

Summer 1983

## On Warriors and Artisans: The Case for Moral Virtue in Plato's Republic

John Patrick Coby  
*Kenyon College*, [pcoby@smith.edu](mailto:pcoby@smith.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.smith.edu/gov\\_facpubs](https://scholarworks.smith.edu/gov_facpubs)



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Coby, John Patrick, "On Warriors and Artisans: The Case for Moral Virtue in Plato's Republic" (1983).  
Government: Faculty Publications, Smith College, Northampton, MA.  
[https://scholarworks.smith.edu/gov\\_facpubs/42](https://scholarworks.smith.edu/gov_facpubs/42)

This Article has been accepted for inclusion in Government: Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Smith ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@smith.edu](mailto:scholarworks@smith.edu)

ON WARRIORS AND ARTISANS: THE CASE FOR MORAL VIRTUE  
IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*?

John Patrick Coby  
Professor of Government  
Smith College  
Northampton, MA

pcoby@smith.edu

Published in *Polity* (Summer 1983): 515-35.

## ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to determine whether, and to what extent, Plato's classic defense of justice in the Republic applies not only to philosophers, but to ordinary human beings--to warriors and artisans. The paper pursues this question by considering the benefits that accrue to the warrior and artisan classes from their submission to the rule of philosopher kings, as well as the benefits to spiritedness and appetite from their subordination to reason.

On Warriors and Artisans:  
The Case for Moral Virtue in Plato's Republic

I

In the first book of the Republic, and indeed throughout the dialogue, Socrates contends that justice is akin to art. Stated somewhat more familiarly, his thesis is that virtue, as an art, represents a form of knowledge, since it is clear that the technical arts utilize knowledge in order to accomplish their specified ends. In the context of Book I of the Republic, Socrates' argument is an attempt to befuddle Polemarchus who maintains that justice is benefiting friends and harming enemies (i.e., justice is the desire to help or to hurt without necessarily the knowledge of how to do either, or the knowledge of what truly constitutes a benefit or an injury, and of who is a friend and who is an enemy). At the same time, Socrates is responding to Thrasymachus' contention that justice is the advantage of the stronger. As a practitioner of the art of rhetoric and as one who equates strength with knowledge, Thrasymachus is all too quick in allowing that justice, or political rule, is also an art. For if ruling is an art, then like the other arts taken in their "precise sense," ruling is practiced for the sake of the ruled rather than for the sake of the ruler--for the weak rather than the strong. Thrasymachus grudgingly agrees that a true artisan, and hence a true ruler, benefits the object of his art. In the most extreme statement on this point of selflessness, Socrates asserts that "the man who is to do anything fine by art never does what is best for himself"(347a).<sup>1</sup>

Given the central argument of Book I that justice is or is like an



art and that the knowledge of art is placed in the service of others, it is hardly surprising that Book II begins with Glaucon and Adeimantus each demanding of Socrates that he prove justice to be good for the just man (and by implication that he prove art to be good for the artisan). Glaucon has "heard it argued" that justice is a compact (358e ff.), an uneasy compromise between the best life of tyrannizing others and the worst life of suffering tyranny at the hands of another. It is a compromise sufficiently unrewarding that it would never for a moment be respected were an individual armed with the "ring of Gyges," a device (presumably Thrasymachus' art of rhetoric) which bestows invisibility upon its wearer--hence release from shame, hence a tyrant's license to commit injustice. Adeimantus, for his part, requires that Socrates show justice to be advantageous in the soul of the just man (366e), and that he not rely for his proof on the external advantages of justice, some of which, such as the promise of divine favor, are known only by the contradictory testimony of the poets. The question which Glaucon and Adeimantus both ask, and to which the Republic is in effect Socrates' reply, is whether justice is good for the good man and whether justice is good for its own sake.

Before responding to the question as stated, Socrates first poses and answers the more fundamental question regarding the meaning of justice. And never does he respond in direct fashion, but chooses instead to proceed through an image. The city, he posits, is an image writ large of man; to find justice in the city is tantamount to finding justice in the human soul.<sup>2</sup> The upshot of this procedure is that when Socrates finally does come to answering the question, his remarks are perforce influenced by the political context he has created, such that the goodness of justice, as a question, is indistinguishable from the goodness of this supposedly just city. And

because Socrates, in the process of describing the city, identifies three distinct classes composing it, the goodness of justice comes to mean the goodness of the city for each of its separate classes: he obliges us to consider whether and to what extent the city he has founded benefits artisans, warriors, and philosopher kings, respectively.

In the attempt to define justice--this as a prelude to proving its goodness--the principal argument consists of a parallel between city and man. As the city consists of three classes, so, we are told, the human soul consists of three corresponding components: appetite, spiritedness, and reason. But within the city--supposing that we follow through with the parallel--there are whole men who are predominantly appetitive (the artisans), spirited (the warriors), or reasonable (the philosophers). Can it then be shown that the justice of this city benefits those of its members who by nature are defined as appetitive or as spirited? In other words, Is justice good for the man whose soul is not and cannot be that orderly composite of reason, spirit, and appetite? a man whose individual soul cannot parallel the hierarchy of the city with its three classes of rulers and ruled?

The philosopher king constitutes a special case; and although he is not to be simply ignored, the urgent question of the Republic, and of political philosophy generally, is whether justice is something good and choiceworthy for the non-philosophical, i.e., for the overwhelming majority of human beings. Glaucon, who speaks as a spirited and appetitive man (also as a "strong" man of uncommon ability--but never as a philosopher), wants to know if being just and obeying the law further his true interests. The complete answer to this question, as evidenced by Books V, VI, and VII

of the Republic, requires an account of the life of the philosopher. But Socrates is himself reluctant to provide this account, and in any event it constitutes a defense of justice relevant only to an insignificant handful. How does the Republic support justice or moral virtue for those naturally disbarred from philosophy?

In raising this question we have uppermost in mind the disconcerting fact that Allan Bloom, one of the most insightful students of the Republic, interprets Plato to say that the best way of life, aside from philosophy, is the life of the tyrant.<sup>3</sup>

## II

To defend the worth of moral virtue means to affirm the well-being and perhaps happiness (cf. 420b ff.) of the warrior class, for it is the warriors who represent and practice virtue most evidently; it means also to affirm the well-being of the artisans, insofar as the artisans periodically blend into the class of warriors.<sup>4</sup> Hence the origin and makeup of these two classes is the logical place to begin.

Socrates locates the first cause of man's sociability in physical need: food, clothing, shelter; and he sees these needs satisfied through the exercise of the technical arts: farming, housebuilding, weaving, shoe-making. The procedure is simple, straightforward, and sensible. Or at least it seems so until one remembers Aristotle's treatment of the same subject in Book I of the Politics. Aristotle claims that the first association is the family whose purpose is the satisfaction of daily recurrent needs (1252b 11-12) --much the same needs, presumably, that Socrates says

are satisfied through a community of artisans. Socrates ignores the blood ties and personal loves that make up the family (and later the village) in order that he might plausibly aver the primacy of knowledge in all human activity. Man does not begin as child, father, mother; but as a technically wise artisan who plies his trade for his own welfare and the welfare of his fellow artisans. Even this first city, the "healthy" city, or the "city of pigs" as Glaucon contemptuously styles it, is an abstraction and a suitable prelude to the "beautiful city" (527c) in which romance, marriage, and the rearing of one's own children are forbidden by law.<sup>5</sup>

The artisan is absolute in the healthy city because reason dictates that human needs be satisfied expertly, efficiently, scientifically. It will not do to have labor duplicated and clumsily performed by isolated and autonomous family groupings. Labor must be divided, for, as Socrates says, "...each thing becomes more plentiful, finer, and easier, when one man, exempt from other tasks, does one thing according to nature and at the crucial moment" (370c). With this quotation Socrates introduces the principle of ~~one man-one art~~, or the division of labor. In the course of the dialogue this principle of specialization is upgraded to the point where it serves as the definition of justice, and so satisfies a spiritual need no less than it does here a physical one. But its more immediate use is to pave the way for the warrior class. This class, absent from the healthy city but predominant in the succeeding "feverish" city, is justified on grounds that "it's impossible for one man to do a fine job in many arts" (374a) and because "the struggle for victory in war seem[s] to be a matter for art" (374b). Socrates discards the egalitarianism of the healthy city

and replaces it with the hierarchy of a class society because warfare is an activity the manifest importance of which requires "more leisure time than the other tasks as well as greater art and diligence" (374e).

But from whence does warfare arise? The easy answer to this question is that the desire for luxury causes war. Glaucon calls this desire conventional, seemingly because luxury is a "need" which human beings impose upon one another rather than have imposed upon them by their physical nature. But the only human being who imposes, and this by his disdain, is Glaucon, a fifth century Athenian who demands of the healthy city riches and comfortable furniture. That a cosmopolitan would find the city of pigs unaccommodating goes without saying. But would the rightful denizens of this city also be dissatisfied? Would they too demand something more? This question is much like the one which Rousseau in the Second Discourse puts to Hobbes: Can the character of natural man, Rousseau asks, be correctly inferred from his corrupt counterpart in civil society?<sup>6</sup> Rousseau argues for an absolute demarcation between the savage and the citizen; he denies that the putative goodness of the former degenerates by a natural process into the wickedness of the latter. Were it not for some historical accident, natural man would have retained his pristine goodness.

With respect to the transition from healthy city to feverish city, Socrates is notably reticent but does offer these two comments: first, that by observing the feverish city "we could probably see in what way justice and injustice naturally grow in cities" (372e). If by injustice Socrates means the feverish or luxurious city itself, then such a city, he

affirms, is by nature--not by historical accident. If, as is more likely, injustice refers to aggressive warfare undertaken by the city, then he is claiming that this ambition is the natural outgrowth of the desire for luxury. But is luxuriousness likewise a natural outgrowth of the healthy city? On this point Socrates simply says that the way of life of the healthy city, along with its paltry, unappetizing "relishes," "won't satisfy some" (373a). He seems therefore not to treat Glaucon--if Glaucon be counted among the "some"--as an interloper imposing unwarranted demands upon the healthy city. Apparently, there will be Glaucons and incipient sophistication even here in the beginning. But it should be remembered just what kind of beginning this is. Socrates has peopled his first city with artisans who are specialists in their trades in order that commodities might be "more plentiful, finer, and easier" (370c)--abundance, beauty, and convenience are the stated purposes of the principle of one man-one art. Is it not then the case that the principle itself, when acted upon, is sufficient explanation of the origin of feverish desires? In compliance with Glaucon's demands, and without one word of protest, Socrates adds to the basic necessities: "relishes, perfume, incense, courtesans and cakes"; "painting and embroidery"; "gold, ivory"; and to the original tradesmen: "poets and their helpers, rhapsodes, actors, choral dancers, contractors...servants...teachers, wet nurses, governesses, beauticians, barbers...relishmakers and cooks...swineherds...doctors" (373a-d). Why this profusion of luxuries and their providers? Because the rudimentary arts of the healthy city, by Socrates' direction, are geared towards the production of surplus goods, of a higher quality, in less time and thus

are responsible for generating the desire to consume these goods and for providing the leisure in which to enjoy them. The principle of one man-one art, as described by Socrates, implies the indefinite improvement of the art and its product. The principle is progressive,<sup>7</sup> thus it unleashes the restless cravings of a person like Glaucon; or rather it makes would-be Glaucons of otherwise simple, contented craftsmen.

The reason for emphasizing this aspect of the division of labor, or one man-one art, is that when the principle is reemployed in connection with the warrior class, it has changed its character altogether. Rather than intended to effect progress in the arts, its purpose now is to promote the moral perfection of the warriors themselves, and also of the artisans who join them in this "purged" city (399e). More importantly, the moral perfection of these citizens is accomplished only at the expense of technical achievement. A principle which formerly was progressive is now a hindrance to progress, and explicitly so. What follows here is an attempt to substantiate this claim.

Socrates states that the warrior class is called into existence because adjacent territory must be conquered if these augmented demands are to be met; and a citizen army, to repeat, is an inadequate force because victory is "a matter for art," requiring a class of people whose sole occupation is training for war. Those identified as especially suited to the warrior class are the spirited of soul. But the art of warfare reveals a problem that seems not to affect, or affect so obviously, the other arts: that is, how to prevent the practitioners of this art, the spirited warriors, from oppressing their fellow citizens?



The threat from this quarter is so dangerous, and the need to tame spiritedness so compelling, that Socrates provides for the warriors, in addition to their technical education in war (a subject hardly touched upon), a "liberal" education in music and gymnastics. The effect of this liberal education is to render the warriors true believers of the city's myths, obedient citizens, and just rulers. Both music and gymnastic training stress simplicity, stability, moderation, and (where appropriate) right opinion. For instance, the poetic (i.e. music) presentation of gods, heroes, and human beings is studiously uncomplicated: gods are unchanging and truthful; heroes are courageous and moderate, untempted by vice and untouched by tragedy or comedy (lamentation and laughter are prohibited); and just men are happy because they are loved and rewarded by the gods. Also, musical harmonies sanctioned by law are the simplest and most sober, the Dorian for war and the Phrygian for peace. In gymnastics the specialized training given to Olympic competitors is avoided. Quick adaptation to the exigencies of war requires simple training as well as simple, easily prepared foods. Glaucon, whose demand for relishes is the raison d'etre of the warrior class, agrees that "a Syracusan table and Sicilian refinement at cooking" (404d) are out of place. Socrates goes so far as to say that refinement (e.g., intricate melodies) is the source of licentiousness in the soul and illness in the body. The latter of these two assertions stretches credulity to the breaking point. But having made the connection between virtue and health, Socrates can lay responsibility for the care of the body upon the moral condition of the soul; he can, in effect, dispense with the art of medicine, or be satisfied with medicine practiced at the



most primitive level--as given by its founder Asclepius. And should moderation alone not suffice to procure and maintain health, Socrates offers the thought that a true craftsman, barred from the employment of his art by chronic disease, would find life on these terms so miserable that death would come as a welcomed deliverance (this Socrates says despite confessing a few lines above that a craftsman is "assigned" a certain job and is "compelled" by the laws of the city to work at it [406c]). Because the technical arts minister chiefly to the needs of the body, and because this community of warriors and artisans ignores the body's well-being (e.g., gymnastics is meant to toughen the soul [410c]) and utilizes the arts instead for the sake of the soul's excellence, the arts--as ironic as this does seem--are very poorly established here.

Simplicity is not congenial to the arts. Glaucon intuites as much when he wonders whether the competence of a physician is not somehow dependent on his having treated a wide variety of sick men (408d).<sup>8</sup> Medicine prospers, it seems, in contact with disease. But disease is a token of licentiousness, and in a city devoted to the moderation of the soul, licentiousness is forbidden by law; hence disease is just punishment which does not require healing by an advanced and sophisticated art of medicine.

It follows then from the simplicity of the warriors' education that those members of the class chosen to be guardians possess no guardian art.<sup>9</sup> Their unique qualification as rulers is the care that they feel for the city, or the conviction they defend that their personal interest is one with the city's common good. According to Socrates this conviction lies open to three dangers: robbery, wizardry, and compulsion (413b). To be robbed

of one's conviction is to fall victim to deceptive but persuasive speech. Wizardry involves pleasure and fear, and compulsion grief and pain. It might be wondered why a persuasive speaker is called a robber rather than a wizard. The reason presumably is that in Book I the best guardian of deposited money was said to be a clever thief. Justice on that occasion meant safeguarding, and the art of safeguarding (this as opposed to simple honesty) was but the other side of the art of stealing. Here also the person who can steal opinions, the persuasive speaker, is the one who can best defend them--by constructing noble lies, for instance. There is an art of guarding convictions (in its lowest form poetry, in its highest dialectical philosophy); but these first guardians, schooled in simplicity, are not its true practitioners.

One final point on this matter of altering the principle of one man-one art. It was previously stated that the warriors are the recipients of a double education, one technical and the other liberal. All of the remarks above concerning simplicity and its effects on art apply exclusively to the liberal education. The technical education is in the art of war, about which a little is said in Books IV and V. If this principle of one man-one art has indeed been altered, it should have consequences on the way in which the warriors practice their specific art of making war.

Is the city founded by Socrates designed to produce the most competent and effective warriors? Will these warriors, made tame by their liberal education, prevail in battle by virtue of their technical education? To the degree that victory depends on courage, devotion to duty, and the love of the city as one's own, the answer is an unequivocal yes. But these martial

attributes are all provided for by the liberal education; and in order that these attributes and others like them might not be jeopardized, Socrates requires that the city remain small, austere, and suspicious of innovation. The city must stay small lest it be weakened by faction, austere lest its workers be corrupted by wealth or debilitated by poverty, and suspicious of innovation in order to maintain intact the tenets of its education. It hardly needs noting that a small city can field but a limited number of soldiers, and that a few soldiers (Socrates says a thousand) cannot reasonably be expected to prevail against limitless "barbarian" hordes.<sup>10</sup> Wealth is of crucial importance, if only because it enables an outnumbered force to procure the services of mercenary troops.<sup>11</sup> And innovation, both in policy and in tactics, is a principal source of strength, as it was for the Athenians throughout the Peloponnesian War.

Socrates submits that wealth must be denied to all classes, not just to the warriors who are permitted no private possessions whatsoever. His ostensible purpose is to ensure a high quality of craftsmanship. The artisan who has grown wealthy is said to be an idler careless of his art. There is of course some truth in Socrates' contention (just as there is some truth in the contention that courage is important to victory): pride in one's handiwork is a major cause of technical excellence, and technical excellence often is sacrificed to profit. But is it further true that the arts deteriorate when craftsmen are motivated by the prospect of large material gain? In fact, is not the opposite likely and supported more by experience, that the arts flourish when innovation is encouraged and when inventors are privately rewarded?

It is then at considerable cost to the excellence of the arts that Socrates revises the principle of one man-one art and makes the principle, in its revised form, the foundation of his new edifice. His reason for doing so is concern for the moral character of the warriors and the artisans. But in what way does one man-one art contribute to moral virtue, since it was earlier thought to be inceptive of feverish desires?

Perhaps no other feature of Plato's Republic is as much decried as this restriction of an individual to the performance of a single task. One thinks of Marx's terse but alluring promise of a communist utopia in which the creative energies of each individual are freely explored and spent on behalf of personal satisfaction; where a single man is fisherman, farmer, and critic all in the space of one day.<sup>12</sup> By comparison to Marx's demand that "the free development of each [be] the condition for the free development of all,"<sup>13</sup> Plato's one man-one art looks positively draconian. Even a participant in the dialogue, Adeimantus, complains that the prohibitions against property and privacy threaten to cheat the warriors of their happiness (419a). The contribution of one man-one art must indeed be indispensable if it warrants the loss of personal happiness in addition to that of fine artistic productions.

As mentioned previously, the technical education of the warriors in the art of war is at all points subordinate to the liberal education in music and gymnastics; and the creation of a courageous, if not entirely effective, fighting force is the credit of this latter education. For the warriors, their art is less important than their gentlemanliness--their manliness made gentle. But even so, and in complete accordance with their artisan counterparts, they are required to be warriors and nothing else,

to practice but one art.

Socrates states that the music education of the warriors culminates in the love of beauty: "Surely musical matters should end in love matters that concern the fair" (403c). Aspects of this beauty include grace, harmony, and rhythm. The ugliness opposed to it is characterized by illiberality, immoderation, clumsiness, gracelessness, and inharmoniousness. It should be noted that while the warriors are indeed taught to love beauty, as Socrates contends, it is beauty of a definite kind--what subsequent ages have come to call Classical beauty. This beauty is of a piece with the warrior's liberal education, for it promotes restraint, balance, proportion, and simplicity; it images the eternal, and it speaks to the quietude of the mind. A contrasting style of art, alternately called Romantic or Gothic, appeals to human emotion; it is ornate, asymmetrical, restless, and violent. Such art, particularly in the form of tragedy, is banished from the regime. The warriors hear nothing of it lest its turbulence discompose them.

Through education Classical beauty insinuates itself into the souls of warriors, and through supervision of the crafts, it embraces them in their environment. The artisans are instructed to produce a physical world that echoes the dignity and grandeur of the poetic education. But artisans are not themselves the beneficiaries of this education (again, there is ambiguity on this point; the artisans do seem to be instructed in the noble lie, for instance). Why then, in order to contribute to the education of the warriors, should they sacrifice their freedom as artisans and inventors or deny themselves as wage earners (the austerity of the

regime affects them no less than the warriors [421d ff.]) if they have not also been formed by the beauty of moderation? Later in the conversation, Socrates affirms that moderation is a virtue possessed by the artisans (432a). But how, we ask, did they come by it? Setting aside the possibility that the artisans are educated with the warriors, we can only conclude that the artisans are made moderate by the practice of their arts. These simple, precise arts, as Socrates describes them--perfectible because limited--are forms of knowledge exhibited in their products: properly constructed homes and furniture, well-tailored clothing, all perfectly suited to the natural and limited needs of human beings. It is said in the Statesman that the knowledge of art, of technē, is structured by an absolute measurement which distinguishes the "just right" from the "too little" and the "too much"--this in contradistinction to the relative measurement of "equal to," "less than," and "greater than."<sup>14</sup> Art has in common with virtue (particularly as presented by Aristotle) a knowledge of the mean. What is here postulated in the case of the precise artisan of Book I is that a knowledge of the mean engenders a love of the mean as an object of beauty, along with a hatred of the ugliness of excess and defect (i.e. the Classicist's appreciation of ordered beauty). The craftsman who has mastered his art and knows its perfection will not prostitute it by creating inferior goods, not if he is also supported by the institutions of a small, austere, and traditional society. Knowledge of the "just right" and love of its beauty fortify him against the wage earning temptation.<sup>15</sup> Socrates says of the warrior reared on poetry and surrounded by handicraft that he "would have the sharpest sense for what's been left out and what isn't a fine

product of nature." He would be a gentleman who "would praise the fine things" and "blame and hate the ugly" (401e-402a). This said of the warriors would seem to apply with equal force to the artisans. In preferring precise art over wage earning, they are moderate.<sup>16</sup>

Three arguments conjoin on this point of moderation. First, Socrates contends that moderation is agreement among all classes within the city as to which class should rule (432a). Second, he submits that the fairest and most lovable sight is the man, presumably the philosopher king (540c), whose soul reflects the eternal forms of moderation, courage, liberality, and magnificence (402d). The purpose of a music education culminating in the love of beauty is to induce the warriors to respect and obey this beautiful man. Third, the technical arts, by virtue of their dependence on absolute measurement, instill admiration for things that are "just right." Sensitivity to proportion leads the artisans to appreciate natural hierarchy, a relationship in which the high predominates over the low. A city governed by philosopher kings or a soul ruled by reason--these are natural hierarchies, instances in which mind, the high, supervises body, the low. The paramount function of the principle of one man-one art is to attune warriors and artisans to the majesty and authority of reason.

### III

Justice is the name given by Socrates to the natural hierarchy in which all the parts "mind their own business." Justice is reason's rule over passion. But is it indisputable that justice is good, that the primacy of reason is good, or that nature is good? And good for whom?



Based upon the arguments of Book I, it would seem that an ordered soul or an ordered regime offer several definite advantages. The tyranny of class rule--what Thrasymachus calls the advantage of the stronger, and what he insists (as does Marx) is the truth of all politics--is averted by Socratic justice, to the benefit of all who would otherwise fall victim to tyranny. If politics is an art, and if the statesman is a precise artisan rather than a wage earner, then no one is harmed by his rule. Those who fancy themselves tyrants are of course denied the opportunity to oppress and the good to be found therein; but neither do they suffer oppression. On the level of the soul, this condition translates into the preference by one passion for the government of reason as against government of another passion: better for love that it be subject to reason--because reason attends to the common good, and love enjoys a share--than that it be dominated by anger. When not occupied with the general welfare, reason is a neutral arbiter among self-interested parties. But a better result still, from the viewpoint of the interested party, is for it to have its own way. Concerning the greater good which accrues to the tyrant by his tyranny in the city or to satisfied love by its dominion of the soul, Socrates says that injustice is faction and that faction erodes power (352a-c). A completely factious soul, lacking any semblance of discipline, cannot realize its unjust designs; nor can a criminal conspiracy succeed where there is no trust among the conspirators. But if it is true that unmitigated injustice is powerless, even in the performance of unjust acts, does it follow that the only alternative is the perfect justice of the naturally ordered soul?

Something positive would seem to be needed in order to recommend the



stern justice of one man-one art, in which all the parts mind their own business and take their direction from reason above. Socrates offers such inducement when he likens virtue in the soul (i.e., the natural and just ordering of the soul) to health in the body, and vice to disease (444c-d). Health, say Socrates, is produced by establishing "the parts of the body in a relation of mastering, and being mastered by, one another that is according to nature" (444d). And the goodness of health is apparently so self-evident that Glaucon regards continued inquiry into the goodness of justice, health's psychic counterpart, to be utterly ridiculous: "If life doesn't seem livable with the body's nature corrupted...will it then be livable when the nature of that very thing by which we live is confused and corrupted, even if a man does whatever else he might want except that which will rid him of vice and injustice and will enable him to acquire justice and virtue" (445a-b)? (Notwithstanding Glaucon's opinion, Socrates wishes to provide proof, but the attempt is postponed until Books VIII and IX; and it takes the form of an analysis of corrupt regimes.)

Even if it is correct to say that virtue is the soul's health, it is not correct to assume that health is unequivocally good. Human behavior would testify that health is only a partial good, or that as a good it must compete with pleasures that are plainly detrimental to health: over-eating, lack of exercise, alcoholic drink, tobacco, and so forth. While few people would neglect the requirements of health to the point of risking a disabling disease or even death (just as they would not generally become so morally corrupt as to nullify their capacity for directed action), they would hardly regard perfect health and fitness to be so useful to them as

to warrant the loss of other pleasures. The best physical life would be a mixture of health and unfitness--and the best moral life would consist of adulterated justice, or the reputation for justice.

The one person for whom a perfectly healthy and conditioned body is desirable, because it is useful, is the athlete. The athlete attains excellence, and the glory and wealth that may come with excellence, through the use of a well-ordered body. His achievement, however, depends as much on his native ability as it does on his training; hence not everyone, by dint of sweat and toil, can become athletic champions. Some, if not nearly all, are disqualified from the outset; perfect conditioning is never in their interest; a mixture of sacrifice and indulgence is the best life for them.

Would the same not be true in matters of the soul? Would the perfect ordering of the soul, which places reason in command of passion, be advantageous for everyone, or only for those who, like the athletes, can make the best use of the soul? This line of argument suggests that justice or the dominion of reason is good for the rational man, for the philosopher, since justice releases reason from rendering service to the passions (a Hobbesian "scout") and permits reason to seek its own excellence in wisdom (not a perfect state of affairs since reason must still devote some of its energy to policing the passions--the same compromise made by the philosopher king who rules in the city [setting aside the problem of compulsion] in order to escape the necessity of being ruled by an inferior [347c]). Only the person with the natural gifts requisite to the philosophical life would find justice truly worthwhile. Others can share in

the negative benefits of the rule of reason, e.g., freedom from tyranny, but the philosopher alone enjoys the positive benefit of using reason, the highest faculty of the soul, for its own speculative purposes.

That the justice of an ordered soul is an unambiguous good only for the philosopher is the position taken by Allan Bloom. Bloom contends that

Once the pleasure of philosophy has disappeared, man is split between duty and desire with no adequate motive for the choice of duty over desire. Socrates indicates that the tyrant's life would be the appropriate choice of a way of life if philosophy did not exist, if the bodily pleasures were the only pleasures and the mind had no pleasures of its own. The self-control demanded by morality has no cosmic support if it is not in the service of a higher pleasure (p. 422).

One point is clear, and Bloom would surely agree--the life of philosophy does not exist as a possibility for most people. Either tyranny is the best life for the vast majority, or there is a field of pleasures between bodily pleasures and the (philosophical) pleasures of the mind, a field of pleasures superior to and more choiceworthy than the bodily pleasures satisfied by tyranny. For most people the moral choice is not between the tyrant and the philosopher but between the tyrant and the warrior/artisan--or rather, because of insufficient energy and cleverness, a choice between the wage earner and the warrior/artisan.

Before taking up the problem of this moral choice (the subject of Part IV), we wish to consider briefly the philosopher's relationship to justice. Justice, as it has been said, is a condition of order which obtains within the soul or within the city when all the parts occupy their natural place and mind their own business. It has further been said that the philosopher is the principal beneficiary of this order. The purpose of the city of the Republic, the best city, is to embody natural order in

the regime and to inculcate it, to the fullest degree possible, in the souls of its citizens. Does it follow from this that Socrates' city of speech serves the interest of the philosopher and that he most of all is benefited by it? If this city represents a deliberate attempt to instill justice, then to discover who is favored by the city is to discover for whom the city's justice (meaning in this case the public pedagogy designed to establish and maintain the order of the soul) is most advantageous.

In Book VI Socrates discusses the philosophic nature. From that discussion it can be inferred that while the philosopher may need justice, he does not need the city's education to attain it. The philosopher possesses the virtues of justice, courage, and moderation (defined differently for the philosopher than for the warrior) as an inevitable consequence of his nature: he is just because he experiences none of the ordinary temptations to injustice; he is courageous because he is magnificent, and so disdains all things mortal, including his own mortal life; and he is moderate because his love of learning masters his other desires; one form of eroticism controls all others, hence the philosopher can dispense with spiritedness and the education that disciplines it.

Socrates subsequently reports, as an accounting for philosophy's bad reputation, that the philosophic nature is singularly prone to corruption. Without special care it not only will fail to ripen but will suffer a spoilage that reduces it to a state opposite its true nature--from preeminent justice to villainy. The great corrupter, or sophist, as Socrates says, is the laws and opinions of defective regimes. No one, educated privately (e.g., by Socrates), can withstand the praising and

blaming of a multitude gathered in assemblies, law courts, theaters, and army camps (492b-c). And the problem is especially acute when the talents, wealth, good birth, and comeliness of the exceptional individual, the potential philosopher, all conspire to make him the target of base flattery and opportunism (494b-c). There are other philosophers, called "useless" (490e), who by the force of circumstance escape from these corrupting influences (496b-c). Socrates designates as "human" both kinds of philosophic natures, the corruption-prone and the useless, and he distinguishes them from the "divine" philosopher who is saved for philosophy by the assistance of a god (492e, 492a). Presumably, the daemonic Socrates is this divine philosopher (496c); and about him it can be said that he benefits not at all by the best city of the Republic, because the order of his soul does not depend on the city's regime or its education (the best regime for Socrates is democracy, a point developed in Book VIII, 557d-558a).<sup>17</sup> Justice for Socrates is something easy, a by-product of his nature. But justice in the Republic is conspicuously difficult, entailing discipline, habit, and education. We can conclude therefore that the justice of the Republic, or life in the best city, is primarily good for the potential "human" philosopher--for someone like Alcibiades, who, living in democratic Athens enjoyed only the intermittent company of Socrates and was corrupted by the adulation of the Sophist-Demos. The Republic is for Alcibiades, that his eroticism might issue in philosophy rather than tyranny. It is not for Socrates who does not need it. But is it for warriors and artisans? Is it in the interest of ordinary human beings to live in the Republic and be formed by its education?

## IV

<sup>π</sup> Socrates would seem to have answered this question in the negative, for he says in Book IV that the warriors are not happy in the regime of the Republic (420b-e): they sacrifice their "exceptional" happiness as private men (no families, no property) in order that they might be warriors and contribute to the success and well-being of the city as a whole. Essentially the same condition holds true for the artisans who are prevented from practicing a variety of crafts and from becoming wealthy at any of them. And it is true of philosophers who are compelled to rule because they would rather devote their energies to philosophy. But in the case of the philosophers, or at least of some, their contributions to the city further their own interests, because the city is the condition for their being able to philosophize; the philosophers, alone among the classes of the city, practice two arts--the lower, public art of rule and the higher, private art of philosophy. The important question is whether a similar bargain is struck by warriors and artisans: Do they mind not their own business but the business of the city, and not for their own sake but for the sake of the philosophers? Another way of putting the question is to ask whether there are pleasures peculiar to spiritedness (e.g., the sweetness of revenge) and to appetite (e.g., uninhibited self-indulgence) which are never satisfied by this city but which are at all points suppressed; and since there seem to be whole people who are chiefly spirited or appetitive, whether they would be the victims of this city instead of its beneficiaries.

Socrates formulates the problem in several passages in Book IX

where his general purpose is to diminish the attractiveness of the tyrannical life. He says the following:

Therefore, when all the soul follows the philosophic and is not factious, the result is that each part may, so far as other things are concerned, mind its own business and be just and, in particular, enjoy its own pleasures, the best pleasures, and to the greatest possible extent, the truest pleasures (586e).

Socrates seems to grant here that the non-philosophic parts of the soul do have their specific pleasures which they can most fully enjoy by following the lead of reason--reason does not use and oppress but, to some degree at least, serves the subordinate parts of the soul. (The relationship between private pleasures, the best pleasures, and the truest pleasures is as yet unclear).

How does reason assist the appetites in the enjoyment of their specific pleasures? Socrates does not answer this question; instead he likens the satisfaction of appetite to the life-sustaining activities of cattle: "...always looking down and with their heads bent to earth and table, they feed, fattening themselves, and copulating..." (586a). The point is that the physical delights of food, drink, and sex are mixed pleasures, rising no higher than the absence of pain occasioned by hunger, thirst and abstinence. An emptiness in the bodily condition (e.g., thirst) invites the fullness of bodily things (e.g., drink), and bodily fullness participates less in pure being than does the fullness of the soul when nourished by knowledge and virtue. In effect, Socrates counsels neglecting the pleasures of the body, the appetites, in favor of the pleasures of the soul.

Socrates seems slightly more generous in the case of spiritedness.



The spirited part of the soul ought not to be emancipated, free to pursue its own pleasures, lest it suffer "envy due to love of honor,...violence due to love of victory, or...anger due to ill-temper, pursuing satisfaction of honor, victory, and anger without calculation and intelligence" (586c). The suggestion is that reason can accomplish the true ends of spiritedness ("private pleasures, best pleasures, truest pleasures"?) without it incurring the injuries that attend upon their pursuit. But in a subsequent passage this relationship comes undone:

Of the desires concerned with the love of gain and the love of victory, some--followers of knowledge and argument--pursue in company with them the pleasures to which the prudential part leads and take only these; such desires will take the truest pleasures, so far as they can take true ones--because they follow truth--and those that are most their own--if indeed what is best for each thing is also most properly its own (586d-e)?

Here it is stated that spiritedness (also appetite), when properly trained to follow knowledge and argument, pursues those pleasures deemed worthy by the prudential part; and that the pleasures peculiar to spiritedness, its own pleasures, are also the best (stated conditionally) and the truest. Spiritedness seems not to have a best interest that is distinct from the truest interest of reason--and the same would hold for appetite. The warrior and the artisan serve their own interests when they serve the interest of reason.

If there is no disharmony between the interests of the irrational and the rational parts of the soul, it is because no soul is without a rational component or because warriors and artisans are not fundamentally distinct from philosophers. Socrates adopts this position, elucidating it by way of analogy. The human soul, he submits, is a composite of hydra, lion, and human being, these images corresponding respectively to appetite, thumotic passion, and reason. Even though a human being gives the outward



appearance of oneness, of humanity throughout, no human being is ever more than partially human. The task before every human being, insofar as he wants to be a human being, is to strengthen the human part by feeding it on virtue and knowledge. Socrates explains that "laws have made the distinction between noble and base things on such grounds as these: the noble things cause the bestial part of our nature to be subjected to the human part--or, perhaps, rather the divine part--while the base things enslave the tame to the savage (589c-d)." There is some indication that appetite as appetite (or that hydra as hydra) is benefited by the rule of reason; also that benefit accrues to spiritedness as spiritedness (lion as lion): for when the human being takes charge of the many-headed beast, only its tame heads are cultivated, its savage ones hindered (the implication being that moderate, tame pleasures are more truly pleasing than violent pleasures); likewise, the lion's nature becomes an ally of reason (589b), and its own stubbornness and bad temper do not reduce it to a snake-like existence (at 590b the lion-like part is called "snake-like"; presumably the lion harms its lionness by giving a free rein to its natural inclinations); finally, without human supervision the lion and the hydra will be at war, and the hydra will impose upon the lion luxury, softness, flattery, illiberality, and acquisitiveness, making the lion cowardly and apish--or the lion may impose cruelty and death upon the hydra. While it is therefore true that the irrational parts in their distinctiveness derive some benefit from the rule of reason, the thrust of the argument is that the humanity in every soul creates a positive obligation to become as fully human (or divine) as is possible. In fact, the analogy almost guarantees the obligation, for few would choose the pleasures of the lion or the hydra if it meant forfeiting their humanity.

On several occasions Socrates speaks of the human part of the soul as if it were divine. Apparently he does so because rationality is man's link to things universal and eternal. Throughout this dialogue (and in the Platonic corpus generally) there is an unmistakable animus towards particularity, individuality, and privacy, towards things physical and mortal.<sup>18</sup> This is most noticeable in the case of the philosophers who, when not ruling, live outside of the cave communing with the eternal ideas. The warriors, for their part, exchange the private pleasures of spouse, children, and home for public spiritedness and wholehearted devotion to duty. And the artisans give up wage earning so that they might become precise practitioners of their crafts. In each case, varying by degree, there is extension beyond the confines of a person's individual existence--an attempt to touch something approaching eternality, be it an object of beauty, a political order, or a true idea. The life of the hydra or of the lion, by contrast, represents a falling back upon what is most perishable and narrow, an abandonment of the project of immortalizing oneself, and with that an abandonment of one's specific humanity.<sup>19</sup>

Still, there are some (philosophers) who do better at humanizing, or at immortalizing, themselves than others; and there are some (warriors and artisans) in whom the human part is not capable of ruling the bestial, quite irrespective of the pains taken to make it so. Should such people, by nature deficient in reason, submit to the rational government of another? This is the moral question of greatest import in the Republic; it asks whether justice is good for ordinary human beings. Socrates states his opinion as follows:

In order that such a man also be ruled by something similar to what rules the best man, don't we say that he must be the slave of that best man who has the divine rule in himself? It's not that we suppose the slave must be ruled to his own detriment, as Thrasymachus supposed about the ruled; but that it's better for all to be ruled by what is divine and prudent, especially when one has it as his own within himself; but, if not, set over one from outside, so that insofar as possible all will be alike and friends, piloted by the same thing (590c-d).

The life of reason, and its prerequisite, justice, are especially good for someone who has a powerful reason within himself; but they are also good, if secondarily, for someone who must take his reason from without. And why? Because reason provides for friendship, harmony, and oneness. If philosophy is beyond the powers of most human beings, friendship is not. If most cannot live outside the cave of opinion, most can be benefited by a cave that is well-ordered, by a political life that frees them from factious discontent. Certainly one major purpose of the Republic is to create a factionless society that would solve, on the negative side, the problem of class oppression (as represented by Thrasymachus) and, on the positive side, that would make friends of fellow citizens.

Marx, in several of his early writings, articulates the same purpose. His antipathy to particularity, exclusivity, privacy is no less fierce than Socrates'. He inveighs against the rights of man to liberty, property, equality, and security, because these, he says, are the rights of egoism. Liberty is the right of man to be separate from other men; it is "the right of the circumscribed individual, withdrawn into himself." Property is the right of self-interest which "leads every man to see in other men, not the realization, but rather the limitation of his own liberty." Equality is the right of every man to be "equally regarded as a self-sufficient monad." And security is the promise of civil society "to

guarantee for each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, and his property."<sup>20</sup> Marx asserts that human happiness depends on a total emancipation from the conditions of need, property, egoism, and private interest, that to be happy man must live as species-being. He goes so far as to suggest that alienated labor has its origin in the practical needs of the body;<sup>21</sup> and the hope of communism, expressed as "the positive transcendence of private property,"<sup>22</sup> amounts to an escape from the body's particularity and exclusivity and an enjoyment of the universality of species-being and creative labor. Whereas Socrates offers three avenues of escape from the self-centeredness of the hydra and the lion--the highest being philosophy--Marx offers only two, but these are roughly equivalent to Socrates' warrior and precise artisan.<sup>23</sup>

Because Marx cannot conceive of the philosopher, he is obliged to defend justice by its contributions to socialized living and to non-alienated labor. Of course Marx does not exactly defend justice, if by justice one means the hard-won dispositions of the soul; for Marx, justice, or virtue, is but a function of the modes of production. What he defends is the greater happiness available through socialism, cooperative effort, and creative work than is available through capitalism, competition, and the forced divisions of labor. In the language of the Republic, he extols the lives of warrior and artisan, and he castigates the tyrant.

The Republic is not much favored today, either as an account of the best regime or of the best education. It is seen as severe, undemocratic, indifferent to freedom and individuality, a government resting on force and fraud and one that is aptly termed totalitarian. In his book Utopia

and Its Enemies, George Kateb expresses these very sentiments, and his following remarks, while not identifying the Republic specifically, might well serve as a trenchant condemnation of the dialogue and its teaching. He says,

We should wish to say that manipulation was characteristic of a social system if the methods of education used therein reposed on a body of knowledge beyond the comprehension of most, or that was kept secret by a few, and that tended to produce a group of men who did what was expected of them without question, without understanding, without even so much as an articulated awareness of what was expected of them, possessed a sense that what is had to be, could not be otherwise, has never been otherwise here or elsewhere; while, on the part of a few men in society, there was reason and understanding.

The Republic would seem guilty on almost every count. Kateb continues,

The aim of conditioning [as opposed to manipulation] is to liberate reason, and, by making virtue less difficult, perhaps to liberate other sources of energy and talent as well; the aim of manipulation, when it is benevolent, is to keep people ignorantly contented and, consequently, barely adult.<sup>24</sup>

Our argument has been that the aim of the Republic is exactly this, to liberate what reason there is in artisans, in warriors, and in philosophers; further, that the principal hindrance to the liberation of reason lies with the passions and appetites, which must be disciplined; that they are disciplined insofar as an individual "minds his own business" and practices his one art; and that by the skilled practice of an art the individual participates directly in the life of reason and participates indirectly by his subordination to the superior reason of another. To the degree that one's assessment of the human condition is not egalitarian and progressive, the Republic represents a politics and a pedagogy that can bring unequal human beings to the fullest realization of their humanity.

So, how stands the case for moral virtue? In the first place, Bloom's analysis of the moral field--either philosophy or tyranny--seems needlessly cramped. It neglects the real advantages available to human beings whose virtue finds political support in the regime of the Republic. These advantages are: (1) freedom from class oppression (a mixed pleasure, so to speak, that depends for its appreciation on the expectation of pain; but no small pleasure given the opinion of Marx that the history of politics is the history of class oppression); (2) successful governing by the wise; (3) opportunity for pride in workmanship without worry of exploitation; and (4) life in a genuine community with friendship among citizens.

Of course, the Republic is only a city in speech which nowhere exists in practice. The true objective of the Republic is the formation of the individual human soul.<sup>25</sup> And on this point the Republic acknowledges (if only quietly) a common humanity and a common obligation to live by reason and to develop it to the fullest--an obligation to divinize oneself. But it must now be conceded that what is happiness and bliss for the philosopher--because of his native ability--is simply a noble and inspiring challenge for the warrior and the artisan--as conducive to happiness as nobility generally is, but no more so. Ultimately, it seems, the Republic fails in its defense of moral virtue, the virtue of warriors and artisans; but its vindication of the philosopher's virtue shows what a successful defense would require: specifically a conception of divinity in which the divine is accessible by some instrument other than speculative reason; a godhead that does not await indifferently upon the ascent of the philosophical few, but

which reaches down lovingly to every human being, and whose reception depends on the opening of the soul, for which the individual, through his virtue or his vice, is responsible. The conclusive and unassailable defense of moral virtue would therefore require a providential God whose dispensation of grace is made freely and to all; it would require, in other words, some combination of Platonic philosophy and Christian religion.



## NOTES

1. All quotations from the Republic are taken from the Bloom translation, The "Republic" of Plato (New York, Basic Books, 1968).

2. It should be noted, however, that Socrates presents his image conjecturally (368d). He does not insist upon an exact parallel between city and man or assert that the city is as natural as the soul. Indeed, the parallel collapses altogether in the case of the philosopher who as philosopher escapes from the darkness of the cave-like city and dwells under the light of the sun--only as returning ruler does the philosopher even have a place within the city. But the parallel is still instructive enough for Socrates to research human justice by way of political justice. It is in fact owing to this parallel or this image that a book on the education of the individual soul becomes also a contribution to political philosophy.

3. Says Bloom: "Most radically posed, the moral problem consists in a simple alternative: either philosophy or tyranny is the best way of life." Interpretive Essay, in The "Republic" of Plato, p. 425.

4. Aristotle in his Politics (1264a 12-16) questions whether the distinction between the warrior and artisan class is consistently maintained by Plato. See also Leo Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), pp. 113-14.

5. The sacred marriages spoken of at 458e are nothing more than--to use the colloquialism--"one-night stands" arranged surreptitiously by the authorities whose only concern is for eugenic breeding. According to the laws of this regime, a community of women replaces marriage and the



and the family: "All these women are to belong to all these men in common, and no woman is to live privately with any man. And the children in their turn, will be in common, and neither will a parent know his offspring, nor a child his parent" (457c-d).

6. Rousseau, The First and Second Discourses, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 128-30.

7. If the principle of one man-one art is progressive, then the feverish city, which this principle begets, marks a progress beyond the city of pigs. Despite terming the city of pigs "true" and "healthy", Socrates concurs in this judgment because the feverish city (e.g., Athens) allows for the emergence of philosophy, the <sup>quintessential</sup> ~~penultimate~~ human achievement. The city of the Republic is an advance over the feverish city because philosophers are produced by design rather than by accident and because the moral tranquility of the non-philosophical multitude is left undisturbed. On the progressive character of philosophy and its dependence on the arts, see the Statesman 272b-d; also Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 97; and Bloom, Interpretive Essay, p. 345.

8. Bloom, Interpretive Essay, p. 363.

9. The warriors chosen to be guardians do not therefore practice two arts, that of fighting and that of ruling--guardianship at this level is nothing more than the consummation of those spirited qualities of the warrior. The principle of one man-one art remains intact until the advent of the philosopher king.

10. The Greek experience in the Persian Wars hardly conforms to reasonable expectations; although twice victorious, there was more of chance involved than sound military planning. To be vastly outnumbered on the battlefield is to court disaster.

11. Adeimantus observes the disadvantage that a poor city suffers when warring with a rich one. In response Socrates suggests a system of alliances, one which depends either on contending with two wealthy cities simultaneously, and enticing one with the promise of plunder to betray the other; or on inflaming factiousness within a single foe (422a-423b). While such a system is not implausible and has indeed been known to work, its reliability is nonetheless dubious--one cannot count upon confronting two enemies who are soft, greedy, and treacherous, nor should it be ignored that a city is never more united than when it is faced with an outside opponent. Moreover, we are told that the feverish city despoils its neighbors simply for the sake of acquiring additional pasturage and tillage (373d).

12. Marx, The German Ideology, in The Marx-Engels Reader, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 160.

13. Marx, The Communist Manifesto, ibid., p. 491.

14. Plato, Statesman, 284d.

15. In other words, the arts are not morally neutral; they do influence conduct. But neither are they likely to be supreme. To take the example of the Republic, spiritedness requires a different education altogether if it is to be tamed.

16. What would induce the artisans to make such a choice? The answer given is mastery of the art itself. And the regime of the Republic has the purpose of providing the needed framework to support the artisans in this choice--a workers' paradise, as it were. But what would induce the artisans, and the warriors too, to accept such a framework? On this vexing problem compare 402d with 501d; it is as if warriors and artisans have to be moderate in order to become moderate.

17. Bloom, Interpretive Essay, p. 421; and Strauss, The City and Man, pp. 131-33.

18. The thesis of Strauss is that the Republic systematically abstracts from the body and from erotic passion. Bloom agrees entirely.

19. Aristotle, Ethics 1177b 26 - 1178a 2.

20. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," ibid., pp. 42-43.

21. Ibid., p. 50; also The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ibid., pp. 80-81; and The German Ideology, ibid., pp. 156-57.

22. Marx, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, ibid., pp. 84-91.

23. The equivalence is indeed rough: Marx's comrade is a citizen of a world state and his non-alienated worker is an amateur (who hunts in the morning, fishes in the afternoon, and so on) for whom the freedom of his work is more important than its skillful execution. See Strauss, The City and Man, p. 133.

24. George Kateb, Utopia and Its Enemies (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 204-05.

25. Except in the case of the "daemonic" philosopher (above, p. 22), the life according to reason, i.e., the activity of a properly formed and educated soul, depends either on external supports or on taking one's reason from without--"human" philosophers need the taming of their own passions if they are to develop as philosophers, and warriors and artisans, being not wise themselves, need the rule of those who are. Hence political institutions must be in place if the soul is to receive its true education. What this means is that education is inseparable from politics, and that the purpose of politics is education. Because the Republic is a book about education, it is also a book about politics.