^1 should not be consistent. Whilst it is not yet clear how the apparent practical difficulty of aligning the interests of the strong and weak might be achieved (this will turn on the intrinsic nature of "interest" discussed below), the *a priori* conclusion of inconsistency reached by commentators looks unsafe.

What then are we to make of the addendum, interpreted as an immoralist position, that injustice is one's own good and that this is the generally admired position? The distinction between instrumental and intrinsic goods does not seem to help here: the addendum is clearly inconsistent with both *P* and P^1. It also seems clear, however, that this addendum is not actually a 'position' regarding the ideal of justice at all but, rather, an (accurate) empirical observation concerning how things generally are in the world, at least at the time of Thrasymachus. Much like Thrasymachus' use of the observation of all types of government to find what can be seen as the 'same', he is here again observing how the world is and, in this case, how greater power seems to lead to greater injustice as the powerful pursue and seek to maximise their own ends, and even are admired and applauded for so doing by the citizenry, a citizenry who would do just the same if they were in a position to do so: "for of course those who abuse wrongdoing and injustice do so because they are afraid of suffering from, not of doing it" (334c). The evidence - based nature of the generalisation is clearly seen in the text when Thrasymachus says:

> *You can see it most easily if you take the extreme of injustice and wrongdoing, which brings the highest happiness to its practitioners and plunges its victims and their honesty in misery – I mean of course tyranny (344a).*

If the addendum is a challenge, then, it is an empirical challenge to the instrumental principle (*P*) that justice will be achieved by serving the interest of the strong, rather than the proposal of a further principle (P^2) involving an immoralist position with regard to the nature of justice. Of course, given such empirical evidence, the earlier conclusion that P and P^1 are consistent may turn out to be something of a *pyrrhic* victory if more cannot be said about how the instrumental principle P might be discharged or conceived so as to overcome the clear tendencies of humans evident in the empirical world, since P appears to deliver in practice (which is where *instrumental* principles really count) the opposite of what is required. I will return to this challenge in the next paragraph, but it at least seems clear that Thrasymachus is not advocating an immoralist position, even if, as he observes, the world generally appears to

be acting as if one were in play, and his position regarding the consistency of P and P^1 remains valid.

And, if we analyse the distinction that Thrasymachus maintains in the face of strong objections from Socrates between rulers and Rulers, or more generally that between practitioners and those operating *qua* practiotioners, we can start to see how this stance may serve to resolve Thrasymachus' overall position. The addendum's empirical description of the way in which justice appears often to operate in practice in the world is not a failure of the principles P and P^1 – instead, it is a clear failure of a ruler to operate as a Ruler. The principles that Thrasymachus holds to are premised on the strong (or rulers) operating as they should, not as they often do. Of course, this leaves open the question of how justice is to be achieved, but it makes it crystal clear that it is a necessary condition for such an end state to obtain that the role of the ruler is being properly discharged. This places huge weight on the competence of the ruler, and the addendum is again helpful to Plato's overall cause in pointing out how few humans, finding themselves in ruling positions, can act appropriately. This will in turn place an absolute premium on the cognitive capability of the ruler if the proposed framework for the establishment of justice is to work, but, as we will see in Chapter Six, Plato has an answer for this. For now, though, we can see why Plato, speaking through Thrasymachus, held out for this crucial distinction.

In addition, the discussion of wage earning and its relation to crafts patterns well with and supports the notions of intrinsic and instrumental goods underpinning the distinction between P^1 and P, as well as their consistency. Thrasymachus is able to show that, the doctor (the stronger) serves the interest of the patient (the other) (the intrinsic good – P^1) at the same time as serving her own interest (but, crucially as an *instrumental* good – *P in order to bring about* P^1) through payment for the services. So long as the doctor is operating *qua* doctor, there is no inconsistency between her being paid and her serving the interest of her patient.

This consistent picture is further supported by the language employed by Plato, just as it was in Chapter Four. Here the focus is on the particular term that he chooses (and I will show in what follows it is clearly a deliberate choice) for "interest". In the previous chapter, a semantic analysis of the crucial term "strength" was pivotal in justifying both the reading proposed and added further weight to the evidence in support of Thrasymachus' cognitive ability being clearly at Level 3. So far as this chapter and "interest" is concerned, the specific term bears less weight because other factors clearly establish Thrasymachus as operating at Level 3. Nevertheless, the use of *sumpheron*, rather than any of the other terms that cover a semantic range that includes

benefit, profit or interest, is telling. Remember that at the beginning of the discussion Thrasymachus asks Socrates to tell him what justice is but prohibits the use of certain terms: "Do not tell me that it is duty, nor that it is usefulness (*ōphelimon*, ὠφέλιμον), nor that it is, profit (*lusiteloun*, *λυσιτελοῦν*), nor that it is gainful (*kerdaleon*, κερδαλέον), nor that it is interest (*sumpheron*, συμφέρον)" (336d). However, out of these four prohibited terms concerning advantage both Thrasymachus and Socrates make a deliberate choice to utilise *sumpheron* when considering interest in relation to justice. What is it about the term *sumpheron* that distinguishes it from the other terms and renders it more fitting to both Thrasymachus' and Socrates' meanings?

A brief examination of the three other terms demonstrates that they have a much narrower focus than *sumpheron*, and also that they, rather than the actual term chosen by Plato, would have been more aptly aligned with the reading of interest that, according to commentators, Thrasymachus is meant to be conveying, commentators generally having pigeonholed Thrasymachus' cognitive capabilities at Level 2. We know that *ōphelimon* is translated as "being useful"[223] and *kerdaleon*[224] as "being gainful or profitable", but it is *lusiteloun*[225] that is most enlighhtening. This term, connected to "paying dues" also carries with it the implication that within this payment there is "profit for me". So it would seem that, were Thrasymachus really inferring that justice is concerned solely with benefitting oneself (as the addendum is generally taken to mean), then he would have employed *lusiteloun.* But he does not. He chooses a term with a much wider semantic range.

Utilising Liddell and Scott and their survey of the usage of the term is illuminating and provides two interesting insights that support, repectively, the idea that Plato, through Thrasymachus, is pushing the boundaries of the level 3 cognitive capabilities in play, as well as the possibility of reading P^1 instrumentally.[226] So far as the former is concerned, they identify the most common usage of the term as one which is to be understood as a gathering together or a harmony of unity. This contrasts markedly with the narrower meanings of the other three terms and makes it clear that the notion of interest is to be construed far more fundamentally,

[223] Liddell and Scott, 'ὠφέλιμον', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944.

[224] Liddell and Scott, 'κερδαλέον', *The Greek Lexicon*.

[225] Liddell and Scott, 'λυσιτελοῦν', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944.

[226] Liddell and Scott, 'συμφέρον', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944.

and offers a glimpse of the noetic picture (to be discussed in Chapter Six) in which "interest" is defined holistically.

The instrumental connotations are licensed by the second most common usage of the term, one evident in the works of writers such as Herodotus and Aeschylus. Herodotus uses the term to state that "it did not do him any good"[227] and Aeschylus talks in terms of "it is of no use to him"[228]. These references suggest that both writers are employing the instrumental term in relation to the agent and neither make any reference to that benefit being material, for example, as wealth and power. Again, in addition to the instrumental, the wider construed interpretation of interest is encouraged, and, overall, this deliberate choice rather than, for example, lusiteloun, supports its being a choice of a level 3 mind. Thrasymachus is talking much less in terms of a specific person's or group's interest (a point that is clearly brought out within the discussion on qua practitioners) and instead is starting to widen out the understanding of interest towards a level 4 development.

The positioning of Thrasymachus' mind and cognitive capabilities is of the utmost importance, and I have maintained throughout this chapter and Chapter Four that one of the crusial reasons why commentators have failed to appreciate the significance of Thrasymachus' position is that they have failed to assess his cognitive capability correctly. I have offered significant, and I think convincing, evidence in support of his operating at level 3, and it would be fair to say that were I not able to substantiate this claim the plausibility of my wider position would be in serious jeopardy. I therefore think that it is important to stand back at this point in the chapter and remind ourselves of the cognitive abilities that Thrasymachus has deployed so far and the consequent degree of sophistication and discrimination that he brings to bear in his apprehension of justice, consistent with the general position taken in Chapter Two.

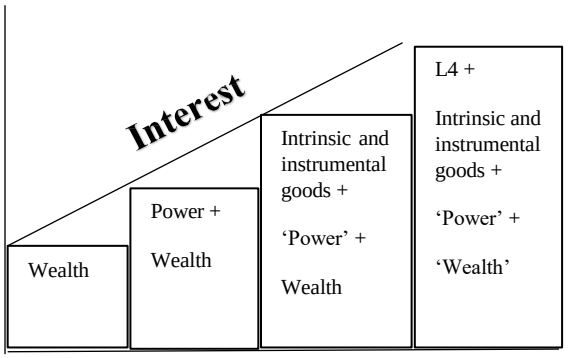
Some are similar to those highlighted in the previous chapter's discussion of "strength", such as an ability to form general principles and, a fluency with the more sophisticated interpretation of particular terms: strength in the previous chapter and interest here. In addition, though, Thrasymachus has shown that he understands the difference between means and ends, and can apply this distinction accurately as part of a wider argument. Further, he appears to understand the difference between an inductive generalisation formed from observations and an ideal principle. Of course, he is drawn into displaying these abilities, or

[227] Herodotus, *The Histories*, Second (Geoffrey Steadman, 2012), p. 9.37.

[228] Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 5.20.

"developed", by Socrates' sometimes irritating questioning and provications, but this progression, and the ability he exhibits, is very different from, say, that of the slave in the *Meno* or a number of other standard interlocutors. Thrasymachus could do none of this were he operating at level 2, and, as I said earlier, he even gestures, in his dogged adherence to the difference between ruler and Ruler, at some admittedly inchoate apprehension of aspects of a *noetic* conception of justice. This further confounds the typical commentator's judgement on Thrasymachus' ability and Socrates' role and, I argue, in doing so pinpoints one of the key reasons why the dialogue is misunderstood and largely disregarded in understanding the nature of justice represented in the *Republic*.

As a result of this overall analysis, we can now see that the sophisticated conception of justice reached by Thrasymachus is consistent, comprising both an instrumental (P) and an intrinsic (P^1) component, and that the addendum's empirical generalisation can be accommodated. We are now, therefore, in a position to populate the development of the Divided Line for the concept of interest in the same way as we did for strength:



The diagram illustrates the move from the level 1 position, which interprets interest merely as wealth, through to the level 3 interpretation that presents interest in relation to the two general principles of justice. This interpretation distinguishes between the two types of goods, instrumental and intrinsic, expressed through *P* and P^1, and it also places a more developed and sophisticated understanding upon the term 'power'.[229] The diagram also shows that while Thrasymachus' interpretation of the term is 'correct' for that cognitive level, there is still a need for all terms within the formula to be developed towards a Level 4 *noetic* understanding and it is precisely this noetic interpretation of strength and interest that I will turn to in Chapter Six.

[229] This topic was dealt with in Chapter Four.

Conclusion

Overall, the individuation of P, P^1 and the addendum, and their revised interpretation and classification have shown not only that Thrasymachus has been consistent, but also that his observations and conception of justice are both sophisticated and accurate. This framework serves as the basis for the *noetic* picture of justice and the conception of justice in the *Republic* more generally (to be discussed in Chapter Six). These findings in turn confound a substantial body of commentators' analysis and opinions of the dialogue and the participants, and offer the very real possibility of rehabilitating both Thrasymachus/Plato's conception of justice and their intellectual reputations.

More specifically the chapter shows the following main conclusions. The individuation of *P*, P^1 and the addendum, and the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental principles (P and P^1) and an empirical generalisation (the addendum) provide a richer and more sophisticated conception of the original formula for justice which, despite appearances to the contrary, is consistent both in itself and with the way in which injustice manifests itself in the world. This finding is important in the rehabilitation of Book I's conception of justice but it also has wider utility for the consideration of the nature of justice in the *Republic* more generally.

The cognitive level at which the dialogue between Thrasymachus and Socrates (and by implication the audience) is taking place is crucial. I have demonstrated that Thrasymachus, and therefore the dialogue as a whole, is clearly operating at level 3. Thrasymachus even, at times, can be seen to be demonstrating frustration in relation to butting up against the glass floor of level 4. Whilst he can only operate at level 3 it seems as though he can, nevertheless, and perhaps with the help of Plato, intuit the need to go further. Although the previous chapter (Chapter Four) also made a strong case for Thrasymachus' intellectual capability, contra commentators who position him at level 2, the evidence adduced by this chapter leaves little room for doubting that he possesses a significantly more sophisticated intellect than is generally allowed. Thrasymachus understands the crucial distinction between intrinsic and instrumental principles; he understands the difference between such principles and empirical generalisations, and is able to apply the latter to the world he is observing; he is able, as he was in relation to "strength", to choose precisely the appropriate and most sophisticated term for "interest". All of these capabilities and consequent decisions prove to be essential to both making sense of his initial formula and his response to Socrates. Clearly, what is to follow is beyond his remit (it is explored in Chapter Six), but my analysis shows that it is difficult to doubt that Thrasymachus has gone as far as any level 3 intellect could in clarifying justice.

I have argued that Socrates' role in the dialogue is developmental rather than confrontational or dismissive, contra the view of the orthodox commentators. His wage-earning and craft arguments certainly test Thrasymachus' stamina but they are also fundamental in drawing out and elaborating the crucial intrinsic/instrumental distinction and, explicitly, the notion of Ruler as opposed to ruler. I have further argued that the choice of the term, *sumpheron*, by Thrasymachus to capture the nature of "interest" is both sophisticated and, most importantly, allows for a wider notion of interest, and ultimately therefore justice, which will be crucial to the level 4 *noetic* conception that I will argue is the notion of justice that Plato subscribes to in the Republic.

Each of these conclusions is important in its own right, but each also reinforces the other and, when taken together, the interlocking mesh of their arguments and findings forms an extremely robust platform that should radically change the perspective in relation to Book I. It will be the work of Chapter Six to explore these implications more fully, but, at the very least, it casts significant doubt on the dismissive stance taken by commentators to Book I and, more positively, sheds genuine light not only on Book I but on Plato's conception of justice in the *Republic* as a whole.

Chapter Six: Towards *the* Just *Republic*

Introduction

In the preceding chapters I established the background and epistemological framework essential for the thesis. I then focused my research upon the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Book I finding that it did not conform to either to the term elenchus nor to the generally agreed purpose of refutation. It did, however conform to the progressive and cumulative developmental interpretation of the Divided Line I argued for in Chapter Two.

In Chapters Four and Five I conducted a detailed examination of both the terms found in the Thrasymachean formula (P), that justice was that which was in the interest of the stronger, and was able to determine that the evidence strongly argued for these terms being deliberately chosen by Plato because of the specific meanings that could be derived from their semantic ranges. This examination allowed me to individuate the components of the formula for justice: P, P^1 and an addendum from the dialogue. I demonstrated that these elements represented the instrumental (P) and intrinsic (P^1) principles and the empirical generalisation, respectively, of justice.

In this chapter I will draw together the findings from all the previous chapters and present my conclusions, providing an interpretation of the formula for justice at Level 4. I will then revisit the issues encountered in previous chapters to assess whether my interpretation of Plato's notion of justice can ameliorate some or all of these concerns that commentators have raised. In concluding the chapter I will argue strongly that my findings suggest that Plato's notion of justice, as it is presented in the *Republic*, is, in fact, consistent and coherent, and that when justice is 'that which is in the interest of the stronger', is properly understood, the resultant state can be seen as natural and organic: a state where justice naturally exists, just as Plato said it would.

The Formula at Level Four

In Chapter Five I established beyond reasonable doubt that Thrasymachus, and therefore the discussion, was operating at Level 3, and that this aligned well with the developmental interpretation of the Divided Line argued for in Chapter Two. I also found that the terms used to denote "interest" and "strength" (discussed in Chapter Four) were deliberately chosen to present a sophisticated interpretation that allowed for a wider focus than other terms that were available, and thereby prepared the ground for the level 4 notion of justice to come. After a close analysis of the dialogue between Thrasymachus and Socrates, and of the terms

deployed, I argued that Thrasymachus identifies two principles and an empirical generalisation, P, P^1 and the addendum respectively. These principles demonstrate that Thrasymachus is utilising a crucial distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goods, a distinction that I argue is also required by the wider *Republic*. This distinction, along with the empirical addendum, enables the conclusion that Thrasymachus not only presents a coherent and consistent position, but also an accurate (for his time, and perhaps ours) empirical observation of how these principles can be abused.

According to the developmental interpretation of the Divided Line Thrasymachus presents us with a Level 3 understanding of justice that is correct according to the limitations of that cognitive ability. As such it would be a mistake to consider the discussion a Socratic failure, or as ending in *aporia*, as Socrates can be seen to successfully draw out of his able pupil the clearest and most sophisticated view of the single object Justice that is possible, given his cognitive level, which in turn provides the foundations for the final clarification at Level 4, where the *noetic* notion of Justice, the Form, is to be fully understood. The only 'failure' is that the dialogue has gone as far as it can go with Thrasymachus and the Level 4 meaning of justice, glimpsed within the discussion, must now be adumbrated without him. However, before the Level 4 *noetic* notion of justice is outlined let us first briefly recall what the interpretations of the two components "strength" and "interest" were at Level 3.

At Level 3 Thrasymachus understands "strength" as that which is excellent and admirable, concerned with, but not merely defined as, power. It is a strength that is exercised by the *qua* practitioner and holds within its meaning and application the intrinsic and instrumental components argued for in Chapter Five. The intrinsic element of strength in this Level 3 interpretation is the excellence of skill that engenders the admiration of others, and the instrumental element is the ability to apply that skill on a practical level. The Level 3 meaning of "interest" is the intrinsic understanding of advantage with the instrumental meaning of a gathering together of the many in unity. If we remember, from Chapter Two, that the level 4 meaning must incorporate the Level 3 then we have our basis for our understanding of the Platonic notion of justice, P and P^1 developed to a *noetic* level.

Thus the notion of justice argued for in the *Republic* must be concerned with the intrinsic notion of another's good and it must also concern excellence and the ability to bring about harmony and unity that will provide benefit for all, including the Ruler. This Ruler will be someone who has a mind at cognitive Level 4 being able to abstract principles from principles, in that he will not need to base his development on the empirical but can merely

advance from P and P[1] to reach their *noetic* meanings. This is not because the empirical is of no value to the Ruler but because that development from the empirical has already taken place in order to attain the meanings at Level 3. According to the intrinsic and instrumental distinction this intrinsic intelligence, demonstrated through a mind at Level 4, is only half of the picture of the *qua* practitioner of rule. This Ruler must also have the ability to bring about a situation of harmony and unity that will benefit all in order to produce Platonic justice. While this approach is coherent with the conclusions of the previous chapters it can only be a justified response if it can be validated by the *Republic* itself. Therefore, in what follows I will provide evidence from the wider *Republic* to support the view that Platonic justice concerns a relationship between strength and interest, as understood by a mind at level 4 and expressed through intrinsic and instrumental components. I will also show that the Philosopher Ruler of the *Republic* ***is*** the *qua* practitioner of Rule identified by Thrasymachus, a Ruler who will also conform to the intrinsic and instrumental distinction.

To establish the Level 4 meanings of the terms within the formula we must first remind ourselves of the level descriptors and functional capacities identified by the developmental understanding of the Divided Line. The reader will remember that according to my interpretation of the Divided Line there is only one object under scrutiny as the subject ascends through the levels, the same object at each section of the Line. This object is apprehended or understood with greater or lesser clarity and sophistication according to the varying cognitive abilities and their correspondent limitations. Thus the perception of an object is subject to a development of meaning where each stage of the development can be seen as an increment on the journey to a full understanding of what that object *is*. As there is no change in object it was also my argument that the key determinant of the degree of clarity with which that object is perceived is the perceiving subject's cognitive level, and it is vital in analysis that the initial focus of attention should be on the mind that is apprehending the object if we are to understand the significance of what is being perceived. By establishing the abilities and limitations of each cognitive level we ascertain how an object is apprehended or understood at each stage.

The Divided Line tells us that the top cognitive level is that of *noesis*, a wisdom that will bring with it completion of understanding of the object as the fully revealed Form. So the excellence that was identified at Level 3 becomes the excellence of wisdom, not just a 'knowing' but something more in line with the idea of *phronesis*, a wisdom that can apply what it understands. Thus the journey to the top of the Line illustrates a completion of knowing that is best explained with reference to the theory / praxis divide. If we regard the development through levels 1-3 as the development of 'knowing' in terms of 'knowing that', 'knowing how'

and 'knowing what' then we could be forgiven for assuming that there is a distinction between the theoretical and the practical, a distinction that Thrasymachus himself identifies within his principles P and P^1: P providing the theoretical understanding of justice and P^1 providing the practical means by which that situation could be brought about. However, if the journey up the line reaches a completion of knowing that builds upon the understanding gained from practical knowledge then it becomes clear that a Level 4 mind will understand that the distinction is false and, that without the theory the practice is meaningless and vice versa. Thus the noetic understanding will collapse the theory / praxis divide meaning that along with the acquisition of *noesis* comes the realisation that the theory entails the practice so that the theory becomes the praxis and the praxis becomes the theoretical. In short the knowledge does not dictate the action because the knowledge is the action. To maintain that there is a distinction, as Thrasymachus does, is to remain at Level 3, and, perhaps, Thrasymachus' limitation as a Level 3 interlocutor is that he is unable to move beyond that distinction.

In order to support this view we need look no further than the Simile of the Cave. The journey of the released prisoner is presented as one of stages of learning in order to reach the final stage of knowing outside the cave. Yet Plato is clear that the achievement of escaping the Cave is not the end for the released man as it becomes evident to him that he must return to his fellow prisoners in the Cave. Here I argue that Plato is implying that the very act of leaving the Cave is part and parcel of understanding the need to return, that is if the released prisoner is the *qua* practitioner of rule, the potential Ruler, rather than the berated philosopher who is content to "remain in the upper world, refusing to return again to the prisoners in the cave below" (519d). The potential Ruler would understand that what is attained outside the Cave is meaningless unless it is taken back and applied on the inside. Thus a Level 4 completion is not merely the escape to the outside world from the cave nor the acquisition of understanding gained from reaching the top of the Line. A true level 4 would only reach completion on return to the Cave, on the implementation of what has been achieved, the instrumental applying the intrinsic. Upon leaving the Cave the potential Ruler, the *qua* practitioner of rule, would recognise that enlightenment from the Form of the Good of what Justice is brings with it the imperative of return. The sight of the truth of what something *is* entails the need to communicate that truth to others or the truth is meaningless. As Plato himself says:

> *Society will never be properly governed either by the uneducated, who have no knowledge of the truth, or by those who are allowed to spend all their lives in purely intellectual pursuits.....the intellectuals will* ***take no practical action***

of their own accord fancying themselves to be out of this world in some kind of earthly paradise (519c).

With this endorsement from Plato in mind I am now in a position to present my conception of the Platonic notion of justice. My argument is that justice *is* another's good brought about through the implementation of that which is in the interest of the stronger, just as Thrasymachus said it was. However, the Platonic notion differs from Thrasymachus' in its level of sophistication and in its understanding that there is no real distinction between the two principles P and P^1. Wisdom entails the ability to bring about advantage for all and the ability to bring about advantage for all entails wisdom. Hence justice is concerned with the relationship between P and P^1 where the component terms within P are correctly developed to their *noetic* level and where P is understood to be a logical consequence of P^1 and vice versa. However, this is only part of the picture, as the state of Platonic justice can only be achieved if all the correct components are in place and the component terms of interest and strength can only be understood at Level 4 by a mind that can operate at that level. Moreover it is necessary that the theory/praxis divide is collapsed to provide a complete understanding of the intrinsic and instrumental elements of justice, an operation that could only be achieved by the *qua* practitioner of rule. Without this potential Ruler there can be no attainment of wisdom and no realisation that that wisdom brings with it an imperative to rule. It would seem then that if there is no qua practitioner of rule there can be no state of justice. It is the 'bringing about' that marks the completion of the journey – the implementation of justice and not merely the acknowledgement of the existence of an idea or form of justice. This being the case we must now consider who this *qua* ruler is intended to be and just what his role is in achieving this state of justice. There can be little, if any, argument that Plato considers this *qua* practitioner to be the person identified in the *Republic* as the Philosopher Ruler (or King) and as such we have a wealth of information surrounding this character.

Plato tells us that the characteristics required for a potential Ruler include "good memory, readiness to learn, breadth of vision and grace, and be a friend of truth, justice, courage and self-control" (487a). This list of characteristics combines to produce a mind that has the potential to "have a sufficiently full apprehension of reality" (486e). It is this combination of characteristics that, given the right education and environment in which to develop, will equip the potential Ruler to embark upon, and complete, the journey out of the cave and back again. The characteristics that will achieve the strength of wisdom at Level 4 that brings with it the "breadth of vision" to understand the entailment of the instrumental within the intrinsic and, therefore, to realise the imperative duty placed upon them. Thus we can now understand that

Platonic justice has three vital components, each necessary in order for a state to flourish and be just. These components are the intrinsic nature of P[1] that justice is another's good, the instrumental conditions of P, that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger, and the presence of the *qua* practitioner of rule, the Ruler. Without any one of these components the others are meaningless, they become nothing more than mere ideals, or situations that are susceptible to the abuse identified by the addendum, that injustice is one's own good, or a ruler who is content to implement the laws for his own profit and to the disadvantage of the many. However, when all the correct components are in place then justice itself is not only present and good but it is also its own reward. So the answer to "what is the benefit of justice?" becomes nothing more complicated than…. justice. The benefit of achieving a just society is the very fact that it *is* a just society for *all*.

Issues Revisited

I now return to the main concerns articulated by commentators and identified by my earlier analysis to see whether they can be ameliorated in light of this new interpretation of Platonic justice that I argue for. I will demonstrate how my recommended interpretation can not only address many of those issues but can also exonerate Plato's notion of justice from its criticisms and rehabilitate the ideal state of *kallipolis* that Plato argues for in the *Republic*.

The most damning issues traditionally associated with Plato's notion of justice were identified in Chapter 1 where I discussed the apparently disappointing notion of justice set out in Book IV. The reader will remember that I concluded that if the viewpoints of the commentators outlined in the chapter were correct then it would appear that "what we are left with" is not the concept of justice that Plato promised, and that substantial issues exist surrounding the argumentation for, and the application of, Plato's notion of justice in the *Republic*. Faced with such a finding it would seem that we must conclude *either* that Plato's argumentation is inept and his notion of justice is flawed, *or* that the commentators are mistaken in their interpretation and analysis of Book IV. I argued then that neither of these positions is correct. My aim was to show that it is the tendency of commentators to over focus on Book IV that is the cause of this apparent exhaustive disjunction. I argued that a reading of justice that does not principally depend on Book IV yields both a more robust notion that comports better with the *Republic* as a whole, and that it would allow us to return to examine Book IV in the context of that new reading, a task I will now undertake.

The issues that the orthodox commentary found with the notion of justice in Book IV were as follows:

- Taken in isolation Book IV presents an amoral defence
- The argument commits the fallacies of irrelevance and equivocation
- There is no connection between ordinary and Platonic justice
- The argument from analogy fails in its application and form
- It is dependent on the concept of minding one's own business which is contra any intuitive code.

As much of the criticism surrounds the city/soul analogy it would serve us well to examine that analogy once more, but this time in the context of the new interpretation of justice. If we re-examine the analogy in light of our new interpretation of the terms for strength and interest, kreisson and sumpheron, we can understand that the conditions under which a state would be truly just would be when the excellence of wisdom gathered all together in harmony and unity. But this provides us with only a partial picture in that it merely illustrates the instrumental principle P that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger. We must also add the understanding that the instrumental principle entails, and is entailed by, the intrinsic principle P^1 that justice is another's good. Consequently we have a situation where the citizenry is united in harmony for the good or advantage of all. Thus the shift from the city to the soul presents with the picture of the *qua* practitioner, the Ruler who has completed his journey of education through to noesis and back: the Ruler who understands the necessity to collapse the theory / praxis divide and the mutual entailment of P and P^1, an understanding that can only be achieved by a mind at cognitive level 4.

The analogy, then, can only be considered a 'failure' if the one who is interpreting it fails to recognise its connection to the intrinsic and instrumental principles and to the cognitive levels of the Divided Line. If these elements are ignored then the city / soul analogy cannot work as we would be faced with only part of the picture, the instrumental principle providing us with the means by which something can be brought about. Without the intrinsic principle and without the Ruler, the analogy would indeed appear to propose a tyrannical and amoral (if not immoral) picture of justice where the ruler inflicts his will upon the people in a position of superiority for no other purpose than his own profit

Hence the analogy does not fail, either in its application or form: it can only fail at the level of interpretation when it is not understood in the context of the level 4 noetic interpretation. The intuitive component of altruism, said to be missing, becomes the intrinsic principle of justice, the essential element of justice that *must* be brought about. Given that this is the case, it is difficult to conceive of this picture of justice as amoral. But what of the imperative to "mind one's own business", the order that has given rise to the view that the

Republic presents an ego-centric notion of justice? Under the interpretation of the intrinsic and instrumental principles it becomes clear that this order is not meant to indicate a selfish egocentric society where the leaders keep the people in line in an authoritarian manner. Plato himself states that he is not endorsing or advocating "the special welfare of any particular class in our society, but of the society as a whole" (520a). So "minding your own business" is best understood as "being who you are", doing what you do best in order to promote the harmony and unity of the citizenry. As a citizen you will then be assisting in the production of justice for all, including yourself. It is vital for this notion of justice that the Ruler himself is bound by this imperative and that in "minding his own business" he is getting on with his allocated role of leadership and guidance. It is important to note here that the role of the Ruler is just another role within the state in which the Ruler is perceived as a fellow citizen, one who will "share their labours and rewards, whether trivial or serious" (519d).

This new understanding of the analogy not only ameliorates the issues within the argument but also demonstrates that the Republic itself can be rehabilitated both in terms of the relevance and importance of Book I and, also, the ideal just society that the Republic purports to present.

With regard to Book I, it is clear from this thesis that without a detailed analysis of the dialogue between Socrates and Thrasymachus and careful observation and interpretation of the deliberate use of terms within that discussion, the crucial components of justice, P, P^1 and the *qua* practitioner, would never have been correctly identified. It would seem folly to suggest that Book I is unimportant or irrelevant to the overall message of the Republic. My thesis has demonstrated that without Book I there can be no possibility of a correct understanding of Plato's view of justice: not only would there be missing pieces in the jigsaw, there would be no picture from which one could even make a start. This is precisely the situation that I suggest has occurred within much of the traditional commentary. Through a dismissal of the relevance of Book I they have been left with the "smaller picture" of justice as it is presented in Book IV with no clues as to how it should look, how it should be applied practically or how it should function within the whole Republic.

While I am aware that there is much debate over the chronology of Book I, whether it pre or post-dates the body of the work in Books II to X, I believe I have made a strong case for its inclusion if justice in the Republic is to be understood correctly. Plato clearly considered it a necessary component of the overall philosophical project, and, regardless of whether Book I is pre or post the other Books, its presence is either Plato's initial foundational presentation of

justice – the seed that then develops and grows into the rest of the *Republic* - or, if it post-dates Books II-X then Book I is Plato (perhaps belatedly)providing the necessary information and clues to elucidate what follows.

M.M. McCabe has suggested that when studying Plato one would be advised to take "no word in vain". This is a sentiment that I not only endorse but have applied in my analysis of the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus, in particular in my analysis of the terms found within the Thrasymachean formula. However, I would go further and suggest that when studying the Republic, one should not only take no word in vain but also that one should never take one book in isolation. Each book is a necessary part of the bigger picture and the reader, like the Ruler in the cave, must make the journey beginning at Book I, advancing through the Book and then back again to Book I, to completely understand Plato's project for a truly just city. To jump in at a mid-way point is analogous to finding yourself halfway up the ascent in the cave with no clue as to where you have come from or what you are trying to find. Moreover, one could expand this line of thinking into insisting that one should not take one text in isolation. The extract from *Timaeus*, utilised in Chapter Two, highlighted that Plato continues lines of thought through various texts allowing for a more detailed and accurate account of his epistemology, metaphysics and politics.

Establishing the importance of Book I as the principal source of insight into Plato's notion of justice and reassessing the role of Book IV is crucial, however a number of other elements of the traditional critical framework were also isolated, analysed and criticised in the first three chapters of the thesis. The individual positions I established on these crucial issues were crucial in building my overall case and argument, and, at the time, I observed that, were I able to argue successfully for my wider position on justice, this would constitute further support for the particular stances that I had taken on these key elements. It is therefore important to revisit briefly these important building blocks of my final position. Perhaps the most important component amongs these comes from Chapter Two, where I argue for the single object. Whilst Chapters Four and Five adduced further independent evidence for my overall claim that justice is that which is in the interest of the stronger and all that that entailed, the 'single object' claim was an essential rung in the ladder of argument which led to that conclusion. Looking back now, the successful wider establishment of my overall position on justice can, in turn, be seen as a powerful transcendental argument for my position on the Divided Line. This in turn reinforces not only my specific argument for a single object, my wider conclusions representing a successful proof of the concept, but it also underwrites my demystification of the 'ratios'

paradox which had puzzled many commentators, demonstrating that the issues arose through a failure to interpret the Divided Line correctly.

Chapter Three demonstrated that it would be a mistake to look for any particular feature as a guide for the interpretation of a Socratic dialogue – the analysis of *elenchus* made it clear that no such essential element could be justified and that the single aspect that commentators seem to be united on, namely refutation, was not the case. I recommended that it would therefore be a profound mistatke to start the analysis of any specific dialogue with preconceptions about the method and intent Plato had in mind and that one should instead take each case individually, looking within the dialogue in the context for its meaning and purpose. This approach proved vital to the detailed analysis of the dialogue undertaken in Chapters Four and Five, and was then vindicated by the success of the overall conclusion which depended on this analysis.

Three further, more general but no less important, consequences follow from the successful establishment of my conclusions regarding Justice. The first of these is a significant rehabilitation of Plato as a consistently intelligent and thoughtful interlocutor, someone who had a clear idea of the notion of Justice for which he argued subtly and at length, despite a number of commentators' views to the contrary. My arguments also re-establish his reputation in a number of smaller areas such as the ratios and proportions of the Divided Line, contributing materially to a revised picture of Plato's contribution in these areas and to his general reputation.

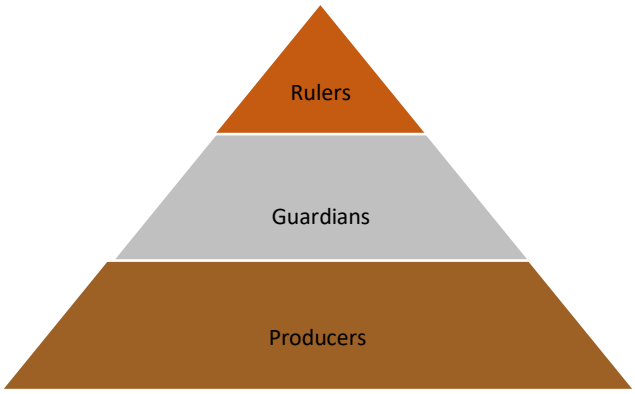
Secondly, whilst the spine of the thesis in Chapters Four, Five and Six argues, in my view, successfully for Book I's formula for Justice the subsidiary arguments, such as those noted above, in which particular positions are established, are shown not only to support the wider conclusions but are also supported by it and each other leading in aggregate to a robust and integrated framework of argumentation in which no major component must stand alone. This general robustness adds further to the plausibility of the conclusions.

Lastly, whilst beyond the scope of this thesis, two further avenues of potentially profitable research now recommend themselves. The first is the impact on the wider *Republic* and perhaps beyond of the notion of justice argued for here which researchers may wish to investigate. The second is the single object cumulative approach to the Divided Line which, having been successful as a proof of concept for Justice, may well prove of value in the analysis of other important concepts.

A Holistic Reading of the *Republic*

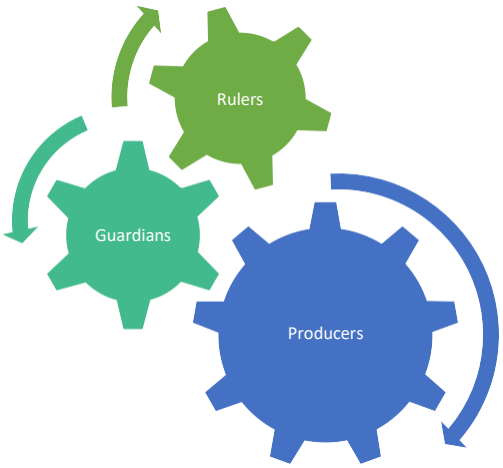
If the focus on Book I has led us to move to a holistic reading of the Republic then we can understand the Level 4 interpretation of justice holistically, in that it is not a purely intellectual abstract ideal, but that it must be understood with reference to the socio-political organisation of *kallipolis*. It would be a mistake to explain justice in terms of its impact upon the socio-political organisation because that would be to treat it as an external factor. Justice *is* the socio-political organisation of *kallipolis* and thus it is now possible to argue that Plato's depiction of the just city in the Republic would indeed be just both in its organisation and in its endorsement of a Ruler, the qua practitioner of rule.

The Republic is often vilified for its presentation of a just society being one in which there is a top down hierarchical system that encourages connotations of superiority and inferiority, a society based on making one group, or individual, responsible for the decisions of the many, severely restricting the freedom and choice of the citizens, a society that purports to present as ruler an ethical expert who will decide the states morality according to his own intellectual understanding of what is Good. In short, Plato's kallipolis is said to present an authoritarian, totalitarian dictatorship as the ideal society. A society that can be illustrated thus:



But this is not the picture that is presented in this thesis, and it is not the picture that would be endorsed by the Platonic notion of justice that this thesis has identified. In fact, the holistic picture of platonic justice I propose based on the evidence I have adduced depicts a social structure of harmony and unity wherein the role of the Ruler is just one role among many. Unlike the traditional view illustrated in the diagram, my picture is not one of a ruler who pontificates from on high to the people, but, rather, one where the Ruler is of the people, "getting his hands dirty" as it were in the daily experience of living as a member of a community.

I suggest that the picture of justice and, therefore, of the socio-political organisation of kallipolis is best represented in the manner below:



The diagram illustrates that each group is a vital component in the whole and when each cog minds its own business the machine of state runs smoothly. No cog is more important than the rest, but each cog is of equal value and worth. When one cog does not perform its function then the machine breaks down and justice is lost. This holistic picture of equal value and worth does not sit well with terms such as "authoritarian", "tyrannical" or "dictatorial" . Instead, it implies terms such as "equality of worth", "co-operation" and "fraternity". This would suggest that Plato's Republic is more akin to ideal socialism, ideal communism or even ideal democracy, a society in which "each man is a link in the unity of the whole" (520a).

There is, of course, the recognition that there is a need for a leader to establish the Republic and set the cogs of justice in motion, he is, after all one of the necessary components of the holistic view of justice identified by Book I. But this ruler is no tyrant, he is of the people and for the people. a person with a mind at cognitive level 4 who has completed the journey of education and understood the meaningless of abstract ideals unless they are properly applied. In Plato's time this journey could only be open to those who studied philosophy hence the title "philosopher Ruler", but this is not necessarily the case. If we refer to this person as the qua practitioner, the Ruler, then, theoretically, as long as her character encompasses the attributes Plato deemed necessary to equip her for her journey, and as long as she has the ability to reach cognitive Level 4, then she could come from any discipline. Even from the inheritor of a discipline that Plato himself criticised, such as politics. But the importance would be transcending the customary understandings of whatever the originating discipline were in order

to gain a harmonious understanding of justice. Overcoming such customary understandings would be equally important for an inheritor of Plato's favoured discipline: philosophy. Regardless of who the figure of the Ruler is, or her origin, the success of their position is in serving as a catalyst to establish kallipolis.

Once *kallipolis* is established and the cogs are turning in harmony then the society will become self-sustaining. This presents us with an image of a homeostatic society, a living, self-sustaining, organic system which according to biologists is the best definition of life that we have. What this suggests is that if the Republic were a natural, living, self-sustaining, organic society then it would present us with the best definition of society that we could have: the very purpose of Plato's K*allipolis*.

The task that Plato set himself in the *Republic* was to address three questions in order to provide guidance in finding the solutions. The three questions that motivated the Republic and permeate the fabric of each chapter were: "What is justice?", "How can we organise society in order that it is just?" and "How can we live in order that we are just?" This thesis has established that Plato successfully articulated responses to all three questions, providing the clues to the solutions within the framework of the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Book I. The resultant notion of justice presented by Plato, and identified by this thesis, is that according to the Republic, Justice *is* another's good, brought about through the interest of the stronger when that stronger is the *qua* practitioner of rule. Therefore, we cannot endorse the established traditions that read the *Republic* in a fractured and disingenuous way. To be attentive to the specific choices of language and argumentation in the *Republic* is to understand it in terms of this protracted project.

In the introduction to my thesis I stated that I would proceed with my research according to a layered approach. Within the project I have clarified the basic formula for justice and what it means and I have also clarified the framework in which I have been able to produce this notion of justice both in a positive sense, with regard to the Divided Line, and in a negative sense, with regard to the lack of any relevance for the term *elenchus*. I have re-presented Book IV and have shown how it can be integrated into a wider understanding of justice based on my solution, and I have drawn a number of conclusions and established a number of positions both in relation to the wider *Republic* and, even, Plato's writing as a whole.

What I now have is a strong and consistent notion of Platonic justice that makes it clear how Plato regarded the term. Given that the issues with Books I and IV undermined the credibility of Plato's opinion on justice, and that a great deal of that criticism now looks unsafe,

we have a solid basis for further research. It will be interesting for others to consider this revised conception not only for its own sake but also to examine how it stands up to modern theories of Justice.

Bibliography

Adam, J, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938)

Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Allen, Danielle, *Why Plato Wrote?* (Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

Annas, Julia, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Ausland, H, 'Forensic Characteristics of Socratic Argumentation', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (United States: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

Austin, J.L, J.O Ormson, and G.J Warnock, 'The Line and the Cave in Plato's Republic', *Oxford Scholarship Online*, 2003, Chapter 13 <www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/019283021X>

Balot, Ryan K, *Greek Political Thought* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006)

Barker, E, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1959)

Barney, Rachel, 'Callicles and Thrasymachus', *The Stanford Encyclopedia Of Philosophy*, 2017 <https://plato.stanford.edu/search/r?entry=/entries/callicles-thrasymachus/&page=1&total_hits=9&pagesize=10&archive=None&rank=0&query=callicles%20and%20Thrasymachus>

Beatty, Joseph, 'Plato's Happy Philosopher and Politics', *The Review of Politics*, 38 (1976), 545–75

Benson, Hugh, 'Plato's Philosophical Method in the Republic: The Divided Line (510b-511d)', in *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Mark. L McPherran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 188–208

———, 'Problems with Socratic Method', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

———, *Socratic Wisdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Beversluis, John, *Cross-Examining Socrates: A Defense of the Interlocutors in Plato's Early Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

———, 'Vlastos's Quest for the Historical Socrates', *Ancient Philosophy*, 13 (1993), 293–312

Blackburn, Simon, 'Knowledge and Belief', in *Plato's Republic: A Biography*, by Simon Blackburn (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), pp. 86–94

———, 'Might and Right', in *Plato's Republic: A Biography*, by Simon Blackburn (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), pp. 32–41

———, 'The Myth of the Cave', in *Plato's Republic: A Biography*, by Simon Blackburn (London:

Atlantic Books, 2006)

Blackson, Thomas A, *Ancient Greek Philosophy: From the Presocratics to the Hellenistic Philosophers* (London, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell (an imprint of John Wiley & Sons Ltd), 2011)

Bloom, Alan, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968)

Blyth, D, 'Plato's Charmides. Positive Elenchus in a "Socratic" Dialogue', *Classical Review*, 63 (2013), 60–62

Boylu, Ayca, 'The Powers Argument in Plato's Republic', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 2011, 107–24

Brickhouse, T, and N Smith, *Plato's Socrates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

———, 'The Socratic Elenchus', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (United States: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

Cahn, Steven M, *Classics of Political and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Cain, Rebbeca Bensen, *The Socratic Method* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007)

Cammack, Daniella, 'Plato and Athenian Justice', *History of Political Thought*, 36 (2015), 611–42

Candiotto, L, 'Aporetic State and Extended Emotions: The Shameful Recognition of Contradictions in the Socratic Elenchus', *Etica E Politics*, 2015, 219–34

Carpenter, M, and R Polansky, 'Variety of Socratic Elenchi', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University, 2002)

Chappell, T, 'The Virtue of Thrasymachus', *Phronesis*, 38 (1993), 1–17

———, 'Thrasymachus and Definition', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 18 (2000), 101–7

Chappell, Timothy, *The Plato Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996)

Coby, Patrick, '"Mind Your Own Business": The Trouble with Justice in Plato's "Republic"', *Interpretation*, 31 (2003), 37–57

Cohen, David, 'Justice, Interest, and Political Deliberation in Thucydides', *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica*, 16 (1984), 35 <https://doi.org/10.2307/20538809>

Cooper, J, 'The Psychology of Justice in Plato', in *Reason and Emotion: Essays in Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)

Cross, AC, and AD Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1964)

Culp, Jonathan, 'Who's Happy in Plato's Republic?', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 31 (2014), 288–312 <https://doi.org/10.1163/20512996-12340018>

Dahl, Norman, 'Plato's Defence of Justice', *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research*, 51 (1991), 809–34

Danzig, Gabriel, '"True Justice" in the Republic', *Illinois Classical Studies*, 23 (1998), 85–99

Denyer, Nicholas, 'Sun and Line: The Role of the Good.', in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 288–94

———, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Diehl, Nicholas, 'Socratic Film', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 74 (2016)

Dorter, Kenneth, 'Socrates' Refutation of Thrasymachus and Treatment of Virtue', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 7 (1974)

Evrigenis, I, 'The Power Struggle of Republic 1', *History of Political Thought*, 31 (2010), 367–82

Ferrari, G.R.F, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Fine, Gail, 'Knowledge and Belief in Plato's Republic', in *Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, ed. by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 215–47

———, 'Knowledge and Belief in Republic V', in *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*, by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

———, 'Knowledge and Belief in Republic V-VII', in *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*, by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Foucault, Michel, David Macey, ro Fontana, and translated by David Macey, *'Society Must Be Defended': Lectures at the Collége de France, 1975-76*, ed. by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (London: Penguin Books, 2003)

Geuss, Raymond, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)

Graham, Daniel W, 'Heraclitus: Flux, Order, and Knowledge', in *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy*, ed. by Patricia Curd and Daniel W. Graham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 169–88

Graham, Daniel W., *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy: The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Grube, G, *Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing company, 1974)

Guthrie, W.K.C, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971)

Hansen, Peter J, 'Thrasymachus and His Attachment to Justice', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 32 (2015), 344–68

Hartley, Christie, 'Two Conceptions of Justice as Reciprocity', *Social Theory and Practice*, 40

(2014), 409–32

Havelock, E.A, *The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1978)

Hayward, Cardinal, and Jones, *Plato: The Republic* (London: Hodder & Murray, 2007)

Heinaman, Robert, 'Plato's Division of Goods in the Republic', *Phronesis*, 47 (2002), 309–35

———, 'Why Justice Does Not Pay in Plato's Republic', *The Classical Quarterly*, 54 (2004), 379–93

Herodotus, *The Histories*, Second (Geoffrey Steadman, 2012)

Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan* (Middlesex: Penguin Classics, 1985)

Homer, and E V Rieu, *The Iliad (Penguin Classics Series)*, ed. by Peter Jones (New York: Penguin Group (USA), 2003)

Hourani, George, 'Thrasymachus' Definition of Justice in Plato's Republic', *Phronesis*, 7 (1962), 110–20

Irwin, Terrence, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Joseph, H.W.B, 'Plato's Republic: The Argument with Thrasymachus', in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by H.W.B Joseph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 15–41

Jowett, Benjamin, *The Dialogues of Plato Translated into English with Analysis and Introductions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1871)

Kahn, Charles H, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Kahn, Charles. H, 'The Meaning of "Justice" and the Theory of Forms', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 69 (1972), 567–79

Kennedy, J, 'Plato's Forms, Pythagorean Mathematics, and Stichometry', *Apeiron*, 43 (2010), 10–13

Kenny, Anthony John Patrick, *A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004)

Kerferd, GB, 'The Doctrine of Thrasymachus in Plato's Republic', *Durham University Journal*, 9 (1947)

———, 'Thrasymachus and Justice: A Reply', *Phronesis*, 9 (1964), 12–16

Keyt, David, 'Plato on Justice', in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. by Hugh Benson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006), pp. 342–55

Klosko, George, 'The Refutation of Callicles in Plato's Gorgias', *Greece and Rome*, 31 (1984), 126=39

Kraut, Richard, 'Justice in Plato and Aristotle: Withdrawal v Engagement', in *Plato and Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. by Robert Heinaman (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), pp. 153–67

———, 'Return to the Cave: Republic 519-521', in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul*, by Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 235–43

———, *Socrates and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Ledbetter, Grace, 'Rethinking The Elenchus', *The Classical Review*, 55 (2005), 426–28

Lesher, James, 'Parmenidean Elenchus', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

Lesher, J.H, 'The Meaning of "Sapheneia" in Plato's Divided Line', in *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Mark. L McPherran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 171–87

Liddell, and Scott, 'δικαιοσύνη', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944

———, 'κερδαλέον', *The Greek Lexicon*

———, 'λυσιτελοῦν', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944

———, 'συμφέρον', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944

———, 'ὠφέλιμον', *The Greek Lexicon*, 1944

Long, Alex, 'Refutation and Relativism in Theaetetus', *Phronesis*, 49 (2004), 24–60

Lukes, Steven, *Power: A Radical View*, Second (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Lukes, Timothy J, 'Teaching Wisdom to Interest: Book Five of Plato's Republic', *Political Science and Politics*, 42 (2009), 197–200

Lycos, Kimon, *Plato on Justice and Power - Reading Book 1 of Plato's Republic* (London: Macmillan, 1987)

Maguire, JP, 'Thrasymachus….Or Plato?', *Phronesis*, 16 (1971)

Matthews, Garteh, 'Whatever Became of the Socratic Elenchus? Philosophical Analysis in Plato', *Philosophy Compass*, 2009, 430–50

Matthews, Gwynneth, *Plato's Epistemology and Related Logical Problems* (London: Faber&Faber, 1972)

McCabe, Mary Margaret, *Plato and His Predecessors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

McPherran, Mark, 'Elenctic Interpretation and the Delphic Oracle', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press)

Miller, David, *Justice For Earthlings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

———, *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

———, 'Taking up the Slack? Responsibility and Justice in Situations of Partial Compliance', in *Justice for Earthlings: Essays in Political Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 206–27

Mitchell, Basil, and J.R Lucas, *An Engagement with Plato's Republic* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003)

Moore, Holly, 'Why Does Thrasymachus Blush? Ethical Consistency in Socrates' Refutation Od Thrasymachus', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 32 (2015)

Nederman, C, 'Giving Thrasymachus His Due', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 24 (2007), 26–42

Nichols, Mary P, *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate* (New York: University of New York Press, 1987)

Nicholson, P.P, 'Unravelling Thrasymachus' Arguments in the Republic', *Phronesis*, 19, 210–32

Novitsky, D, 'Thrasymachus and the Relativity of Justice', *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, 26, 11–30

Ophir, Adi, *Plato's Invisible Cities: Discourse and Power in the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Osborne, Catherine, *Presocratic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2004)

———, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy: Hippolytus of Rome and the Presocratics* (Baltimore, MD, United States: Cornell University Press, 1987)

Owen, G, *Logic, Science and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*, ed. by N Nussbaum (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1986)

Pappas, Nicholas, *Rouledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (London: Routledge, 1995)

Patterson, Richard, *Image and Reality in Plato's Metaphysics* (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing company, 1985)

Payne, Andrew, 'The Division of Goods and Praising Justice For Itself in Republic II', *Phronesis*, 56 (2011), 58–78

Planinc, Zdravko, *Plato's Political Philosophy* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co, 1991)

Pomerlau, Wayne, 'Western Theories of Justice', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013 <http://www.iep.utm.edu/justwest/#SH1a>

Popper, karl, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Third (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1957), I

Price, A.W, *Virtue and Reason in Plaro and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011)

Prior, William J, 'The Metaphysics of the Early and Middle Platonic Dialogues', in *Unity and Development in Plato's Metaphysics* (Kent: Croom Helm Limited, 1985), pp. 9–50

Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, Reissue (Boston: Harvard University Press)

Reed, RC, 'Euthyphro's Elenchus Experience', *Springer Science and Business Media*, 2012

Reeve, CDC, *Blindness and Orientation: Problems in Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

———, *Philosopher Kings The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988)

Rescher, Nicholas, 'On the Epistemology of Plato's Divided Line', *Logos & Episteme: An International Journal of Epistemology*, 2010, 133–64

Rice, DH, *A Guide To Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Roochnik, David, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's Republic* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003)

Ross, D, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951)

Rowe, Christopher, 'Socrates in Plato's Dialogues', in *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006)

Rowe, Christopher J, *Plato* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

Rowett, Catherine, *Knowledge and Truth in Plato: Stepping Past the Shadow of Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Runciman, W.G., *Plato's Later Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962)

Sayer, Sean, *Plato's Republic: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)

Schofield, Malcolm, *Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Sedley, David, *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Shorey, Paul, *The Republic of Plato* (London, 1937)

Sidgwick, H, *The Philosophy of Kant and Other Lectures* (London, 1905)

Smith, N, 'The Objects of Dianoia in Plato's Divided Line', *Apeiron*, 15 (1981), 129–37

Smith, Steven B, 'Plato on Justice and the Human Good', in *Political Philosophy* (Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 37–66

Solomon, Robert C., and Mark C. Murphy, *What Is Justice? Classic and Contemporary Readings* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1990)

Sparshott, F.E, 'Socrates and Thrasymachus', *The Monist*, 50, 421–59

Stern, Harold S, *Plato's Socratic Philosophy* (New York: Edwin Meller Press, 2002)

Strauss, Leo, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988)

———, *Studies in Platonic Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)

———, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978)

Sullivan, Roger J., *An Introduction to Kant's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Tait, WW, 'Noesis: Plato on Exact Science', in *Reading Natural Philosophy: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science and Mathematics*, ed. by David Malament (Open Court)

———, 'Plato's Second Best Method', *Review of Metaphysics*, 39 (1986), 455–82

Tarrant, Harold, 'Elenchus and Exetasis: Capturing the Purpose of Socratic Interrogation', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

———, 'Socratic Method and Socratic Truth', in *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006)

Taylor, CCW, *Socrates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Teloh, Henry, 'The Importance of Interlocutors' Charactersin Plato's Early Dialogues', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, 2 (1987), 25–38

———, 'The Isolation and Connection of the Forms in Plato's Middle Dialogues', in *The Development of Plato's Metaphysics* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981), pp. 100–146

Trabbatoni, Franco, *Essays on Plato's Epistemology* (Leuven University Press, 2016)

Vaidya, Jayprakash, *Ancient Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary*, ed. by Nick Smith, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell (an imprint of John Wiley & Sons Ltd), 2008)

Versenyi, Laszio, *Holiness and Justice* (Boston: University of America Press, 1982)

Vincent, Andrew, *The Nature of Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2004)

Vlastos, G, 'Postcript to the "Socratic Elenchus"', in *Socratic Studies*, by Gregory Vlastos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 33–38

———, *Socratic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Vlastos, Gregory, 'Degrees of Reality in Plato', in *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, ed. by R Bambrough (London: Routledge, 1965)

———, 'Is the "Socratic Fallacy" Socratic?', in *Socratic Studies*, by Gregory Vlastos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 67–86

———, 'Justice and Equality', in *Social Justice*, ed. by R Brandt (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962)

———, *Platonic Studies*, 2nd edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973)

———, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

———, *Studies in Greek Philosophy Vol 2: Socrates, Plato and Their Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997)

———, *The Philosophy of Socrates: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980)

———, 'The Socratic Elenchus', in *Socratic Studies*, by G Vlastos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1–28

Warren, James, *Presocratics: Natural Philosophers before Socrates* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007)

Welton, W, 'Thrasymachus v Socrates: What Counts as a Good Answer to the Question: What Is Justice?', *Apeiron*, 39, 293–317

White, N, *Plato on Knowledge and Reality* (Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing company, 1976)

White, Nicholas, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis, 1979)

Williams, Bernard, *The Sense of the Past: Essays in The History of Philosophy*, ed. by Myles Burnyeat (Princeton: Princeton University Press)

Young, Charles, 'Comments on Lesher, Ausland and Tarrant', in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and beyond*, ed. by Gary Alan Scott (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002)

Zuckert, Catherine, 'Why Socrates and Thrasymachus Become Friends?', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 32