Journal of Ancient Philosophy Vol. IV 2010 Issue 1

As Happy As Can Be:
How *Republic*'s Philosophers Fare Best by Ruling

Cathal Woods (Virginia Wesleyan College)[1]

Abstract: Many scholars hold that in Plato's *Republic* philosophers who rule suffer in terms of philosophical activity. This view is based largely on Socrates' silence on the matter in response to a complaint from Glaucon. Yet two major themes of *Republic* maintain that philosophers who act justly and rule do *not* suffer in terms in philosophy: (i) with respect to the material goods and physical security which are pre-requisites for philosophical activity, philosophers benefit from the support of the city, and (ii) rule by inferior people is inimical to philosophy. I develop these two themes, disarm in passing the evidence for thinking that the philosophers are worse off, and consider four types of non-ruling philosopher — "spontaneous", "besotted" "wealthy" and "deceitful" philosophers. None of the four fares better in terms of philosophical activity than ruling philosophers.

1. Introduction

At *Republic* 517b, in discussing the allegory of the Cave, Socrates explains that the cave and the upper world should be mapped onto the visible and knowable realms of the Line, respectively. The people who have ascended out of the cave and been able to look at the brightest objects are thus those who have achieved comprehension of the highest intellectual objects. These people are philosophers (520a4, cf. 521c5[2]). Socrates states that philosophers who have ascended cannot spend their time continuously contemplating the forms but instead must be

[1] Particular thanks are due to Allan Silverman. Thanks also to Eric Brown, Amy Coplan and Tom Tuozzo, and to audiences at the University of Kansas and the Virginia Philosophical Association.

[2] Parenthetical references are to *Republic* unless otherwise stated. Translations are from Grube, revised by Reeve (1992).

persuaded[3] to return to the "cave" to rule (519c5, cf. 517d7, 519e3, 521b6).

Glaucon thinks that the philosophers could be living some other, better, life, a life of continued contemplation presumably, and so he thinks that returning to rule impedes the philosophers' happiness. He calls the necessity that they rule "an injustice". In his response, Socrates denies the injustice and contradicts Glaucon by saying that it is just for the philosophers to rule (519e). Socrates does not immediately respond to Glaucon's protestation that the philosophers are worse off than they might be and by his silence he gives the appearance of conceding Glaucon's point about happiness: returning to rule is just, but the life of ruling is not the happiest one for the philosophers.

Understood in this way, the philosophers' return is a *prima facie* case in which justice doesn't pay. This is contrary to an (and probably *the*) overall thesis of *Republic*, that being just is always more to one's advantage than being unjust. Although it as has been argued that there is no explicit assertion in *Republic* that the philosophers fare less well than they otherwise might because of ruling,[4] most scholars have agreed that justice, in the philosophers' case, is disadvantageous. John Cooper, for example, writes that "[e]xtraneous circumstances prevent the city from giving the philosophers, and only them,[5] the best life of which ... they are capable".[6] Richard Kraut states that philosophers are "willing to sacrifice their proper interest for the sake of others"[7] where their "proper interest" is philosophical activity.

Most scholars go on to argue that acting justly nonetheless benefits the philosophers. They do this by revising what the philosophers' interest is. The philosophers' obvious interest is philosophy, paradigmatically contemplation of the forms, but scholars argue that there is

[3] In this article I will *not* be addressing the problem of the philosophers' reluctance or the need for "compulsion" or the explicit motivation of the philosophers. I have previously treated these issues in Woods (2009).

[4] E.g. Mahoney (1992) p. 269 ff. For some discussion, see Brown (2000) n. 3

[5] White (1979) likewise thinks the philosophers suffer while others in the city do not. He does not think this is an inconsistency.

[6] Cooper (2000) p. 23.

[7] Kraut (1973) p. 338.

something else that philosophers value more, and benefit more from, than philosophy.[8] One strategy is to claim that philosopher value not only *contemplating* the forms but *imitating* them. Cooper, for example,[9] holds that philosophers benefit by ruling because "[w]hat they care most about is the rational order of the lives they lead in pursuing and enjoying rational order more generally."[10] He then argues that a major part of this pursuit is ruling the city.[11]

Another approach is to argue that philosophers value the just state of their souls above anything else, and that civic justice (or "vulgar" justice, to use Sachs' terminology[12]) is necessary for psychic justice. In the philosophers' particular case, civic justice involves ruling because ruling is what philosophers are required to do for the polis in return for their education.[13] In this way, even though ruling is detrimental to contemplation, it is beneficial for psychic justice.

Both approaches have in common some expansion or modification of the philosophers' interest. Contemplation is certainly a good for philosophers — it's their desire to continue contemplating the forms (517c7, 519c3) that provides them with a temptation not to rule — but it is not the only good for a philosopher. Once this is realized, it can be argued that philosophers value, and achieve by ruling, something other than contemplation and this compensates for the loss of contemplation because it is valued more.

---

[8] See Kraut (1991) n.1 and Mahoney (1992) n. 1 for lists of those who hold that the happiness of philosophers is negatively affected at least in some way.

[9] Into this category of approach fall Gosling (1973) p. 71, Irwin (1979), White (1986), Kraut (1991) and (1992) and Mahoney (1992). Cooper (2000) is endorsed by Silverman (2007) p. 50-1 and p. 47. For some others, see Brown (2000) n. 13. A debate associated with this position is whether the philosopher is a self at all, for which see Cooper (1977) and Waterlow (1973). A more specific version of this approach is that philosophers desire to bring about virtue in others. This is the approach of Kraut (1973) and Vernezze (1992).

[10] Cooper (2000) p. 23.

[11] Cooper (2000) p. 17. Also Cooper (1977).

[12] Sachs (1963). Cf. 441e where the account of justice is tested against "vulgar" standards.

[13] Brickhouse (1981). Cf. Brown (2000) p. 11, Mahoney (1992) p. 275. A debate associated with this position is the "gap" between the two conceptions of justice made popular in modern times by Sachs (1963). (See Pakaluk at http://dissoiblogoi.blogspot.com/2005/11/republic-442d-443b.html and http://dissoiblogoi.blogspot.com/2005/11/was-there-scholarship-before-1963.html for the claim that this problem had previously been pointed out by Grote (1867) as described in Kahn (1996) p. 49).

Journal of Ancient Philosophy Vol. IV 2010 Issue 1

In what follows I'll articulate a different type of response to the problem, one that holds that the philosophers do *not* suffer in terms of contemplation by doing what is just, that is, by ruling. This position is consistent with two major themes of *Republic***.** Both will be familiar to readers of the work, but I will develop each in some detail by picking up each thread at different places in the text. I first return to the work's overall thesis that justice is more to one's benefit than injustice and bring out what I think has been an underdeveloped aspect of Socrates' argument, namely that justice allows *interdependent* parts to function well. This means that ruling is beneficial to the philosophers because the other members of the city, when just, support the philosophers' contemplation by providing them with their other (non-intellectual) goods in return for ruling. Here I'll be drawing on books 2, 4 and 5. The second major theme is that if philosophers do not rule, someone inferior will, and philosophers, both in development and after having achieved enlightenment, do not fare well when the city is controlled by non-philosophers, because philosophy is not supported. Here, I'll be drawing on books 1, 6 and 8.

These two central themes mean that the philosophers fare as well as they can with respect to contemplation by ruling, and in order to show this, I'll consider four guises that *non*-ruling philosophers might take and analyze their well-being in terms of the two main themes. These are "spontaneous" philosophers, "besotted" philosophers, "(independently) wealthy" philosophers and "deceitful" philosophers. In every case, these philosophers do *not* do better in terms of contemplation than philosophers who rule.

If my interpretation is successful, there will no *need* to appeal to additional values (such as a desire to imitate the forms or psychic justice) in order to explain why the philosophers' return is beneficial for them, though one might do so on other grounds. The purpose of the present paper is not to deny any role to these additional values but only to defend in full[14] the position that there is no tension between ruling and philosophical activity.

[14] Faring well in terms of contemplation seems to me to be the straightforward reading of *Republic*, since, on the surface at least, justice is supposed to make one better off than injustice, and contemplation is the activity of philosophers. But surprisingly few people have held or argued for the position that ruling does not negatively impact the philosophers' livelihood. These are Davies (1968), Beatty (1976a), Reeve (1988) pp. 202-3 and Cross & Woozley (1964) p. 101. Cross & Woozley's entire discussion can be included here: 'They will take their share of ruling, not because they want to, but because they recognise

Journal of Ancient Philosophy Vol. IV 2010 Issue 1

2. Justice and the Interdependence of the Classes

In book 2, the principle of specialization (369e2-370c5) provides the organizing principle of the city and later (in book 4) becomes the basis for Socrates' definition of justice, that a whole — whether a city or a soul — is just when each part of the whole does and has its own (433a1-5, 433b3-434a1). The interconnectedness brought about by specialization benefits each class and provides a reason for each, including the class of philosophers, to do its part.

According to the principle of specialization, each class performs its function on behalf of itself and everyone else (369e3). Potters, for example, make enough pots for everyone. In the basic city, each type of producer benefits straightforwardly from specialization by receiving material goods that it needs or wants. The principle of specialization was introduced in the basic city because each of four or five different kinds of goods were needed — food, shoes, woven goods, wooden goods and medicine. Producers, generally speaking, produce material goods and derive pleasure from their enjoyment of material goods. When the warriors and then the philosophers (or: guardians) are added, different types of work and different types of good are introduced: the warriors' work is defense of the whole city and their good is honor; the philosophers' work is ruling over the whole city and their good is contemplation of the forms.

In the simple city, it was to each individual's advantage if the tasks of producing the different goods (and later of equipping the producers and distributing their products) was the exclusive focus of different workers. Although the goods "produced" by the two additional classes of warriors and guardians are of novel types, the principle of specialization, and the benefits each class achieves from it, still hold. That is, it is still the case that each of the classes has a need of each of the other classes, and that they specialize in this way because it is to their advantage.

---

that other men, lacking the knowledge, would do the job worse than themselves, and because they acknowledge it as a duty which they must perform as the price of their privilege of being allowed to spend the rest of their time doing what they really want to do, viz. engage in philosophical research." Beatty's treatment is a full paper, but nothing I say here appears there. His argument is that the philosopher needs to rule in order to be confronted with "the most challenging arguments which practically ensure his progress in the pursuit of truth" (p. 566).

The good that philosophers supply to the other citizens is good governance. The philosophers are best at ruling because only the philosophers have a "clear model in their souls" (the forms and/or the form of goodness) to which they "make constant reference" when governing (484c8-10), though their eyes must be acclimated to the darkness of the cave so that they can apply their knowledge of the forms to the material world. In this way they are the best (and indeed, the only) people who can plan and organize for the benefit of the parts of the city both individually and severally. The artisan and warrior classes, being moderate,[15] agree with the philosophers that the philosophers are the people best suited to rule and agree to produce and to soldier on their behalf. Since the philosophers must contemplate in order to be able to do the work of ruling, this means that the other classes are supporting contemplation, even if in their eyes they do so as a means to their own, respective, goods.

The producers and warriors are said to fare best *on their own terms* when they act in accordance with the dictates of the philosophers; the organization of artisans and warriors that the philosophers prescribe makes them happy (590d) and with respect to the producers and warriors in particular, Socrates claims that they will be better off under the rule of philosophers because they will pursue their respective goals moderately and not in the manner of a leaky sieve (586b2). It's thus in the interest of the members of the artisan and warrior classes to perform their own tasks and only their own tasks, and in particular, not to compete for power with the philosophers. Thus the other classes benefit from the additional specialized job of the philosophers.

In return for playing their part by governing, the philosophers receive their "upkeep" (420a1, 465d, 543b5) from the producers and warriors. That is, they receive security from the warriors and material goods from the producers. Neither class can directly provide the philosophers with their good (contemplation), but each provides the philosophers with something that they need if they are to do their job and enjoy their good, just as the warriors and producers

[15] The philosophers in *non*-philosophic states are thought by their fellow-citizens to be "useless" (487d3, e2, 488d2, e4, 489b4, d3) except by oligarchic or democratic leaders imposing their own agendas. But if the citizens who call philosophers "useless" realized that navigating the ship of state required so much by way of training and knowledge (488a-e), they would go begging at the door of the philosopher (489b7).

consider good governance a necessity for what they (respectively) really value. The need the philosophers have of the other classes is derived from the fact that, despite their highly rational nature and emphasis on education, they (the philosophers) are still human beings with integrated tri-partite souls.

That the philosophers benefit is enshrined in the central belief instilled by their education, that 'what's good for the city is good for me' (412d4-e6, 502e2-503a2). Even though trainee philosophers appear to be expected to cling to this motto as an article of faith — the truth of the motto might not be understood by the philosophers until after they achieve knowledge of goodness — it is presumably correct.[16]

Socrates in fact claims (at 465d) that the life of the philosopher will be "most blessed", more so even than Olympic victors who are rewarded with meals at public expense.[17] Philosophers achieve an even greater accomplishment — ruling an ideal city — and their upkeep is correspondingly "more complete" and extends to "all the necessities of life" (465d10). Socrates then explicitly returns to Adeimantus' complaint that the guardians fail to benefit from their position. It's now clear, he says, that they fare supremely well. This life, Socrates says, allows the philosophers to maintain a philosophical life (465d2-466c4 c.f. 421a-b) because it is "moderate, stable, and – as we say – best" (466b5). [18]

---

[16] Beatty 1976b pp. 135-6 expresses surprise at the idea that the philosophers are simply indoctrinated into the belief that justice is in their advantage. As he writes elsewhere (1976a), "Philosophic questions cannot be finally resolved either by faith or social engineering." (p. 570). As I discuss in Woods (2009), the mature philosopher must decide for him- or herself that the motto of his/her education is true.

[17] And therefore more blessed than Socrates, who, in *Socrates' Defense* (36d), suggested that he be rewarded with meals in the Prytaneum, the same reward as was granted to Olympic victors, because he was the greatest good that could come to Athens.

[18] Another statement of the belief that philosophers fare well occurs when the parts of the soul are distinguished. Concerning reason in particular, we learn that reason is distinct from appetite and *thumos* because it alone can consider the good of all of the parts, including itself (441e3, 409a1). Similarly in the city, the wisdom of the city stems from the fact that the philosophers know what is advantageous to *each* part, which would include the philosophers themselves (442c5-8). (This passage does not state that what is best for the philosophers is contemplation.) Knowledge of what is good for oneself and others is useless, in a situation of interdependence, if one is not a position to implement that knowledge, and so, even though ruling is not explicitly mentioned here, the benefit comes by ruling.

Such exuberant statements differ from Socrates' reticence in his replies to Adeimantus and Glaucon (at 420 and 519) who object on behalf of the warriors and the philosophers, respectively. His failure to clearly contradict Glaucon's protestations gives the impression that the philosophers are made worse off by ruling and in responding to Adeimantus he mentions (as he also does with Glaucon) that their goal is not to make any one group exceedingly happy, but to make the city happy.

But even in these cases he asserts, both times, that the class in question fares well. To Glaucon's objection on behalf of the philosophers he says they have been put in charge as "kings in our city and leaders of the swarm" for the sake of both the citizens and themselves (520b6 *humin te autois*). And in reply to Adeimantus he says "it wouldn't be surprising if these people were happiest just as they are" (420b4-5) before following this up with an explanation of how playing one's part is the way to gain the greatest possible benefit.

Socrates discusses what would happen if one of the classes were afforded its interest exclusively. Socrates imagines a city in which the farmers and potters and cobblers are permanently at ease (420e). The farmers are given robes and jewelry and are told to work the land "for pleasure". Potters spend all of their time feasting, though they do have their wheels beside them, in case the urge strikes them. And so on for each of the classes.[19] Such indulgence destroys the pattern (*skhêma*) that makes a city (421a1-2) and the destruction of the city means the break-down of the reciprocal relations between the classes and with it the advantages that follow from the division of labor. Each class thus undermines its own happiness by pursuing a life of constant feasting. Being a potter on holiday might seem like a great life, but in fact it is self-defeating.

This contrast between making one class exceedingly happy and the well-being of the whole by each class doing its own are made in response to Adeimantus' objection on behalf of

[19] Socrates says that each of the classes and the whole city can be made happy in this way, at 420e9. But he then immediately says that we must be dealing with some other form of life (421b2). These final words suggest that the outstanding happiness of each part at the same time is impossible and a mere figment of his imagination. For where would all of the goods come from which the producers enjoy, if the producers are on holiday?

the warriors. If they are carried over to Glaucon's later objection on behalf of the philosophers, the philosophers too would be happiest by performing their function within the city. We can imagine a parallel life for the philosophers in which they do not rule but are at leisure, but such a life will bring down the city and ultimately prove self-defeating.[20]

Socrates' message, then, is that work and "play" must be mixed. It is only in the underworld that human beings will find relief from their burdens. This thought is made explicit by the references to the Isles of the Blessed, which apply specifically to the philosophers (519c4, 540b8). The Isles of the Blessed are a part of the underworld to where the exceptional go upon death. As in the rest of Hades, they are a place where the body becomes insubstantial and has no nutritive or protective needs such as might be taken care of by artisans and warriors. Moreover, there is no need for governance. In such a place, then, one can philosophize all day long.[21] The possibility of a life of uninterrupted philosophy, however, is an unreal position.[22] Philosophers in this world do not escape the need for co-operation and for governance. The best they can hope for, according to Socrates, is a life provided with security and material support which will allow them to divide their time between the intellectual activities of contemplating the forms and using

[20] There are a number of places where Socrates mentions that fact that the philosophers and the rest of the citizens do well simultaneously. One is 520b6, referenced above (p. 9). Another goes back to book 1, where Socrates argues that just rulers rule on behalf of the ruled. The phrase "ruling in the interest of the ruled" might suggest that ruling is exclusively a benefit for the ruled, and a disadvantage to those who rule, which fits with the worry that philosophers do not benefit from ruling. There is no inconsistency, however, as book 1 also contains the possibility that the "captain" is also a "sailor" (341c9, 342d7, cf. 409a1). In book 1 Socrates emphasizes that rulers rule on behalf of the ruled in order to point up the contrast with those who rule unjustly in their own interest, the epitome of which is the Thrasymachean position that justice is the advantage of the ruler. But to say that rulers rule on behalf of the ruled and not in their own (unjust) interest, is not incompatible with the claim that they simultaneously rule *justly* on their own behalf. See also fn. 48.

[21] Cf. the end of *Socrates' Defense* where Socrates hopes to spend the rest of his life talking with heroes and the wise (40e-41c). In their interpretations of the *Republic* as a whole, Strauss (1964) and Bloom (1968) emphasize the thought that Plato "disregards the realities of human nature." (This phrase is from Hall (1977).)

[22] Such possibilities are postulated by Glaucon and Adeimantus rather than Socrates himself. Their objections indicate that they have not taken on board the interdependence of the parts and perhaps explain the reticence in Socrates' replies.

that knowledge to rule. Being provided with one's upkeep in return for ruling is as close as human life can come to life in the Isles of the Blessed.

In sum, the principle of specialization creates reciprocal relationships within the city. The city is a structure for non-zero-sum co-operation, by which each class gets the most of what it wants (pleasure, honor or contemplation) and more than if it attempted to provide itself with all three kinds of goods (material goods, security, governance). By ruling, the philosophers simultaneously make the other classes most happy and ensure that their own needs are met, governing over a society which supports contemplation. By being just, the philosophers (and producers and warriors) will be as happy as they *can* be, where by "can be" I mean that they are not as happy as they could imaginably be (as in the image of the feasting potters or the Isles of the Blessed) but as happy as they can be in reality (the kallipolis). The objective of making the city as whole happy and not make any one group exceedingly happy (420b, 519c) is not incompatible with the goal of making each class as happy as it can be. The delight of contemplation must be mixed with the trouble of work, just as physical pleasure is mixed with physical labor in the case of the productive classes and honor is mixed with military activity in the case of the warriors.

An objection to the claim that justice is beneficial for the philosophers serves to bring out this theme of justice and (contemplative) benefit intertwined. The objection is that construing the philosophers' well-being in terms of contemplation or in terms of upkeep is erroneous because 'Glaucon's Challenge' (from book 2) concerns the intrinsic benefit of justice and specifically rules out the consequences or the "wages" of justice.[23] If I have argued that the philosophers'

[23] When speaking of "wages" (in Glaucon's challenge), Socrates and Glaucon could be referring ahead to either or both the "wage" of the threat of being ruled by an inferior (346e-347a) with its impact on contemplation (as will be discussed in the next part of the paper) or the "upkeep" that the philosophers earn in exchange for their ruling (420a,1 465d, 543b5, 613e4. 543bc states explicitly that the upkeep is the wage the philosophers receive. See the next section for references to occasions on which 'not being ruled by an inferior' is referred to as a wage.).

contemplation will fare best as a "consequence" of the just act of ruling, I have not given an answer that Glaucon would accept.[24]

In response, we must first note that Glaucon's question is posed at the level of the individual, and not at the level of the city and its classes.[25] We must transfer the objection from the psychic to the civic level. Justice in the soul is the psychic harmony of the parts of the soul, each performing its function,[26] and in the city is the harmonious functioning of the different classes. In each case, the well-functioning of each of the parts is dependent on the well-functioning of the others. Thus, the objection just above alleges that the philosophers, as a constituent class of the city, fare best when the city is just, *as a consequence* of the city's justness.

Put this way, it is not clear in what sense contemplation or the security and material goods provided by the warriors and producers to the philosophers are *consequences* of the *city's* justness even though they are wages paid by the other classes. The city is just precisely when the philosophers function as well as possible through the help of the other classes. The philosophers' upkeep, which enables their ruling and contemplation, counts as part of what it is *for the city* to be just, rather than the consequences of justice. At the level of the individual, analogously, the soul is just when its three parts perform well, provide some good to the others and enjoy the object of their desires.

Describing the exchange of goods between the classes with the word "consequences" would be to forget that Socrates has followed Glaucon's move from an externally-regarding perspective on justice to an internally-regarding one. When Glaucon speaks of consequences he

---

[24] Brown (2000) n. 4. For discussion see Beatty (1976a) pp. 140-2. Interestingly, Brickhouse (1981) p. 146 makes this kind of objection against Kraut's (1973) notion of extended interest. If Socrates' response to Glaucon's challenge *is* to be restricted to the intrinsic benefits of a just soul *and* contemplation were an extrinsic benefit, it would not follow that the philosopher *is worse off* in terms of contemplation, which is the explicit concern of this paper. Rather, the question would be open — the philosophers might do better or worse in terms of contemplation while at the same time deriving whatever intrinsic benefits there are to being just.

[25] Sachs' "fallacy" lies lurking in the background. See footnotes 12 and 13 above for references.

[26] The function of each part is what it alone does or does best (352e2, 353a8, 433a. See also 444de, where Socrates describes virtue as being like health and cf. 610c.).

speaks of benefits or harms that might accrue to the whole in its relations with other wholes. In book 2, he is speaking about the consequences that might happen to the individual from other individuals — such as reputation from humans and a good place in the underworld from the gods (as discussed in book 10) — and by analogy the consequences for a city would be the benefits and harms to it from other cities. What he (Glaucon) is particularly interested in are not the external consequences of justice, but the impact of justice in its own right, to the unit which is just, which, in Socrates' hands, becomes how the harmony of the soul's parts is beneficial to the soul, that is, how the soul fares best when its parts co-operate with one another.

Similarly, while the description of injustice as a "civil war" (as e.g. at 351-2) places the emphasis on the question of what single part should rule, it's also true that all the parts are affected — think of "destroyed utterly" from 421a8 and "destroys these people and the rest of the city" from 520e-521b (and see also 473c9-d4). Indeed, the decline of souls and constitutions involves the successive limiting of the proper functioning of the parts, beginning with the installation of the warriors as rulers (547de and following for the corresponding individual). The harm of injustice described in books 8 and 9 is not portrayed there a *consequence* of an unjust soul. Rather, books 8 and 9 work out in detail what it is like to have (or, to be) an unjust soul. The soul becomes more unjust as its parts cease to co-operate. It's only in book 10 (at 612b and following) that Socrates returns to the consequences of justice.

It might still be objected that each class has in fact two activities: its useful function to the state and its preferred goal, and only the former is involved in the justness of the city. Ruling, therefore, and not contemplation, is the activity by which philosophers contribute to, or constitute in part, the justness of the city, since this is what they do for others and for which they are paid with the wages of security and material goods which enable contemplation. While this objection might be more damaging in the cases of the warriors and producers, it does not hold up in the case of the philosophers, for as we have seen, constant reference to the forms is necessary if ruling is to be done well.

3. Rule By An Inferior

I turn now from what might be called the "positive" side of the argument (that philosophers do as well in terms of contemplation by their mutual dependence on the other classes) to the "negative", that the philosophers suffer, or can do no better, in terms of contemplation when they do not rule. In the current section (3), I will briefly discuss how, if philosophers do not rule, someone else must rule, and then discuss the impact of this situation on the developing philosopher and on the first of four non-ruling philosophers, the "spontaneous" philosopher. Here, the focus is on the quality of the philosopher's intellectual life. In section 4, where I consider three more non-ruling philosophers — "deceitful", "besotted" and "wealthy" philosophers — it is on the quantity of contemplation.

In book 1 of *Republic*, improper rulers see ruling as a way to get more of what they want for themselves. The job of ruling, properly done, looks to the good of the subjects (446e3 and preceding, 342e4 and preceding). Yet even those with the correct conception of ruling are described as requiring some wage, to make the task worthwhile — no one, whether just or unjust, simply wants to rule for its own sake. The available wages are money (in tyrannical or democratic regimes) or honor (in military regimes) or a punishment for not ruling. This third "wage" is the wage of philosophers,[27] who are not interested in money or honor (347a).

The other members of the city can only offer material goods or honor. These are coveted by tyrants, the masses and the military but are unappealing to philosophers, at least when in exchange for the task of ruling. Philosophers thus do not perceive ruling to be "something good or something to be enjoyed" (347c7) in the same way as other leaders and the fact that the other classes cannot give them what they most value is said to make the well-governed city a possibility (520e4, cf. 347d). They are thus motivated to rule not by something positive but by a punishment. Despite their direct disinterest, philosophers have an indirect interest in ruling. The punishment for the philosophers is that if they do not rule, other people, who are necessarily worse than they are, will rule in their place (347c3).

[27] The word "philosophers" is not used at this stage of the work. Rather, the people in question are referred to here as "the best people" (347a8). It is clear, however, that those who will later be identified as philosophers are the best people. Indeed, the similar phrase "the best natures" is used in the return to the cave section of *Republic* at 519c8.

Being ruled by inferiors is a punishment because if the philosophers do not rule, someone with a different type of soul must take their place, and the regime will reflect that leadership.[28] We can spell out the negative consequences of inferior rule by turning to Socrates' account (in book 8) of how the best regime degenerates into successively worse regimes. Each such regime is analogous to a condition of the human soul (368e2 ff.) and Socrates provides descriptions of the different individuals who typify each of the regimes as he proceeds through them. The first degradation is the Cretan or Spartan regime (544c2) or timarchy, in which the military are in command (or in the soul, *thumos* or: spirit.) Socrates then describes in graphic detail the rise to power of the money-lovers and their subsequent splintering and downward spiral into chaos. In

[28] An objection to the idea that an inferior will rule stems from the fact that Socrates often mentions that there will be a number of philosophers. If this is so, any of them could take over if an individual philosopher should absent him- or her-self, and since none of them is inferior, it is false that 'an inferior will rule' (Aronson (1972) p. 397, Kraut (1973) p. 332, Brickhouse (1981) pp. 144-5, White (1986) p. 25, Brown (2000) p. 4). From this, however, it does not follow that a better life is available, for it assumes that the errant philosopher will retain the status of philosopher even though she refuses to work. But this assumption is untenable. The philosopher will not be supported by the other philosophers who have been forced to rule, just as she would fail to be supported by the broader citizenry. He will be expelled from his position and have to make a living for himself, with all of the consequences we have seen above. (Beatty (1976a) notes that any remaining philosophers will demand reasons for the abdication and that it is consistent with the philosophers' love of dialectic that any philosopher threatening to quit will provide an answer or engage in the pursuit of one (p. 139).) Further, none of the scholars who employ the "multiple philosophers" objections explain away the threat of being ruled by an inferior. This text is simply ignored, even though it directly contradicts their point. (Brown (2000) n. 4 perhaps does the most work.) The theme of being ruled by an inferior is moreover repeated at 520e-521b, which is a part of the discussion of the return to the cave. There, Socrates states "if beggars hungry for private goods go into public life … then ruling is something fought over, and this civil and domestic war destroys these people and the rest of the city as well." In this quote "these people" might refer to the disputants to power rather than the philosophers, but in any case, the philosophers are included among "the rest of the city". Further, when the soul is considered analogously, it is not at all clear what it would be for reason to abdicate its responsibility for ruling to other rulers. This impossibility is important if we imagine that a philosopher might attempt to deceive her fellow philosophers by appearing to rule but not actually doing so. (For discussion of the deceitful philosophers relationship to the other classes, see section 4, below.) In light of these remarks, an obvious way to resolve the contradiction between the two ideas (that an inferior will rule, that there are a number of philosophers) is to assume that Socrates' real target is the claim that philosophy (whether in the form of one philosopher or more) should rule (and related issues). He thus switches naturally between the singular and the plural. The section of text in which Socrates and Glaucon discuss the 'return to the cave' switches between individual and plural philosophers (519c-e) suggesting that no difference is implied in the situations of a single philosopher or a group. And this is the way I have dealt with the issue in this article, until the point of the "multiple philosophers" objection.

oligarchy the wealthiest people (analogous to the strongest appetites) rule. Oligarchy is said to be the first regime to permit the "greatest evil" — total bankruptcy of a person (552a), who becomes a beggar or a thief (552d3). The analogue in the soul would be one of the appetites growing so weak that it no longer performs its function but instead is perverted into an unnecessary desire (558d ff.). Democracy then occurs when such people become numerous and take over, while tyranny is total disorder, a living nightmare in which not even the most beastly and savage desires go unchecked (571cd).

All of these regimes privilege or are dominated by something other than philosophy and as a result in all of them the people who have a philosophic nature receive no support. As Socrates says (when discussing oligarchy) "what is valued is always practiced, and what isn't valued is neglected" (551a3, cf. 485d7). Thus, even in timarchy, the focus on war means that there is no place for thinking not devoted to military preparation and success. Although the citizens of a timarchy recognize the need for rulers — the worst regimes lack any acknowledgement that leadership is necessary — they are afraid to appoint wise people as rulers (547d8). Rather, since all of the efforts of the city are directed towards war (548a1) they put correspondingly inclined and abled people in charge.

Although his topic is the character of the deviant cities and personalities, Socrates is fairly explicit in saying that what is missing from these cities and souls is a love of learning. A city under such rulers does not promote philosophical wisdom, and so, Socrates states, pays no attention to learning (554b4), while the timocratic youth is said to lack the best guardian of all, reason (549b). In this way, Socrates tells us that the good of the philosophers, which they diminish by failing to rule, is philosophy.

In section 4 I shall spell out the details of what life for a philosopher is like in such a city, when I consider the possibility that a non-ruling philosopher could flourish in such a city. Socrates, however, seems to hold the fate of the *developing* philosophic nature to be more important, for he considers it in the some detail in book 6, in the discussion from 490e onward.[29]

[29] See especially 491d5, 492a2, 495a. Socrates' emphasis on the developing nature might indicate that the question of mature philosophers returning from the cave is moot if the philosophical talent of the young person has not first been developed. If correct, this would make the fourth section of this paper otiose.

So, let us turn to that first. A young person with a philosophic nature faces a difficult future in a city that does not value philosophy (494a ff). The majority of people look upon philosophy with suspicion, as, therefore, do the leaders of the city, since they are trying to win the support of the majority. At the same time, since the (proto-) philosopher is an able person, he is courted by those in power. Since none of the present constitutions is directed towards philosophy, Socrates says (497b1, 498de), the growth of philosophers within them is "perverted and altered" (497b3). A "philosophic nature" under the wrong conditions is like a plant in an unsuitable soil and ends up being of a different character (497bc). It's in this way, Socrates says, that the greatest evils come about — when a great talent is perverted (491de, 495b1-4). Analogously, Socrates is saying that reason can only flourish within a soul when the other parts do not overwhelm and pervert the growth of reason as it develops. If a soul is directed towards the fulfillment of a particular appetite, reason will be pressed into service.

Now, despite the pressures that philosophic natures face, book 6 appears to allows that it is possible to become a philosopher in a deviant regime. Socrates provides himself and Theages (496bc) as examples of people who have turned to philosophy and "consort with philosophy in a way that's worthy of her" (496a9). They have escaped the disapproval of the majority and the wiles of their leaders only by some "divine dispensation" (493a) — Theages is kept from politics by his ill-health, Socrates by his divine sign (496bc). In the return to the cave, Socrates similarly speaks of "spontaneous" (*automatoi* and *autophues*, 520b2, b3) philosophers, who have come to be in other cities against the will of their constitutions (520a7). Since the philosophical development of Socrates, Theages and the spontaneous philosophers has not been impeded by living in a deviant regime, and, since they will not be called upon to govern, it would seem that ruling is not necessary for a philosopher to do as well as possible. These "spontaneous philosophers" thus present a challenge to the claim that the philosopher requires and benefits from a supportive regime. (The spontaneous philosopher represents the first of four guises that non-ruling philosophers might take. The other three are considered in part 4.)

However, Socrates says that although philosophers might spontaneously come into being, they would have been better off if they had lived in a city that esteemed education. "[U]nder a suitable one [= regime] his own [= a philosopher's] growth will be fuller", Socrates says (497a4),

and without it a philosophic nature "fails to develop its full power" (497b7) and its true, divine, nature (*hoti touto men tôi onti theion ên,* 497c2*)* is obscured.

There are, it seems, more- and less-well-developed philosophers. When Socrates mentions the spontaneous "philosophers", he is pointing to a class of people who have not received a complete education and who have not reached the heights of philosophy. The development of such people has been impeded by living under inferior rulers. The philosophic nature sometimes escapes the corrosive effect of living in a deviant regime and can arise spontaneously, but fully-formed philosophers cannot.[30]

Socrates does not spell out the difference between fully-developed philosophers and the inferior kind, but does provide one prominent difference between himself and the philosopher in the best regime, namely knowledge of the good. Socrates admits that he does not have knowledge of goodness when he says that he is not to be able to describe it, but only an offspring of it (506c2). The philosopher of the philosopher's return, by contrast, has attained this knowledge. It might thus be that a philosophically supportive environment is necessary for one's ultimate success as a philosopher. Even if this is not the case,[31] however, there is still some difference between philosophers and spontaneous philosophers. Complete philosophical development depends on a regime devoted to philosophy, that is, a regime in which philosophers rule. If philosophers do not rule, others will steer the polis towards their own ends.

4. Three More Non-Ruling Philosophers

Being educated under the best regime seems to be a clear advantage of living there. But thus far we have been considering only the developing philosopher. While Socrates in book 6

[30] The analogous description of the soul of the lover of wisdom, as opposed to the philosopher would perhaps be something like the following: In a lover of wisdom one (or more) of the other parts of the soul is unruly, but circumstances prevent it from taking over (the "divine dispensation"), thus allowing the philosophic part to flourish (somewhat). The urges still interfere with the proper functioning of reason, but do not overwhelm reason and make it their slave. In a truly philosophic (though still human) soul, on the other hand, the appetites and *thumos* are not so strong as to attempt to take over the soul but rather operate in accordance with reason.

[31] Cf. Davies (1968) pp. 124-6, who claims that the spontaneous philosophers are unlike those philosophers raised in the city because they do not acknowledge the forms.

considers the plight of those who grow up under non-philosophic regimes, his talk of philosophers failing to rule *after* having ascended to an understanding of goodness (in book 7's return to the cave) means that he has in mind the case of fully-formed philosophers. One might yet ask whether, for a person raised in the best regime, subsequent ruling is beneficial. The philosophers of the return to the cave have already reached the pinnacle of their education and so have not suffered in terms of their intellectual development. They now each face the question "Should I rule?" Wouldn't it be better for them to spend their time philosophizing, rather than ruling?[32] Let us turn, then, to the specific choices available to the fully-formed philosophers. I will first consider philosophers who might be able to stay in the ideal city. There are two varieties of these, "besotted" philosophers and "deceitful" philosophers, and then those for whom staying is not an option but who must live under other regimes, "(independently) wealthy" philosophers.

The Besotted Philosopher. The return to the cave makes mention of the spontaneous philosophers, which we considered above, but the main figure in this section of the text is a fully educated philosopher who is unwilling to rule because the attraction of the forms controls his attention. We know that such philosophers in fact return, but we are not sure that they are most benefited, in terms of contemplation, by ruling. If we imagine for the moment that the failure to rule was *not* reversed, could philosophers benefit in terms of philosophical activity?

If their failure to rule were public knowledge (what I call 'deceitful' philosophers will be considered next) such philosophers would be relieved of their positions. Let us assume that the best city continues under the auspices of other philosophers. How would the remaining rulers treat the non-ruling philosophers? Non-ruling philosophers violate the principle of specialization and are unjust. It's likely, then, that they would be thrown out of the city, since any place they

[32] The spontaneous philosopher, Socrates is careful to say, comes to be "in other cities" (520a-b), which implies that they do not come to be in the best city. This is due to its attention to the function and happiness of each citizen. The philosophers of the ideal city have undergone a rigorous system of education involving close scrutiny of philosophical ability and are unlikely to be overlooked. Further, the chances of an artisan or a warrior becoming philosophical are extremely slim, since in the best city each class does its own task and leads a life suited to that task. It is possible that they may turn from their work to the pursuit of philosophy, like Theages or Socrates, but the education that the philosopher goes through, to which the artisan-philosopher has no access, is long and arduous.

might assume would not be the best. If allowed to stay, they would be regarded with suspicion, as people who refused to play their part in the community.[33]

But let us assume that they are allowed to stay and do not suffer in any way from their ill-repute. What place might they make for themselves within the community? *Ex hypothesi*, they would not be ruling, and so would not receive their upkeep, and would have to be put to work in order to earn the goods of the other classes. This living could not be derived from philosophy in private practice, since philosophy is valued by the rest of the citizens (on the one hand) only for the sake of ruling, which is not their function. Education of developing philosophers, on the other hand, is under the control of the ruling philosophers, and again, it is scarcely conceivable that unjust philosophers will be allowed to play a role in this education. Thus, the philosophers would have to earn their place in the city by working as producers or warriors. We must consider, then, in what ways this situation would be better or worse for them in terms of contemplation. There is not much in *Republic* which directly addresses the quality of life of warriors and producers[34] in comparison with philosophers but we can gather together various points to develop a picture.

Philosophers are fine warriors, since they begin life by going through the training and education of warriors (412-414b); they have received no training in the productive arts. Their productive talents (and perhaps to a certain extent their military talents too) are therefore weaker and less developed than those who have been trained in them exclusively and are experienced in making a living from them.[35] Such competition only increases the effort required and interferes

[33] See fn. 28, above, for more on the "multiple philosophers" objection.

[34] In an inferior city, philosophers might be able to make a living in education. But in inferior regimes, education is a private (and limited) concern. Philosophers who teach would be regarded with suspicion by the rest of the populace, as described in part 3.

[35] Philosophers becoming artisans or warriors is an instance of one class meddling in the activity of another. Socrates' concern is always with one of the lower classes trying to get above its station, but the point holds for the case of philosophers trying to move "down". According to the principle of specialization, each person performs the task for which he or she is best suited, but if philosophers are artisans (and perhaps also if they are warriors), the city cannot rely on them.

more with any contemplation the philosopher-producer might hope to do.[36] For its part, military activity involves the risks of death and injury, as well as a involving great physical exertion. Productive work is also physical, though it includes less strenuous jobs such as selling, trading and banking (370-371). Ruling is presumably not any more strenuous or dangerous than these, which allows for maximal philosophical effort.

More important are the psychological implications, of which Socrates makes some mention. Philosophers are unique in that their dominant desire is for philosophy rather than honor or money. But those who work for the acquisition of material things or honor enlarge the corresponding part of their souls, and this is deleterious to the other parts, for whenever one's desires are fixated on one thing, one's desire for other things are weakened (485d6-10). Thus, even though philosophers would (initially) have the goal of being able to philosophize more continuously, they might risk, as warriors, indulging the thumotic part of the soul, or, as producers, the money-loving part of the soul.

It's inappropriate, Socrates says, for philosophers "to take seriously the things for which money and large expenditures are needed" (485e2-4, 390d6) instead of focusing on their studies.[37] It is unfortunately not clear how the corruption occurs (and why one could not perform such functions *for the sake of* philosophy), but it is reasonable to think that philosophers who are engaged in productive or military activity would be taking that occupation seriously, if only because they are struggling to compete with other citizens. Philosophers desire knowledge, but they would be forcing themselves into these other lifestyles when they do not rule.

---

[36] With respect to the amount of time each takes up, ruling, Socrates says, is a small part of a life mostly taken up by philosophy (540b1-3). The other jobs have at least some leisure time too, however, and so we can't securely conclude that ruling will fare better on this score.

[37] Socrates states that philosophers must not do the work of, or imitate, the other crafts (395b9, 396a6-7) and although there's mention of philosopher appreciating beautiful works of art (401c4-8), there is no mention of them performing any. At his most disparaging, Socrates states that virtue and wealth are opposed to one another, such that "if they were set on a scales, they'd always incline in opposite directions" (550e4-6). Note also Socrates questioning Cephalus about his wealth — he doesn't seem to love it too much, unlike those who have to make their own money (330b70c1) — as well as the picture of the person who loses all his property, at 553b ff.

What about the psychological effects of ruling, by comparison? The other jobs risk diverting one's desire to other ends, but wouldn't ruling do the same thing, and to the same extent? A first response is that that ruling is neutral in a way that productive and military activity are not. While pleasure or honor is the goal of productive or military activity, ruling is only a means to the goal of the individual and by itself does not reinforce any value, corrosive or otherwise. For most people who rule, the goal is in fact honor or pleasure, but for philosophers, ruling is seen as a means to some loftier goal (contemplation, imitating the forms, etc.). Ruling must of course pay attention to production and soldiering, in order to provide material goods and security for the city, and it must see that their creators are rewarded with pleasure and honor, but the ultimate product is neither material goods nor security and the ultimate goal is neither pleasure nor honor. Ruling only ensures the harmonious well-functioning of all three classes (i.e. creates justice) so that the highest goal can be achieved. Those who hold this goal might tyrannically employ ruling for their own ends, but the philosophers (as opposed to pleasure- or honor-lovers) have the virtue and wisdom to realize that abuse of power is in fact self-defeating.

Further, we could emphasize that ruling is the work associated with philosophers and for which they are groomed because of their moral and intellectual abilities. Ruling is said to be among the work that reason does better than anything else (353d3-5[38]). As a rational activity, then, ruling is in some ways akin to contemplation and might be thought most compatible with it of the three types of occupation.

In sum, while the spontaneous philosopher is not fully developed, the fully-formed philosopher who does not rule is forced into some line of work that is more deleterious to contemplation than ruling.[39] The besotted philosopher thus falls short.

The Deceitful Philosopher. A third type we might invoke we can call "deceitful" philosophers. Might the philosophers be able to abuse their position by deceiving the other

[38] This text refers to the soul rather than reason in particular, but it is clear that reason is meant.

[39] Section 2's discussion of spontaneous philosophers raised but left unanswered the possibility that the philosophers would benefit from not ruling. What we have just said about the besotted philosopher applies to them, too. It's no advantage to a spontaneous philosopher to be able to avoid ruling (though it's no harm, either). The best that "lovers of wisdom" can hope for is to hide behind a wall and be content with loving philosophy privately while the storm of the misdirected city rages around them (496d).

classes — appearing to rule but not really doing so — and taking more of what they want? Whatever organization of producers and warriors that the philosophers order (apparently benignly) in order to maximize their contemplation will be taken as just.

This figure does not appear in the return to the cave, but Socrates might have such a character in mind when he says (at 466) that a philosopher might use his power to make everything in the city his own.[40] In response, Socrates states that a philosopher who somehow thinks that she could do better has become enthralled by a "silly and adolescent" view of happiness. Socrates continues: "He'll come to know that Hesiod was truly wise in saying that "the half is somehow worth more than the whole." The reference is to the opening of *Works and Days*, where Hesiod says that he and his brother should settle their dispute (over their inheritance) according to the perfect law of Zeus. This law does not allow each person to have everything his heart desires, for Zeus has hidden the means of effortless living from human beings. By invoking Hesiod in this way, Socrates means that a philosopher would be foolish to think that he can do any better than upkeep at public expense. To attempt to gain more is only asking for trouble.

We saw the reason for this above. Each class in the city agree to work for the others as well as itself because it has wants that are better satisfied by others. Not only does each of the classes not only get some good from the others, but they all need what the others provide in order to perform their own function well. To repeat with a basic example, if farmers refuse to farm, cobblers can't cobble, which is in turn disadvantageous to the farmers, because they want shoes. So, if the farmers refuse to farm, they will actually get less of what they want (here, shoes, but more generally, pleasure and freedom from pain) because cobblers and all of the other classes will be negatively affected by not having food to eat. Similarly, if philosophers refuse to rule or, as we are now considering, are deceptive in doing so, the other classes will not be best governed, which in turn negatively affects the philosophers, who, as described above, depend on the

[40] Socrates seems to be thinking of a philosopher who has grown up in a good city and completed the course of education, because he is speaking of the philosopher as being supported by the city in exchange for ruling it.

material goods and security from the other classes.[41]

The Wealthy Philosopher. Since the problem for the besotted philosopher is work, we might consider the "wealthy" philosopher. To my knowledge, this character does not appear in *Republic* and indeed this philosopher *could* not appear in the best city, since the material conditions of the philosophers are strictly controlled. Thus, even if we now conclude that this type of philosopher does better by not ruling, it would not invalidate the claim that no better life is available to *Republic's* philosophers. This third philosopher is briefly considered here as the "last best hope" for real-world[42] circumstances under which philosophers profit by not ruling.[43] In the best city, philosophers rule but are supported; in other cases, they do not rule but are not supported. If we grant a philosopher independent wealth, he could not rule, yet be supported. Might the balance thus be tipped in favor of not ruling?

The wealthy philosopher in an ordinary city is able to hire or buy his own producers, and his own mercenaries too, to defend himself from outside attack and to control the producers. What would this gain him? It's not clear that anything is gained, as this scenario puts the wealthy philosopher in (almost) the same position as the philosopher in the good city — he rules over a network of producers and warriors. He escapes any productive or military work but he is stuck with organizing the means to the fulfillment of his material and security needs, as well as those of his subordinates.

Perhaps, however, all he need do is hire someone to act as an overseer, and escape the task of ruling. But the overseer does not understand how to govern in the same way that the philosopher could, if he put his mind to it. The overseer does not know how to best select people for positions and arrange who is to do what and how to settle disputes by making constant

[41] A response to the thought that a deceitful philosopher might deceive his fellow philosophers in pretending to rule but not actually doing so is included in fn. 28, above.

[42] Life in the Isles of the Blessed is not an option. As Reeve puts it, "A life of pure philosophy, like a life spent perpetually as if at festival, is not a practically possible option for a human being" (p. 203).

[43] Similarly, if the concern is *making* an individual into a philosopher (as was discussed in the part 2) someone might say "Well, what if the parents of a would-be philosopher can provide her with sustenance and security? Wouldn't she then be able to reach the heights of knowledge?"

reference to the forms.[44] Moreover, the philosopher who plays his part in the good city has the easier task and the more secure position. For the wealthy philosopher, the allegiance of the overseer, the producers and the warriors is tenuous, as they do not work for the philosopher but for themselves. They are not moderate. The warriors, for example, might abandon or sacrifice this philosopher in troubled times, or try to overthrow him because they are attracted by the wealth of a person who can afford to have so many others work for him and by the possibility of taking over that network of people.

It might yet be objected that either a wealthy philosopher or a deceitful philosopher could possibly do better than a philosopher-ruler *if only in the short run*. One form of this objection imagines a scenario in which the philosopher will die in two days but the effect of not ruling will not be evident for three, and so the philosopher abdicates her responsibilities in favor of a last binge of contemplation.[45] But more details are required to make this "short-term profit" plausible: What will cause the death? Is the philosopher suffering from some disease which would nonetheless permit contemplation and ruling (though no ruling is done)? And so on. By demanding these details I mean to expose the objection as portraying an unlikely and unforeseeable eventuality. In general, people makes plans for what seems reasonable to expect and live their lives accordingly. In the case of the philosophers, the plan is to stick with the life in which they rule the city which supports them. Non-philosophy-or-ruling-disabling-but-life-ending-diseases can be handled if and when they arise.[46] Even if the right thing to do in this situation is to abandon ruling for philosophy, this would not disprove that the philosopher had abandoned ruling in general. *Republic's* claim is rather that a *life* of ruling, amongst other

[44] If we re-imagine the wealthy philosopher as a regular (though wealthy) private citizen, the job for the *overseer* gets easier, perhaps, but the life of the *philosopher* does not change.

[45] Kraut (1973) p. 332. Kraut (1991) calls the claim that the philosopher does best in terms of contemplation a "speculative and doubtful empirical calculation" (p. 50). My aim in this article might be described as showing that *not* ruling is a speculative and doubtful calculation.

[46] For Socrates a last binge would only be a last binge of philosophy *on this earth*; the real binge is about to (re-)commence. Freedom from the body might *improve* the philosopher's position with respect to contemplation and the response to the illness might be to get in as much *ruling* as possible before dying.

activities, is best, and the activities include (and in the case of the dying philosopher, have included) both ruling and philosophy.

5. Conclusion.

My goal in this article has been to show that there is a straightforward way to maintain the main thesis of *Republic*, namely, that justice is better than injustice, while simultaneously holding that philosophers primarily value philosophical activity. In order to support this claim I have emphasized that justice means an *inter*dependence of the parts of the city, and of the soul, which enables each part to flourish maximally. Secondly, I argued that for philosophers there is no better life available, first (and more generally) because someone inferior will rule and misdirect the city and secondly (and more specifically) because there is no way to compensate for the support offered by the citizens of the kallipolis. In none of the possible alternatives — the spontaneous philosopher, the besotted philosopher, the deceitful philosopher or the wealthy philosopher — whether in an ordinary city or in the best, does philosophy profit from not ruling. The philosophers are as happy as can be.[47]

While I think that many scholars wrongly believe that contemplation is negatively affected by ruling, they need not give up anything of their own answers to this question of the philosophers' benefit to accept that philosophers also do best in terms of contemplation. In other words, I think that there is no contradiction between the "demands" of justice, or of the forms, (whichever kind of approach one takes, or both), and the desire for contemplation.[48] Indeed, not

[47] Brickhouse (1981, p. 150-1) for example argues that a better life is not available to the philosopher because he is morally constrained by his debt to the city. This is a different sense of "possible life" (which can be true in addition to which I have argued here).

[48] Why is there this insistence on the part of scholars to show that the philosophers fare worse in terms of contemplation and must be compensated for it in some way? Speculatively, I think it's because of a desire (on the part of scholars) to show that philosophers are unlike the other people who try to rule for their own advantage by showing that they are not egoists (beginning, perhaps, with Kraut (1973)). But they go too far, I think, towards making the philosophers self-*dis*interested. The approach I have taken here suggests that what distinguishes the philosophers from those others who want to rule in their in own interests is not that they do not rule in their own interests — they do — but that they *also* rule in the interest of others and can see that the unrestrained pursuit of their own interest is self-defeating. They do not, however, have to make a sacrifice.

only is there no contradiction, but, as I hope I have showed, thinking in terms of contemplation or of justice as Socrates defines it are two aspects of the same theory — maximal contemplation and justice towards the other parts go hand in hand.[49]

Bibliography

Aronson, Simon (1972). "The Happy Philosopher — A Counterexample to Plato's Proof", Journal of the History of Philosophy, 10, pp. 383-398.

Beatty, Joseph (1976a). "Plato's Happy Philosopher and Politics", The Review of Politics, 38.4, pp. 545-575.

Beatty, Joseph (1976b). "Why Should Plato's Philosopher by Moral, and Hence, Rule?", The Personalist, 57, pp. 132-144.

Bloom, Allan (1968). The Republic of Plato, Basic Books, New York.

Brickhouse, Thomas C. (1981). "The Paradox of the Philosophers' Rule", in Nicholas Smith (ed.) Plato: Critical Assessments vol. III, Routledge, New York, 1998, pp. 141-152. Reprinted from Apeiron 15, pp. 1-9.

Brown, Eric (2000). "Justice and Compulsion for Plato's Philosopher-Rulers", Ancient Philosophy, Vol. XX.1 (Spring).

Cooper, John M. (1977). "The Psychology of Justice", pp. 17-30 in Kraut (ed.) Plato's Republic: Critical Essays, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 1997. Reprinted from American Philosophical Quarterly, 14, pp. 151-7.

Cooper, John M. (2000). "Two Theories of Justice", PAPA, 74.2 (Nov.) pp. 5-27.

Davies, J. (1968). "A Note on the Philosopher's Descent into the Cave", Philologus, 112, pp. 121-6.

Gosling, J. C. B. (1973). Plato, Routledge, London.

Grote, George (1867). Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates, John Murray, London.

Grube, G. M. A. (1992). Plato, The Republic, trans., revised by C. D. C. Reeve. Hackett, Indianapolis.

Hall, Dale (1977). "The Republic and the Limits of Politics", Political Theory, 5, pp. 293-313, with a reply by Bloom, pp. 314-330.

[49] Kraut (1991) p. 51 alleges against Reeve that his (Reeve's) defense of the claim that philosophers do best in terms of contemplation omits any mention of justice — there is merely a calculation of benefit.

Irwin, Terence, (1979). Plato's Moral Theory, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kahn, Charles (1996). "George Grote's Plato and the Companions of Socrates" in George Grote Revisited, Calder and Trzaskoma (eds.), Weidmann, Hildenheim.

Kraut, Richard (1973). "Egoism, Love, and Political Office in Plato", Philosophical Review, 82 pp. 330-344.

Kraut, Richard (1991). "'return to the cave': Republic 519-521", BACAP 7, pp. 43-61.

Kraut, Richard (1992). "The Defense of Justice in Plato's "Republic"" in The Cambridge Companion to Plato, Kraut (ed.), Cambridge Univ. Pr., New York, pp. 311-37.

Mahoney, Timothy (1992). "Do Plato's philosopher-rulers sacrifice self-interest to justice?" Phronesis, Vol. XXXVII/3.

Reeve, C. D. C. (1988). Philosopher-Kings, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton.

Sachs, David (1963). "A Fallacy in Plato's Republic", The Philosophical Review, 72, pp. 141-58.

Shields, Christopher (2007). "Forcing Goodness in Plato's Republic", Social Philosophy and Policy, pp. 21-39.

Silverman, Allan (2007). "Ascent and Descent: The Philosopher's Regret", Social Philosophy and Policy, pp. 40-69.

Strauss, Leo (1964). The City and Man, U. of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Vernezze, Peter (1992). "The Philosopher's Interest", in Nicholas Smith (ed.) Plato: Critical Assessments vol. III, Routledge, New York, 1998, pp. 141-152. Reprinted from Ancient Philosophy 12.

Waterlow, Sarah (1972). "The Good of Others in Plato's Republic", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, n.s. LXVIII, pp. 19-36.

White, Nicholas (1986). "The Rulers' Choice", Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, 68, pp. 22-46.

Woods, Cathal (2009). "The Last Temptation of the Philosopher-Rulers", Journal of Ancient Philosophy, III.1.