

# THE DIALECTIC OF COMMUNITY IN PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*

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Some scholars maintain that there is no logical progression between the first three cities constructed in Plato's *Republic*. In this paper I show that they are wrong. On the view I defend, the dialectic of Plato's civic architecture is centred on an account of justice as geometrical equality. The first city expresses this account by assigning social roles on the basis of τέχνη. The second city disrupts the geometrical schema in order to accommodate the human desires for greatness and self-knowledge, with the third city re-establishing the geometrical pattern by means of poetic catharsis, a noble lie, and the placement of an armed camp.

*Keywords:* Plato; Socrates; *Republic*; justice; city for pigs; poetry

## 1. Introduction

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates and his comrades attempt to determine what sort of thing justice is by looking for it in cities (368e9-a1); they resolve to watch a community coming into being in order to see how justice and injustice arise (369a5-7).<sup>1</sup> But their watching soon turns into a kind of making (369c9-10), and what they (initially) succeed in making are three defective communities: a city for pigs, a city with a fever, and a city with an armed camp.<sup>2</sup>

The relationships between the first three cities of *Republic* are not well understood in the scholarship. For example, I M Crombie describes the city for sows as a 'false start',<sup>3</sup> and Julia Annas agrees, concluding 'reluctantly' that 'Plato has not given the first city a clear place in the *Republic*'s moral argument ...'.<sup>4</sup> And while C D C Reeve notices that the design of succeeding cities is intended to

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<sup>1</sup> All Stephanus page references in the text not preceded by the title of a dialogue are to *Republic*. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation of *Republic* is by G M A Grube, as printed in Cooper and Hutchinson 1997. Revisions are noted where appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> These labels are with minor modifications consistent with the scholarship, though I shall sometimes vary usage by referring to the first city as the 'city for sows' and the second city as the 'luxurious' or 'inflamed city'. The term 'city of the armed camp' is borrowed from Strauss 1964:93. I shall not in this paper have very much to say about Socrates' fourth city, the beautiful city or Kallipolis.

<sup>3</sup> Crombie 1962:89-90.

<sup>4</sup> Annas 1981:78; see also Morrison 2007:250-51. I am grateful to Professor Arnold Christianson for drawing my attention to these passages and to those in note 5.

accommodate different sorts of human motivations, he gives neither a satisfactory account of these motivations nor of how their development relates to justice.<sup>5</sup>

In the view I defend in this paper, the dialectic of Plato's civic architecture is centred on an account of justice as geometrical equality. The first city expresses this account in its founding principle by which social roles are assigned according to τέχνη. The second and 'inflamed' city disrupts the geometrical schema of the pig city in order to accommodate human desires for virtue and self-recognition, with the third city re-establishing the geometrical pattern by means of poetic catharsis, a noble lie, and the placement of an armed camp (415d8-9). It seems that Plato would have his reader infer that truth and justice both can be realised only in the philosophical community for the sake of which the beautiful city is founded.

## 2. *The first community: A city for pigs*

The structure of the first community exhibits the logic of insufficiency. The first application of this logic is to the solitary human being who is vulnerable and lacking many things (369b5-7).<sup>6</sup> Human insufficiency implies that individuals must cooperate with one another in working to satisfy their needs (369c3). Cooperation occurs by dividing labour (369e *ff.*), which permits specialisation by natural aptitude (370a7-b2), and, in so doing, facilitates the growth of the τέχνα.<sup>7</sup>

The first application of the logic of insufficiency produces what Socrates terms 'therapeutic' arts, or 'arts of bodily care' (369d10; τιν' ἄλλον τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα θεραπευτήν) — forms of knowledge such as farming, building and weaving, which are designed to satisfy human needs for food, shelter and clothing (369d1-d5).<sup>8</sup> However, while the therapists of the body are introduced to counteract human insufficiency, the therapist himself turns out to be lacking in many things (370c). Thus Socrates repeats the logic of insufficiency by introducing a second kind of knower, the *demiourgos*. The wheat-farmer is for food; but he needs a plough and thus a blacksmith; and each subordinate artisan requires other goods from other workers. For this reason, says Socrates, 'carpenters, [blacksmiths] and many other craftsmen of that sort will share our little city and make it bigger' (370d5-7).

The city of pigs is brought to completion with a third iteration of the logic of insufficiency, this time applying to the whole hierarchy of the arts. While the

<sup>5</sup> Reeve 1988:ch. 4; see also Mckeen 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the Great Myth of Protagoras in the eponymous Platonic dialogue. 'While ... other animals [are] well provided with everything, [man] is naked, unshod, un-bedded and unarmed'; he has no natural supply of food in the manner of other animals: plants, roots, fruit on overhanging branches; he lacks the wherewithal to be a predator (*Prot.* 321b-c).

<sup>7</sup> See Weinstein 2009:442-43.

<sup>8</sup> I shall discuss the relationship between medicine and the other therapeutic arts in §5.

therapists of the body and their assistant artisans will receive some of what they need from subordinate craftsmen within the community, they will not get it all.<sup>9</sup> The farmer will sometimes require seed, the blacksmith metal, and the potter clay and bitumen; '[it is] almost impossible to establish a city in a place where nothing has to be imported' (370e5-7). Thus Socrates introduces a third category of knower, the *diakonos*, the service provider, exemplified by the retailer and the merchant, and, if the trade is by sea, the sailor.<sup>10</sup>

The role of the *diakonos* is to facilitate trade by providing knowledge of supply and demand. The logical prerequisites for trade are something to supply and a medium of exchange, viz. money (371b8-9). Thus the number of artisans qua suppliers must be increased in order to produce a surplus of goods. Moreover, the introduction of the *diakonos* changes the community's mode of exchange from sharing to buying and selling (369e, 371b). The market must equip the city for exchange that does not depend on knowledge of, and good will from, specific known trading partners. This completes the construction of the first city, the city for sows.

### 3. *The second community: A city with a fever*

In the course of their attempt to found a city, Socrates and his companions project their thoughts about justice into its design. Thus, if the organisation of the community is unsatisfactory to one of its founders, it will be unsatisfactory to the citizen who shares his point of view. What we shall see is that the impetus to transform the city for sows into a city with a fever is provided by the cultured Glaucon, whose aspirations, suitably tempered and refashioned, need to be accommodated in a satisfactory political model.

Once the structure of the first polis has been articulated (see §2), Socrates turns to the lifestyle of its denizens, recommending that they consider 'what sort of life our citizens will lead when they've been provided for in the way we have been describing' (372a5-6). His description of life in the pig polis is intended to provoke Glaucon and by this provocation to redirect the course of the conversation. Of the form of life of the inhabitants of the city for pigs, Socrates has the following to say:

They'll produce bread, wine, clothes, and shoes, won't they? They'll build houses, work naked and barefoot in the summer, and wear adequate clothing and shoes in the winter. For food, they'll knead and cook the flour and meal they've made from wheat and barley. They'll put their honest cakes and loaves on reeds or clean leaves, and, reclining on beds strewn

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<sup>9</sup> See Weinstein 2009:443.

<sup>10</sup> For discussion see Weinstein 2009:447-49.

with yew and myrtle, they'll feast with their children, drink their wine, and, crowned with wreaths, hymn the gods. They'll enjoy sex with one another but bear no more children than their resources allow, lest they fall into either poverty or war (372a5-c1).

This encomium to the bucolic life is 'too much' for Glaucon, who snaps: 'You seem to make these men (τοὺς ἄνδρας) feast without any relishes (ἄνευ ὄψου)' (372c2-3).<sup>11</sup> 'That's just the fodder you would provide', he continues, if you were founding a city for pigs' (372d).<sup>12</sup> 'How should things be?' asks Socrates gently, and Glaucon re-joins: 'If [these men] aren't to suffer hardship, they should recline on proper couches, dine at a table, and have the delicacies and desserts that people have nowadays' (372d-e).

'All right, I understand', Socrates replies, 'It isn't merely the origin of a city that we're considering but the origin of a 'luxurious city' (τροφῶσαν πόλιν, 372e3), or a city with a fever (φλεγμαινούσαν πόλιν, 372e8). Let's construct this 'luxurious city' because in it 'one might [readily] see how justice and injustice grow up ...' (372e5). 'We must enlarge our city and increase it in size...and fill it with things that go beyond what is necessary' (373b1-4). And so he fills it with couches, tables, and other furniture; relishes, perfume, incense, cosmetics, prostitutes and a variety of cakes (373a1-4); and painting, tapestries, gold and ivory (373a4-8). The city must be enlarged, increased in size and filled 'with a multitude of things that go beyond what is necessary for a city' (373b3-4): hunters, poets and painters, along with their helpers, actors and dancers (37b5-8). 'And so we'll need more [service providers] too': cooks and swineherds, beauticians, barbers, chefs, tutors, wet nurses and nannies (373c1-5). More cattle also, if we 'are going to eat meat' (373c6-7), and 'if we live like that' we'll be in far greater 'need for doctors' (373d1-2).

The pig city develops a fever when the logic of insufficiency is applied for a fourth time. However, unlike the second and third applications of this logic, which moved downward from the 'arts of bodily care' to subordinate arts (see §2), the fourth application applies at the same level as the original therapeutic arts but complicates the picture of human desire. In the city for sows there were builders who built shelter, now there are also interior decorators; in the first polis there were crop farmers, now there are pastry chefs and hunters. Since desire is augmented and each of the new commodities or services that is sought *needs* a maker or practitioner, the city must grow larger. Each job requires for its practice a specific

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<sup>11</sup> The word 'ὄψον means anything to accompany the bread, but especially meat or fish' (Burnyeat 1997:230 note 31).

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly enough, the city is precisely not a city for pigs: it is vegetarian. See 370d-e and 373c. I owe this point to Strauss 1964:95.

form of expertise that is oriented to the satisfaction of a complex form of desire. And for these jobs, many more people are required.

With the increase in population, the demand for resources increases and expansion brings about conflict (373d7-10). 'The one who told the myth was not unreasonable in pairing Ares and Aphrodite' (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1269b27-28; Lord trans.). There is warfare now and the need for a professional army (374b1-2), and then a question of how to control the army, since the strongest will claim his right to rule. The soldier must accept the authority of the ruler if he is not to be the ruler, from which emanates the institution of government. The problem of political authority is at bottom the question of how to control those who have power over the body.

The feverish city is Glaucon's city. Glaucon didn't like the food and lack of furniture in the city for sows; he wanted meat and a comfortable couch. Initially his objection appears to express the desire for something more (cf. 359c). Human motivations are pleonectic: in the pursuit of its own good, every soul prefers more, and this means that law and contract are needed to restrain a natural tendency to injustice (359a).<sup>13</sup> But Glaucon has misunderstood his own desires and aspirations; he is lacking in self-knowledge. We find that Glaucon 'does not want two coats; [he] wants one coat with a [golden] braid on it'.<sup>14</sup>

For Socrates, the basic human desires are easy to satisfy; Glaucon's complex desires much less so. But, as Socrates recognises, Glaucon does not really want more food and couches. His desire is, more accurately, a desire for Alexander of Macedon, Michelangelo and the Sistine chapel; his is a desire for something *higher*.<sup>15</sup> He desires freedom and beauty, greatness and virtue in artefacts, deeds, and in soul. This is why Socrates is willing to accede to Glaucon's request for luxury, never returning to the city of sows,<sup>16</sup> but focusing his attention on the feverish city and how to reform it. The culmination of this purgation will be the city of the armed camp (415d6-e4).

By following Glaucon into the feverish city Socrates gives to him — and the citizen that is like him — a certain sort of freedom. The denizen of the feverish city is overwhelmed by his possibilities, his freedom and his choices. So many teas and cakes and ices — this is the freedom of the supermarket, a freedom so great, Boris Yeltsin suggested, it might well have destroyed the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is the essence of the liberal tradition in political philosophy emanating from Locke.

<sup>14</sup> White 1989-1990:191.

<sup>15</sup> The *Republic* is fundamentally concerned with this question: holding together the desire for justice and the desire for greatness. I here echo and adapt White 1989-1990:199.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bloom 1968:345.

<sup>17</sup> Hlavaty 2014.

By following Glaucon into the feverish city Socrates gives beauty to him also. In the first community, desire is for food qua food; the question is whether something is suitable for a human being to eat to live and be healthy. And something similar applies to the other human needs: in the city for sows there are strong shoes and warm coats and houses sufficient to keep people warm in the winter. In the luxurious city, however, there are also high heels and fur coats, art galleries and 5<sup>th</sup> avenue cocktail parties.

Desire changes when the pig city develops a fever; basic human needs are transformed into something more complex. Desire is no longer for food qua food, but for food qua *fine* food; there is a move from clothing to beautiful clothing, housing to beautiful housing, bodies fit for work (healthy bodies) to beautiful bodies, that is — all of them — objects that can be *seen to be beautiful*. Desire has become self-reflexive. Or, more accurately, desire, which is always self-reflexive, has become doubly so, with the second level of self-reflexivity mediated by certain aesthetic standards emanating from — what might termed — *culture*. Socrates has interpreted Glaucon's request for couches and delicacies and proper feasting as a request for all the elements needed for a symposium, that symbol of the Athenian high society.<sup>18</sup>

Self-reflexive desire demands self-reflexive knowledge.<sup>19</sup> With the double self-reflexivity of desire comes the need for someone who can satisfy the demand for self-reflexive knowledge. Whereas in the city for sows the therapists of the body worked within the boundary of natural need, poets are in the feverish polis 'the makers of the horizon which constitutes the limit of men's desire and aspiration'.<sup>20</sup> Poets introduce self-reference into the polis: they make images (598b-c), that is, artefacts, by which the citizens can see and recognise themselves. The poet is *for*, that is, has the function of, 'supplying' knowledge of the self as beautiful. Poetry seems to be bound up with a human desire to be seen to be living finely or beautifully.

While the second city is unhealthy, inflamed and feverish on account of its excesses, it does in its way make provision for legitimate human desires and aspirations. There is neither freedom nor virtue in the pig city; there is no friendship, no relation of souls: only an economic partnership for the purpose of satisfying bodily need (371e).<sup>21</sup> For the spirited and erotic Glaucon, 'the justice of the artisan ... is contemptible'.<sup>22</sup> The city of the poets 'replaces the impersonality

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<sup>18</sup> See Burnyeat 1990:233-38 and Brown 2017:§4.1.

<sup>19</sup> This equation of knowledge and desire is maintained throughout the *Republic*. See especially 438c *ff*.

<sup>20</sup> Bloom 1968:351.

<sup>21</sup> White 1989-1990:191.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*.

of an economic transaction', and corrects its 'invisibility of soul'.<sup>23</sup> The symposium is an institution for mutual self-recognition and the affirmation of citizens as citizens.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. *The third community: City of the armed camp*

The *Republic's* first two communities are formed by addition: therapeutic artisans and their assistants join together as helpers in order to satisfy the needs of the body; then poets, mimetic artists and other technicians of desire are added for the sake of the soul.<sup>25</sup> The third community, by contrast, is formed by transposition: the soldiers of the second city become guards or wardens who quell the fever of the luxurious city by censoring the poets and administering law (415e1-2; 399e).<sup>26</sup>

As argued above, Socrates gives the potential for virtue and self-knowledge to Glaucon by allowing poetry into the city. Poetry expands the horizon of human possibility by creating role models and paradigms for imitation. 'A little boy hears heroic tales of Achilles ... When he goes out to play his version of *hoi agathoi kai hoi kakoi* ..., he assigns himself the role of Achilles. He acts out a certain image of courage before he is able to understand what courage is ... and in this way his soul gets 'Achillized'.<sup>27</sup> What Plato means by poetry is thus neither 'reading TS Eliot ... in bed' nor even the *Iliad* at school.<sup>28</sup> It is the sort of thing that one's kids watch on TV, which gives them something to desire and to aspire to, a picture of their place in the world and their relation to divine, their concept of death and how to cope with it (377a-392a).<sup>29</sup> '[It] is words and music you hear at social gatherings, large and small. Think pubs and cafés, karaoki, football matches, the last night of the proms'.<sup>30</sup>

Without poetry there is no virtue; so too without poetry of the proper kind. If the poets write of gods and men and their actions in such a way as to create wrong conceptions of piety and courage and temperance, these tales must not be

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

<sup>24</sup> Burnyeat 1997:236. By following Glaucon into the feverish city, Socrates also gives him warfare. And so he has also given him the potential for the manly courage (*andreia*) that the Greeks prized so highly.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Brann 2011:124.

<sup>26</sup> Since there are no philosophers in the third city, catharsis is manufactured by principles of censorship emanating from the philosopher-founder's understanding of the human soul.

<sup>27</sup> Lear 2006:30.

<sup>28</sup> Burnyeat 1997:256.

<sup>29</sup> See Lear 1992, Burnyeat 1997 and Lear 2006:30.

<sup>30</sup> Burnyeat 1997:256.

told (377a-392a). Education is no longer technical mastery but the development of the cardinal virtues by reorientation of desire (*cf.* 402d, 403c and 518b-c).

A human community must admit poets into its walls but every image and *mythos* is also a kind of lie (595c *ff.*). Thus, the question cannot be how to eliminate lies, but which ones are best (382a-d).<sup>31</sup> In this regard, Socrates tells some lies of his own. For, after separating the true guardians from the auxiliaries (414b), and with great hesitation (414c8-11), he says that he will try to persuade the rulers and other citizens of a certain Phoenician story, which the poets say ‘describes something that has happened in many places’ (414c4-5):

‘All of you in the city are brothers’, we’ll say to them in telling our story, ‘but when the god was forming you, he mixed gold into those of you who are capable of ruling; silver into the auxiliaries [soldiers], and iron and bronze into the farmers, and other craftsmen. For the most part, you will produce children like yourselves; but, because you are all related, a silver child will occasionally be born to a golden parent, a golden child to a silver parent, and so on. Therefore, the first and most important command from the god to the rulers is that there is nothing they must guard better or watch more carefully than the mixture of metals in the souls of their offspring ... If an offspring of theirs is born with a mixture of iron or bronze, they must not pity him in any way, but assign him an honor appropriate to his nature and [send] him out to join the craftsmen or the farmers. On the other hand, if an offspring of the latter is found to have a mixture of gold or silver, they will honor him and take him up to join the guardians or the auxiliaries. For there is an oracle that the city will be ruined if it ever has an iron or a bronze guardian’ (415a2-c6).

The myth of the metals is a useful lie: it is literally false, but, from Plato’s point of view, symbolizes deep social truths.<sup>32</sup> Citizens are in some sense ‘related’ — they are children of the same mother; but they do different jobs and some have more knowledge and authority than others; and these differences must be acknowledged by being symbolized. The allocation of people to jobs is made in conformity to nature, so that there is equality of opportunity, or ‘careers open to talents’. The myth is descriptive of an ideal; and its acceptance is productive of that ideal.<sup>33</sup>

The noble lie forms the boundary between the city with a fever and the purified city of the armed camp. After telling his greatest useful lie, Socrates arms his ‘earthborn’ and ‘[leads] them forth with their rulers in charge’. The guardians

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<sup>31</sup> Lear 2006:30.

<sup>32</sup> Lear 2006:42 note 5.

<sup>33</sup> Socrates’ noble lie is discussed more fully in §6.



and their auxiliaries are to 'look for the best place in the city to have their camp, a site from which they can most easily control those within, if anyone is unwilling to obey the laws, or repel any outside enemy who comes like a wolf upon the flock' (415d6-e4). In this way, the design of Socrates' third defective community is brought to completion.<sup>34</sup>

##### 5. *The dialectic of community I: Knowledge and authority*

Contemporary economics answers the question 'what should be produced?' by appeal to supply and demand, assuming human desires as they are. But Socrates' concern in the *Republic* is with the logic of a community as articulating the normative structure of the soul. The question is not one about what should be produced given human beings as they are, but what should be produced given human beings as they should be.

In the city for sows all social roles are defined by the therapeutic arts. The construction of the first city is rational since every social role is individuated by knowledge. While all of the arts qua forms of knowledge are needed by the community, some are 'greater' than others; the bridle-maker, for example, must take orders from the ploughman. The structure of the arts is hierarchically organised with the therapeutic τέχναι at the upper limit.

The arts of bodily care are incomplete in two ways. One sort of incompleteness was manifest in the second application of the logic of insufficiency, which expressed the therapeutic artisan's need for tools and materials. A second and fundamental incompleteness is deficiency in knowledge of what is really beneficial to the body. Each therapeutic art knows how to produce a given good such as food, but does not, qua the art that it is, know whether what it is able to produce is good. Should the farmer farm grain or should he farm cocoa? The farmer qua farmer does not even know what kind of food is good for the body (cf. *Laches* 195b3-c2).

The epistemic incompleteness of the therapeutic arts is indicated in the text by the way that Socrates introduces doctors into the community. Socrates asks, very slyly, whether he and Adeimantus will add some other 'therapist' of what has to do with the body (369d8-9). The obliqueness of the question signals that a fundamental change is taking place. Unlike the farmer, weaver and builder who are concerned with specific aspects of bodily well-being, the doctor is oriented toward the good of the *body as a whole*. The doctor thus emerges as a kind of ruler, who looks to the norm of health in order to determine how to answer the question of

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<sup>34</sup> To be sure, several significant details remain to be filled in, including those relating to domestic arrangements and sexual politics. See 449a *ff.* These are presented as elaborations on the cryptic remarks Socrates had made at 423e-424a.

what should be produced. The farmer, builder and weaver are answerable to the doctor: for she decides whether any specific kind of food or quantity of food, type of dwelling or clothing, is good for the body, that is, healthy.

In the city for sows the doctor was ruler; she knew the human body; she ruled over the other therapists of the body by ‘looking to’ a norm of health. Authority is, for Plato, always founded in knowledge (601c *ff.*). In the inflamed city, the poet is ruler; he prescribes what ought to be thought and felt by means of images of virtue and greatness. The freedom of the poet is a kind of slavery: such is, surely, one moral of the allegory of the cave (505a). But the poet qua poet, that is, maker of images, has no natural right to rule; for he has no authority founded on knowledge of the human soul; he must remain at the level of appearances. Just as the farmer is to be ruled by the dietician in the city for sows, the poet needs to be ruled by another sort of doctor, a doctor of the soul. This will be someone who follows the Delphic maxim and searches for knowledge of himself (*Phaedr.* 230a), who understands the modalities of human desire and so can comprehend the soul in all its beauty and monstrosity.<sup>35</sup> In the city of the armed camp there is no philosopher, but the guidance of philosophy is manifest in the principles of its construction, which express the knowledge of its founder.

#### 6. *The dialectic of community II: Justice and truth*

Socrates finds the ἀρχή of the community in the human lack of αὐτάρκεια (369b6-7). Human insufficiency creates the need for cooperation (369c3) and cooperation requires that people be willing to work together by performing different tasks; this is a question of distributive justice, not of goods, initially, but of jobs and hands. Hence it follows that the need for justice springs from an original deficiency in human nature in regard to knowledge of how to care for the body. Justice is, initially, an instrumental good; it is for the sake of knowledge of bodily care.

Human deficiencies in knowledge create the need for the therapeutic arts, which introduce social hierarchy into the community — different people are assigned to different social roles correlated with different degrees of authority based on knowledge (*Rep.* 601e). The hierarchical structure of the division of labour is independent of natural human inequality. But, as things are, human beings are not equal in respect of basic aptitudes (370a8-b2). Thus if function is to be fitted to virtue, to skill, then the structure of the economy is meritocracy.

For Plato, justice is geometrical equality: the justice of giving to each what is fitting or appropriate for him or her (*Rep.* 332b-c, *Laws* 757b-d and *Gorg.* 507e-

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<sup>35</sup> Kirkland 2010 and White 1989-1990:193.

508a). Geometrical equality implies arithmetical inequality: a giving of different things to different people. In Platonic terms, arithmetical equality — the giving of the same to everyone — is unjust. It is unjust to treat un-equals equally, as it is unjust to treat equals unequally. All citizens are citizens, but they are different on account of the structure of the division of labour into which their different natures, understood as aptitude and desire, must be as far as possible be contoured. Geometrical equality is equality of ratio: everyone receives the goods proportionate to his or her virtue.<sup>36</sup>

The city of pigs presents an account of justice as geometrical equality. But the city for sows is needy in its way, marked by deficiencies in the goods of the soul. The city's insufficiency in relation to spiritual goods produces poetry and the mimetic arts. Poetry is necessary because human beings desire to see themselves as living well. But poetry — or at least, poetry of a sort — expands the nature of desire. So the division of labour must be extended and differentials in natural aptitude are enlarged by being symbolised. The judge wears a black robe, the manual labourer a blue overall.

In the poetic representations of the community by means of conventional symbols people recognise themselves and their place in the community. There is, at least, the potential for envy and contempt. The transformation of desire produced by bad poetry creates sham crafts (373b8-c1; *Gorg.* 462b ff.) that lead to a breakdown in the structure of cooperation that was necessary for the development of the arts of bodily care. Thus it seems that the justice of the community — that which enabled cooperation — is eroded by the human desire for virtue. The idea of a human community can then seem self-contradictory: the primordial incompleteness of human nature joined with justice produces geometrical inequality by means of technology and poetry. Justice is, in a way, for the sake of injustice (cf. 351c7-10).

A community is a unity of multiplicity, a union of the same and the different. Justice is a mode of unification by which different elements work together to fulfil the functions of the community, that is, those functions that it must do well in order to — as it were — *do well*. Justice as geometrical equality is then for Plato the self-reflexive virtue of assigning social roles on the basis of virtue.<sup>37</sup> Justice is respect for sameness and difference, a form of attention to the nature of every individual as the being that he or she is.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For helpful discussion, see Kosman 2007. Cf. Aristotle, E.N., bk. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Kosman 1983.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Lachterman 1989:150.

In a city characterised by geometrical equality there is no gap between the individual good and the common good.<sup>39</sup> If everyone does the job to which he is by nature suited, and for which he has the virtue, the whole city is benefitted. By doing his own work (433a *ff.*) an individual also works for others. The city of the armed camp is an attempt to design ‘a regime whose laws are such as to serve the common good while allowing each of its members to reach his natural perfection’<sup>40</sup> It is a regime in which ‘life [is not] eternally torn between duty to the city and duty to oneself’.<sup>41</sup>

If justice is the virtue of assigning social position on the basis of virtue, then everyone must know her nature and her virtue, that is, know herself. The blacksmith must feel that she is a blacksmith. For if the blacksmith aspires to be governor, geometrical equality will be destroyed. But — and herein lies a difficulty — true self-knowledge is not possible for a blacksmith. Self-knowledge requires philosophy; in fact, it requires so much philosophy that Socrates didn’t have the time to do anything else (*Phaedr.* 229e-230a).

At the end of the discussion of the content of the stories that will be purged from Glaucon’s community, Socrates sets aside what the poets say about justice and human beings on the grounds that it would beg the question at hand (392b). But this does not seem to be quite accurate, since, as already discussed (§4), Socrates reserves some lies about justice for himself. The myth of the metals is an image of justice as geometrical equality; it is a myth about unity in difference.<sup>42</sup>

Justice is a mode of unification, a way of producing unity from multiplicity in a way that respects the ‘being what it is’ of every element. The introduction of poetry into the city for sows in order to satisfy the desire for self-knowledge produced geometrical inequality by presenting distorted images of the self. The need for a noble lie is an admission that this problem cannot be solved at a deeper level. The universal and common pursuit of philosophy is impossible. The myth of the metals then ‘solves’ the problem by enabling the craftsmen and the soldiers to see themselves as good and virtuous, and to recognise that they are recognised by others for what they are. The lie enables the blacksmith in his forge to see himself as a kind of Hephaestus, capable of producing a beautiful shield for Achilles.<sup>43</sup>

Socrates’ telling of his Phoenician story suggests that truth and justice as geometrical equality cannot be wholly joined in a human community.<sup>44</sup> Justice as

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<sup>39</sup> Strauss 1964:78 and Bloom 1968:344.

<sup>40</sup> Bloom 1968:343.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 344.

<sup>42</sup> See Lear 2006:42 note 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Iliad* 18.369-483.

<sup>44</sup> The inhumanity of the first city is also its truthfulness; no lies are needed in the city for sows. See Strauss 1964:98.

geometrical equality must be born of a lie. Since justice requires self-knowledge and self-knowledge requires Socratic philosophy, justice and truth can be reconciled only in the activity of philosophy. In the luxurious city, justice was for the sake of poetry. Justice needs to be for the sake of philosophy. And philosophy needs to be for the sake of justice (473c-e). Only then will justice be for the sake of itself.<sup>45</sup> Only then will justice be an intrinsic good. This is, in outline, the logic that leads to the development of Socrates' beautiful city.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For discussion, see Bloom 2017:78 ff.

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