KİLİKYA FELSEFE DERGİSİ Sayı: 1, Nisan 2025, 51 - 72.
KİLİKYA JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY Issue: 1, April 2025, 51 - 72.

Makale Geliş Tarihi | Received: 29.09.2024 E-ISSN: 2148-9327
Makale Kabul Tarihi | Accepted: 07.04.2025 http://dergipark.org.tr/kilikya
Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article

PLATON *DEVLET* BİRİNCİ KİTAP'I SOKRATES'E KARŞI MI YAZDI?

Süleyman Çağlar VAROL[1]

Öz: Felsefe eserlerinin giriş bölümleri eserin kalanı ve konusu hakkında önemli ipuçları sağlamaktadır. Bu sebeple es geçilmemeleri, eserin bütünü bağlamında değerlendirmeleri ve açıklanmaları önem arz etmektedir. İzleyen bölümlerin hangi motivasyonla yazıldığını anlamak ve bölümlerin arasındaki bütünlüğü kavramak için de bu nokta geçerlidir. Felsefe tarihinin en önemli eserlerinden olan Platon'un *Devlet*'inin Birinci Kitap'ı, bir giriş bölümüne oldukça benzemekte ve dolayısıyla yukarıda saydığım çerçevede değerlendirilmelidir. Her ne kadar araştırmalar genellikle eserin devamında Platon tarafından öne sürülen fikirlerin incelenmesine ayrıldıysa da Birinci Kitap'ın kalanlardan belli nitelikler bakımından farklı olduğu da saptanmıştır. Hem bu niteliğiyle hem de diğer bölümlerin yanıtlamaya çalıştığı sorunların kavranmasına katkı sağlayacağı için Birinci Kitap da benzer bir araştırmayı hak etmektedir. Bu çalışma, Platon'un eserinin ilgili bölümünde başlıca elen alınan ve çoğunlukla dilimize "adalet" olarak çevrilen *dikaiosynē* (δικαιοσύνη) kavramını, bu kavramın farklı isimler (Kephalos, Polemarkhos ve Thrasymakhos) tarafından nasıl anlaşılıp yorumlandığı, Sokrates'in (veya Platon'un) bu kavrama dair söyledikleri ve bahsedilen isimlerin bu kavramla ilgili görüşlerine verdiği karşılıkları, bu tartışmanın niçin önemli olduğunu ve izleyen bölümler (kitaplar) için neden temel olduğunu açıklamaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet, Adalet, Sokrates, Thrasymakhos, Platon

DID PLATO WRITE *REPUBLIC* I AGAINST SOCRATES?

Abstract: The introduction sections of philosophical works provide important insights into the subject and the rest of the work. It is therefore crucial not to dismiss them but to evaluate and explain them within the scope of the whole work. This remark is also valid for understanding the motivation behind the following sections and grasping the integrity of all sections. Book I of Plato's *Republic* is akin to an introduction section and should be evaluated and explained in this light. Although research has generally been devoted to investigating the thoughts and philosophical/political doctrines put forward by Plato in the rest of the work, it has also been asserted that Book I differs from the rest in certain aspects. Considering this difference and the possible contribution of the book in question to the comprehension of the problems that the other books attempt to answer, Book I deserves similar scrutiny. This study aims to explain the concept

[1] Lisans Öğrencisi | Undergraduate Student
Koç Üniversitesi, İnsani Bilimler ve Edebiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe Bölümü, Türkiye | Koç University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Philosophy Department, Türkiye.
svarol19@ku.edu.tr
Orcid Id: 0009-0000-2177-648X

of *dikaiosynē* (δικαιοσύνη), a Greek term mostly rendered into English as "justice", which is mainly discussed in the relevant book of Plato's work, how this concept was understood and interpreted by various figures (Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus), what Socrates (or Plato) considered regarding this concept and how he replied to these figures' accounts of this concept, why this discussion is important and also fundamental for the following books.

Keywords: Republic, Justice, Socrates, Thrasymachus, Plato

1. Introduction

Plato's (positive) philosophical thoughts and political doctrines as they are presented in the *Republic* have attracted vast scholarly attention.[2] Similar attention should be paid to Book I of the *Republic* so that the following books may be better comprehended and situated. Recent scholarship has argued that Book I may be approached as a proem, a very condensed, carefully worded, formal introduction to an extensive work that acts programmatically (Thanassas, 2021). In this light, Book I serves a purpose similar to the contemporary tool of a literature review since it showcases the conventional ideas popular among laymen side-by-side with the more sophisticated ideas that had recently emerged and developed among intellectuals in Plato's time.

In this essay, I aim to analyze the central concept of the *Republic*, namely *dikaiosynē* (δικαιοσύνη), by outlining the different views on this concept expressed by the collocutors of Socrates (viz., Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus), as well as Socrates' (and perhaps Plato's) objections to these views in Book I. I will also address the question of why this discussion is important both independently and as a part of the *Republic*'s wider philosophical program.

Much scholarly attention has been concentrated on the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus, who seriously challenged Socrates and Plato. However, as I will argue, the discussions between Socrates and his collocutors have further significance since Socrates' claims and objections to these collocutors might have been some possible sources of Plato's dissatisfaction with Socrates (or Socratic philosophy) which might have motivated Plato to write the subsequent books of the *Republic*. Accordingly, in this essay, I will attempt to underline these possible sources and argue that Book I can be read as a critique of Socrates which might signal a divergence of Plato's philosophy from Socrates' and shed light on how the former goes beyond the latter. Therefore, in line with this attempt, I aspire not only to offer a mere exposition of Socrates' claims and objections, exploring their connections with common Socratic themes found in other dialogues and so forth as often done in literature, but also, in fact primarily, I intend to rigorously reflect on Socrates' claims and objections and to investigate whether he succeeds in defending his position, responding to the opposing views of his collocutors, settling the disagreements and most importantly, gets his message to the reader of Book I convincingly.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Greek are mine.

2. A Remark on the Translation of "*dikaiosynē*"

The central concept of *dikaiosynē* has been commonly rendered into English as "justice", though "fairness" and "righteousness" may be closer to the original Greek term.[3] The English term "justice", I believe, doubles as a legal and/or a moral term, yet as is evident in the rest of the *Republic*, *dikaiosynē* is primarily meant by Plato as a psychological state, a type of harmony within the soul, which eventually leads people to act as they are supposed to act—in the just right manner (Cooper, 1977).[4] Being in the psychological state of *dikaiosynē* and acting in the right manner as a result of being in this state is important both for a person's life in general and for his social interactions with others. As Annas (1981) observes, Aristotle would later break this term into two distinguishable qualities, those of "law-abidingness" and "virtuous behavior to others in general"; for Plato, however, this holistic understanding of *dikaiosynē* provides us with a conception of "the good life in general", not necessarily confined to various sorts of social interactions (Annas, 1981, pp. 12-13). In short, the meaning of the Greek term extends beyond the legal and moral connotations of "justice".[5] In this essay, I will therefore opt for the more inclusive translation of *dikaiosynē* as "fairness" so as to avoid such connotations.[6]

3. On the Dialogue Form

Although the entire discussion of the *Republic* is related to the concept of *dikaiosynē*, it is plain that Book I differs from the rest of Plato's work in format and outlook, in that it resembles more the tone of other (earlier) Socratic dialogues, which could, in fact, be read as a stand-alone dialogue (Irwin, 1995).[7] For instance, here too, Socrates engages in

[3] See Annas (1981) for arguments for and against each translation option (pp. 10-13).

[4] The state in question is not presented by Plato as a momentary one like pain, but rather as a long-term, character trait. Perhaps *dikaiosynē* should be considered as "the disposition to do what is right or fair" (Schofield, 2008, p. 199).

[5] Reeve (2004) also acknowledges that the Greek term is broader than "justice" but thinks that it is closer to "ethical rightness in general" (p. 328). In opposition to Reeve, Chappell (1993) states that for Socrates and Thrasymachus, *dikaiosynē* is not "simply a (rough) synonym for the phrase 'moral rightness'" and adds that they do not conceive of *dikaiosynē* as "a concept which might be used in the justification of particular deeds or ways of living. It is a concept which itself stands in need of justification, by reference to the more basic notion of that flourishing human life to which [fairness] or [unfairness] may or may not be seen as contributing" (pp. 4-5). Chappell's observation is pertinent because, as will be discussed later in this essay (see §5), towards the end of Book I, Socrates and Thrasymachus discuss whether fairness or unfairness paves the way for a good and happy life.

[6] The translation of *dikaiosynē* as "fairness" is suggested to me by Haris Theodorelis-Rigas.

[7] To clarify, I do not argue for (or against) the hypothesis that Book I was initially written as an independent dialogue on *dikaiosynē,* and Plato later integrated it into the alleged original books of the *Republic*. The question concerning whether this hypothesis is true or not is not my concern in this essay because regardless of whether Book I was initially an independent dialogue, I aim to study it as a part of the *Republic*. As Kahn (1993), who strictly argues against this hypothesis and claims that Book I has always been a prelude to the *Republic* for Book I largely anticipates the issues that will be addressed in the following books, points out, even if this hypothesis was true, we should still ask why Plato preferred to commence his work with a Socratic dialogue.

a dialogue with some collocutors who take themselves to be knowledgeable about a certain virtue, moves to show that they are wrong but does not offer a satisfying alternative view. This similarity is meaningful and presupposes a firm grasp of the essential features of these dialogues.[8]

Before focusing on these features, it is worth noting that due to the dialogue format enacted by various characters but never by Plato himself, it is not always easy to identify the views expressed by the characters as belonging to these historical personalities, most notably Socrates, or Plato himself (Frede, 1992). That is, given the fictitious nature of these dialogues (there seems to be no straightforward criterion to maintain whether Plato depicts some authentic encounters between Socrates and numerous figures or whether the characters in the dialogues, including Socrates, perfectly match the historical personalities, i.e., the real Socrates or, for instance, the real Thrasymachus), there is no warrant for claiming that the articulated views belong to Plato or other people seen in dialogues (Frede, 1992).

The commonly held view is that at least in certain dialogues, the character of Socrates is there to present Plato's views, while in others he is closer to the historical Socrates.[9] The problem concerning the *Republic* is that we find Socrates both in Book I and the rest of the work. If there is indeed a difference between Book I and the rest, we should be cautious about the role played by Socrates. Moreover, if Annas (1981) is right when she says that Book I is a dialogue whereas the rest is mostly a monologue, this contrast between Book I and other books must serve a purpose.[10] This contrast, I believe, indicates that Plato does not fully abide by any of the views stated in Book I, including those expressed by Socrates. The reason is that Plato argues for his own views in detail in the following books, where we find Socrates almost in the role of an instructor or even a theoretician who articulates Plato's views. The question concerning whether the views presented in Book I belong to actual people does not undermine the book's value and purpose. What is crucial is the views themselves and probably the group of people each of these characters come to represent.

[8] Aygün (2018) rightly points out that Plato consistently and purposefully preferred the dialogue form for producing philosophical works. He argues that any reading of Plato that fails to recognize the pivotal role of the dialogue form in Plato's philosophizing is bound to be invalid given Plato's explicit preference.

[9] The problem addressed here concerning whether Plato faithfully represented the historical Socrates in his dialogues is part of the famous "Socratic Problem". Our information about the historical Socrates comes from a variety of texts predominantly by Plato but also by Aristotle, Aristophanes, and Xenophon. This raises the question, "What was the historical Socrates really like?" since it is a formidable challenge to distinguish the historical Socrates from the literary character of Socrates in these texts given that the authors of these texts did not intend to portray the historical Socrates accurately, but rather mostly use the character of Socrates "as a kind of mouthpiece through which the author is advancing some agenda of his own that had little or nothing to do with the historical Socrates" (Brickhouse & Smith, 2000, p. 15). Guthrie (1971) argues that "there is, and always, will be a 'Socratic problem'" in as much as we are left with no written work by Socrates himself (p. 6). See Brickhouse and Smith (2000) for an evaluation of the representations of Socrates by Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Plato, respectively (pp. 33-49).

[10] Kahn (1993) characterizes the contrast between Book I and the rest of the books by describing Book I as "polemical, as in earlier works", whereas the rest as "didactic, as in later dialogues" (p. 134).

We can now return to the features of Socratic dialogues. In these dialogues, including Book I, the crossexaminer, i.e. Socrates, who employs the method of *elenchus*, is presented as defending no particular position, but rather as challenging the initial views of a certain respondent, leading him (the respondent) to contradict himself based on some other beliefs he "sincerely holds and is unwilling to abandon" by constantly raising questions and eventually showing that these initial views cannot be true in light of these sincerely held beliefs (Reeve, 2004, p. xi) and that he, therefore, has an inconsistent set of beliefs (Brickhouse & Smith, 2000).[11] In other words, these dialogues are *elenctic* in the sense that Socrates questions "whether the respondent on a given subject matter has any claim to authority, to knowledge, to expertise" (Frede, 1992, p. 211). Furthermore, these dialogues are *aporetic* in the sense that the issues discussed by Socrates and his respondents remain unresolved, the respondents' authority and opinions about the subject matter of the discussion are proven to be wrong and the respondents cannot continue discussing it, yet no positive alternative is offered by Socrates instead. The main conclusion drawn therefore is that being knowledgeable about the thorny subject matters discussed in these dialogues and becoming an expert on these matters is quite an ambitious task, in which most people fail. This difficulty has a special significance.

> Beliefs about these subject-matters, like virtue, reality, justice, evil, do not form relatively small, isolated clusters; they form sheer endless chains which, and this is of equal importance, determine, or help to determine, our whole life and the life of the society we live in (Frede, 1992, p. 215).

Such fundamental ethical matters deeply shape our lives and societies. And yet, (the presumable Athenian) people usually have false beliefs about these matters. Therefore, the wrong beliefs must first be eliminated and only then replaced by new ones, which have resulted from a rigorous (philosophical) investigation. From this standpoint, a revision and refinement of these commonly held beliefs may result in a (hopefully positive) change in the way people live. I am inclined to think that this is exactly what Plato aims to accomplish in the *Republic*. In line with the elenctic and aporetic natures of his earlier works, Plato employs Book I as an opportunity for Socrates (or rather for himself) to question and even perhaps disprove the views held by Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus, respectively, thus revealing the ineptitude of the beliefs held both by common folk and self-styled experts like the sophists (or intellectuals in a broader sense).[12] Such commonly held views are more often than not false and fallacious, or at best misleading and not well-grounded. By instructing people

[11] See Irwin (1995, pp. 17-20), Benson (2002), and Brickhouse and Smith (2002) on Socrates' method of *elenchus*.

[12] Reeve (2004), confirming these points, argues that the elenctic nature of Socratic dialogues serves the crucial overarching purpose of "moral reform" (so, this is not peculiar to Book I, nor is to the *Republic*) (p. xii). This is because "Socrates believes that, by curing people of the hubris of thinking they know when they do not, leading the elenctically examined life makes them happier and more virtuous than anything else" (Reeve, p. xii). Penner (2008) seems to agree on this point for he claims that according to Socrates, "*only philosophical dialogue* can improve one's fellow citizens" (p. 164, original emphasis). In a similar vein, Scott (1999) states that Socrates discussed philosophical issues with his respondents mainly with the intention to morally better not only his respondents but also himself.

in these subject matters, such as fairness, Plato aims to reorganize the *polis* accordingly because, as it can be seen in the rest of his work, "[h]is ideal person is dedicated to a social ideal, and identified with a social role" (Annas, 1981, p. 2). Once one provides people with some cogent reasons and arguments as to why their beliefs are mistaken and reforms their beliefs about fairness (remember its connection with people's acts and behaviors, and relations with each other) by proposing convincing alternatives, one can create a fair society and a fair state. In this respect, there is a significant common ground shared by the cross-examiner and the respondent and, in turn by the author (Plato) and the (presumable Athenian) reader, within which Plato's works, including Book I of course, "are supposed to teach us a philosophical lesson" (Frede, 1992, p. 219).

It is worth noting the specific socio-cultural milieu in which Plato wrote the *Republic*, with the explicit aim of bringing about positive changes through the revision and refinement of commonly held beliefs. First and foremost, the intellectual atmosphere of fifth-century Athens witnessed a clash between traditional values and a rising relativism and skepticism targeting both cultural and moral norms. As intellectuals began to question traditional values, they paved the way for moral skepticism and relativism and "replace[d] the question of how to live a good life with the question of how best to get on in the world" (Annas, 1981, p. 8). Plato did not endorse these trends and was in search of disproving them. He wanted to argue for moral objectivism but was aware that the dissatisfaction among these intellectuals was not altogether unfair, groundless, and pointless. So, "[t]raditional confidence in traditional values is to be re-established" (Annas, 1981, p. 8). This seems to outline Plato's overarching project well.

With this aim in mind, by having Socrates talk, Plato first shows some problems with the traditional views prevalent among Athenians and demonstrates the unsatisfactory sides of the accounts of fairness presented by Cephalus and Polemarchus. Accordingly, Book I, where wrong beliefs are expected to be eliminated, can be considered a first step in Plato's overarching project. I will not examine these accounts or Socrates' objections against them in full. Rather, I will examine them in the context of what the concept of fairness is not.

4. Cephalus and Polemarchus on Fairness

Cephalus' response to the question "What is fairness?" is basically a set of actions including, but possibly not limited to, "speaking the truth" and "giving back what is borrowed" (Socrates needs to paraphrase Cephalus' words as they are not direct or to the point) (331c). Socrates easily rejects this account by showing that although under certain circumstances a particular fair act can be identical to a particular act of giving back what is borrowed, under other circumstances, it is not fair to give back what is borrowed. For example, when some weapons are borrowed from a friend, even if he asks, it will not be fair to give them back if he becomes mad (331c-d). This divergence suggests that a fair act and the act of giving back what is borrowed are not type identical which means that what Cephalus suggests cannot be the definition or ultimate characterization of fairness.

Cephalus' response may be poor, and Socrates' objection simple but nevertheless, both the response and the objection show two important things. First, we should note that Cephalus, in fact, does not say that whenever the owner demands what is borrowed back, one should return it immediately. The timing of returning it may vary, for instance, one may wait until the owner recovers from madness, but ultimately, one must return what has been borrowed. Socrates is right that Cephalus' account is poor, but he is not being fair to Cephalus because he distorts his collocutor's words. This flaw in Socrates' objection can be interpreted as a "Platonic gesture" which is, according to Aygün (2018), a moment in a dialogue where the dramatic and argumentative aspects of the dialogue intervene with one another (pp. 81-82). He claims that in a dialogue where the notion of fairness is examined in depth, if one of the characters is unfair to another character, this unfair behavior is a Platonic gesture, which signals that a discussion concerning fairness cannot be pursued in isolation from the collocutors. In this light, when a collocutor commits unfair behavior in a discussion concerning fairness, his behavior creates the impression that the presupposition that one should possess an adequate understanding of what fairness is to articulate one's opinions about fairness is not satisfied, that is, this collocutor lacks such an understanding. So, the nature of Socrates' objection might illustrate Plato's own dissatisfaction with Socrates' position and some of his views or the manner in which he argues for these views. Moreover, Aygün (2018) thinks that in this way the reader is encouraged to reflect on and scrutinize the views articulated by the collocutors instead of passively following an abstract, theoretical discussion.[13] If the reader is supposed to learn a philosophical lesson from the dialogue, such encouragement can serve as a (didactic) facilitator.

Second, Cephalus is an ordinary but rich old man whose conception of fairness is limited to performing certain actions and obeying certain rules. He claims that his wealth helps him to pursue a fair life and is quite complacent, but his conception of fairness is so limited that he is not concerned at all about "the kind of person" he is (Annas, 1981, p. 20). However, fairness cannot be reduced to the mere chronicling and/or performance of some actions.[14] On the contrary, it is what leads one to perform fair actions.

---

[13] According to a certain approach to the interpretation of Plato's dialogues, these dialogues are produced so as to encourage the reader to pursue her own philosophical investigation concerning the subject matter of a given dialogue (Gill, 2006). Sedley (1996) mentions a similar way of interpreting Plato's *Theaetetus* due to Platonist commentators of antiquity according to which the dialogue itself exemplifies a philosophical (midwifery, in other words, maieutic) method that aims to encourage the reader to form her own opinions concerning the subject matter of the dialogue. See also Sayre (1992) and Leigh (2007) on this method.

[14] Another possible reading of Cephalus' response might be that Cephalus chronicles a set of actions with a view to showing what is common (if anything at all) to all these actions or the agents of these actions, that is, it is perfectly possible that Cephalus in fact "gives examples and intends them to be taken in a particular way", i.e., inviting Socrates to see what is common (Wittgenstein, *PI*, §§71-72). After all, giving examples in this way and with such an intention can be a valid way of explaining a concept, such as fairness and Wittgenstein (*PI*, §71, original emphasis) argues that "giving examples is not an *indirect* way of explaining — in default of a better one", e.g., providing a full-fledged definition. I nevertheless said that Cephalus' account cannot be the definition of fairness because even if it is a proper explanation of what fairness is, it is still not the *kind* of explanation that Socrates seeks given his (and possibly Plato's) obsession with definitions as the sole means of explanation of concepts. The underlying assumption behind this obsession

For all his ignorance, Cephalus maintains that being fair is in fact beneficial because, otherwise, one will be punished (presumably in his afterlife). Here, the crucial point is that the motive behind Cephalus' eagerness to be fair, namely his fear of punishment, is not satisfactory. On the face of it, Cephalus' motive implies that if there is no punishment for unfairness, one does not need to be fair. Or if one's benefit from being unfair exceeds the harm one receives from being punished, one can prefer to be unfair. If being fair is beneficial for someone (also in one's lifetime), Plato needs to demonstrate that this is true yet for a different reason than Cephalus'; otherwise, he cannot re-establish the traditional understanding that fairness is beneficial.

Polemarchus gives a somewhat more sophisticated and general account than Cephalus' but relies on and recites the poet Simonides (or he claims that Cephalus relies on Simonides, and he builds on Simonides' words). He first says that fairness is "giving back what we owe to each other" (331e). Then, with the help of Socrates, he revises his account and says that fairness is "benefiting one's friends and harming one's enemies" (332d). As Steadman (2011) illustrates, this view was shared by others or seen in other works and "was part of popular Greek morality" (p. 19).[15]

I will not consider each of Socrates' counterarguments and will mention only the ones I find relevant to the current essay. In a nutshell, Socrates claims that for helping one's friends to be a fair act, these friends must be good people and for harming one's enemies to be an unfair act, these enemies must be bad people, but given our fallibility, we may mistakenly think that a friend of ours is a good person while he is actually not, which is tantamount to believing that it is fair to benefit someone bad (334c-e). Socrates thereby shows that Polemarchus contradicts himself because it is obviously not fair to benefit a bad person (or equivalently harm a good person).

In the course of Socrates' elenchus, Polemarchus eventually acknowledges some contradictions with his initial position. The points that he concedes to Socrates stem from his own genuine beliefs, which he is unwilling to abandon.[16] For instance, he sincerely

seems to be that, as Brickhouse and Smith (2000) neatly state, "Only if one knows the definition of some quality (F-ness) can one know anything about F-ness or F-things, including whether any instance of F-ness is really an instance" (p. 100). Thus, Socrates wants his respondents to provide him with an explanation that renders one able to judge whether any particular instance is an instance of the concept in question, say, fairness, but not a few actual instances of this concept. See Brickhouse and Smith (2000, pp. 99-120) on the Socratic priority of definitions, Wolfsdorf (2003) on how Socrates quest for definitions, and Ben-Yami (2017) on Wittgenstein and the Socratic/Platonic view that definitions are the sole explanations of (meanings of) concepts.

[15] For instance, in *Meno*, Meno says in response to Socrates' question concerning what virtue is: "It is not hard to tell you, Socrates. First, if you want the virtue of a man, it is easy to say that a man's virtue consists of being able to manage public affairs and in so doing *to benefit his friends and harm his enemies* and to be careful that no harm comes to himself…" (71e-72a, my emphasis, trans. G. M. A. Grube, 1997).

[16] Vlastos (1994) argues that Socrates requires his respondent to "say what you believe", that is, Socrates does not intend to force his respondent to agree with him on the points he makes just for the sake of agreement without genuinely endorsing them while they are discussing, but rather he encourages his respondent to affirm the points that this respondent himself does consider to be true (p. 7). See, e.g., Book I, 346a.

believes that it is unfair to harm good people. Instead of abandoning this belief, he abandons (or modifies, as will be explained below) the one he initially held, namely that fairness is to benefit friends and harm enemies. So, through examination, Socrates helps him to see that some of his beliefs cannot be held simultaneously with his other beliefs. However, one concern might be whether there exists an established criterion for eliminating which of these beliefs that one cannot hold simultaneously in case of inconsistency. Can holding a belief sincerely be a criterion? As Reeve (2004) aptly notes:

> Socrates must be presupposing, therefore, that some of Polemarchus' sincerely held ethical beliefs [about fairness] are true, since inconsistency with false beliefs is no guarantee of falsehood. The problem is that there seems to be little reason to accept this presupposition (p. xiii).

Reeve argues that just because a belief contradicts another belief, we cannot say that one of them must be true. To illustrate, one cannot (or should not) believe that the surface of a table is all red and also that it is all yellow. Conceivably both of these contradicting beliefs can be wrong if the surface is, say, black. In other words, just because two beliefs are contradicting, we cannot safely conclude that one of them must be true. So, he claims that for inconsistency to be a criterion for the elimination of *merely* some beliefs and maintenance of others, Socrates must presuppose that other beliefs are true, and these beliefs are the ones that are sincerely held by Polemarchus, or any respondent. However, Reeve finds this presupposition almost groundless. I disagree.

> The agent has only to reflect on what a belief is to appreciate that most of his basic beliefs are true, and among his beliefs, those most securely held and that cohere with the main body of his beliefs are the most apt to be true. The question 'how do I know my beliefs are generally true?' thus answers itself, simply because beliefs are by nature generally true (Davidson, 2006, pp. 237-238).

Davidson thinks that if a certain belief is securely held by someone and coheres with more fundamental beliefs, this particular belief has a higher probability of being true.[17] Socrates seems to share a similar view and favors the belief held more securely or sincerely by Polemarchus over the one that Polemarchus is ready to abandon, which is therefore a belief that is held less securely and coheres less with the more fundamental ones.[18] If his belief that fairness is to benefit friends and harm enemies was held more securely and received more support from the rest of his beliefs, then Polemarchus would have kept this belief and rejected the belief that it is unfair to harm good people. But he did not. So, in light of Davidson's view, Socrates and Polemarchus appear to be justified to a fairly large extent in eliminating the beliefs that were held less securely and sincerely in case of an inconsistency among Polemarchus' beliefs.

[17] Very roughly, we can consider coherence as mutual support among beliefs. Two consistent beliefs may not cohere. For example, it is dubious whether a belief that 3 is a number and a belief that red is a color cohere or not. However, if two beliefs are inconsistent, such as a belief that 3 is a number and a belief that 3 is a color, they presumably do not cohere.

[18] I simply assume that there is not much (if any at all) difference between securely and sincerely held beliefs.

It may be beneficial to ponder over the method of elenchus a bit further. However plausible this method might appear from this Davidsonian viewpoint, we should admit that it has certain limitations. If a particular belief does not cohere with the main body of beliefs, what can at most be said is that it is likely to be false, but in spite of this likelihood, it can still be true. Accordingly, what this method can at most achieve is the elimination of a particular belief that tends to prove false, compared to the remaining ones that an agent holds more sincerely and securely in a given set of beliefs, which are more likely to be true. (In a similar vein, we should notice that an agent may not know which subset of a given set of beliefs contains all and only the true beliefs, or, in other words, she may not know exactly which of these beliefs forming a coherent set of beliefs are true. That is, even if a particular belief does cohere with the main body of beliefs, an agent cannot ensure that that very belief is true. She can at most say that it is likely to be true.) These considerations seem to suggest that Socrates' method, from a Davidsonian viewpoint, cannot be employed in the establishment of the truth or the falsity of a particular belief with full warrant.[19] Having sufficiently understood the rationale of Socrates' (cross-)examination, we may now return to his discussion with Polemarchus.[20]

Polemarchus subsequently modifies his account: one must benefit (harm) his friend (enemy) "provided that he is good [bad]" (335a). Socrates then moves on to claim that fairness cannot involve harming even if the one who is to be harmed is a bad person. For him, fairness is a sort of human excellence or virtue, and when people are harmed, they become worse in terms of their excellence or virtue and become unfair as a result. However, people cannot use fairness to bring about its opposite, just like a horse trainer cannot make people unsuitable for riding using his horse training (i.e., his craft or skill), therefore, Polemarchus' account is false (335b-c), despite its popularity. Moreover, Socrates thinks that a fair man is not supposed to harm others at all since a good man is not supposed to harm people just like "dryness [is not supposed] to wet, but the

[19] The problem addressed by Reeve (2004) above in the text is the notorious "problem of elenchus". Vlastos (1994) writes: "What Socrates in fact does in any given elenchus is to convict *p* of being a member of an inconsistent premise-set; and to do this is not to show that *p* is false but only that either *p* is false or that some or all of the premises are false. The question then becomes how Socrates can claim…to have proved that the refutand is false, when all he has established is its inconsistency with premises whose truth he has not tried to establish in that argument: they have entered the argument simply as propositions on which he and the interlocutor are agreed. This is the problem of *the* Socratic elenchus…" (pp. 3-4, original emphasis). I am, on the other hand, inclined to believe that, according to the account of elenchus I offered, elenchus is never meant to show that *p* is false. Vlastos has definitely a point: Socrates shows only that his respondent simultaneously holds inconsistent beliefs. Given that some of these beliefs must be abandoned as the belief that *p* is inconsistent with the others, Socrates and his respondent have to decide which of these beliefs must be abandoned. As Vlastos notes, they basically favor the ones about the propositions they are in agreement on, which are, I think, the beliefs that the respondent holds more securely and sincerely, and therefore they abandon the belief that *p*. So, according to the account of elenchus I offered, the purported problem of elenchus simply dissolves as the employer of this method never claims to have proved that *p* is false.

[20] Cf. Brickhouse and Smith (2000) who, in reply to the problem of elenchus (see fn. 18), defend an "inductivist" account of elenchus according to which previous philosophical discussions in which Socrates took part taught him which belief(s) must be eliminated (pp. 87-89) and Doyle (2010) who argues that contra Vlastos (see fn. 18), there is no problem of elenchus and provides another Davidsonian approach to the method of elenchus.

opposite" and that a fair man is a good man and concludes that "in no case, it is fair to harm anyone" contra Polemarchus (335d-e).

With this answer, Socrates shows that fairness is not a principle or an imperative that governs our actions but something internal to a human, namely an excellence or virtue. Here, it might be fruitful to reflect on the notion of virtue in more detail. The Greek notion translated as "virtue" is *aretē* (ἀρετή), which is not limited to morality, or even human beings, but includes presumably all entities. It is sometimes translated as "excellence" in the sense that it is the quality that makes something an excellent instance of the type of thing it is an instance of. There is no counterpart of this notion in English, and it may seem that Socrates' position is stillborn, as the extension of the notion includes qualities of non-human beings. It is important to note that this problem did not arise from the perspective of an ordinary Greek. That is, the way Socrates uses *aretē* is compatible with the way it was used in the ordinary (Greek) language, where the word, *aretē*, "is at home" (Wittgenstein, *PI*, §116).

Having said that, I am not claiming that Socrates' view that fairness is a virtue is by definition free from error. That is, upon philosophical reflection, his view might prove to be erroneous. Still, it seems reasonable that fairness is a virtue but the sense in which it is a virtue should be clarified. Socrates uses the example of dogs (335b) and talks as though the virtue of dogs is what makes a dog a good dog. Thus, the sense Socrates has in mind is apparently not moral, provided that he does not attribute morality to animals. In fact, he is not required at all to conceive of fairness as a moral virtue given the broader meaning of the original Greek term.[21] However, even then, it is far from obvious why fairness should be a human virtue (but not a human vice, for instance, or even none of these two) and one must accept this without questioning. If fairness is not considered a moral virtue *per se*, one could claim that the ultimate human virtue is, say, rationality and if it clashes with fairness, one must pursue his reason. (This line of reasoning is similar to that of Thrasymachus which will be discussed in the next section.) To dispel and avoid such counterarguments and criticisms, Plato needs to show that fairness *qua* virtue does not or cannot clash with rationality *qua* virtue. We can now return to Socrates' answer.

Socrates' answer reveals that he in fact considers fairness as a craft or skill. Given that he sees fairness as both an excellence or virtue and a craft or skill, we can say that for Socrates, an excellence or virtue is a craft or skill. Penner (1973) acknowledges this point and states that "on the Socratic view it is also the case that virtue is an art or skill" (p. 149).[22]

[21] Still, Vlastos (1994) notes that despite the fact that "[f]or 'moral' Socrates has no special word", Socrates' investigation is a moral one (pp. 6-7) and adds that "in expounding Socratic doctrine he [Socrates] uses ἀρετή [*aretē*] to mean 'moral virtue'" (fn. 25).

[22] See Irwin (1995, pp. 68-70) on Socrates on the relation between crafts and virtues.

Although one may find the craft or skill analogy[23] (i.e., Socrates' move to draw similarities between virtues and crafts or skills or equate virtues with crafts or skills) misleading for various reasons, I do not believe that the term *technē* (τέχνη) creates a particular problem since it means "skill", "art", and "craft". From our perspective, it seems problematic to think that fairness is a *craft*. However, I think, that for a Greek this term is not composite (A+B+C), but rather inclusive ABC, that is, it is we who divide it into subcomponents as we do not have a concept perfectly corresponding to *technē*, so we use more than one concept to render it into English. This is why the claim that fairness is a craft seems quite unreasonable or odd. Apparently, this claim would not have seemed as such to a Greek, otherwise, Polemarchus would have presumably denied this claim immediately. On the contrary, he sees Socrates' point and follows the steps Socrates takes in the course of their discussion though he grants this analogy for the sake of Socrates' arguments without genuinely endorsing it.

The mention of crafts and skills has further significance. Annas (1981), neatly defines a craft or skill as "an organized body of knowledge of the ways to achieve a certain end" and adds that it is something "impartible" (p. 25). This may imply that those who have such knowledge can impart it to others. That is, people can undergo training to acquire any skill or knowledge and come to possess some skills, including fairness.[24] Without any doubt, training or education is a crucial topic and Plato devotes a significant role to it in the rest of his work.[25]

Having said that, a skill is *prima facie* different than a psychological state. So, if Plato is to give a novel account of fairness as a psychological state, the view that fairness is a skill can hardly be the view Plato will argue for in the rest of the *Republic*. As Reeve (1985) observes, Plato does not use this craft or skill analogy in the rest of the *Republic*. If so, this is a disagreement between Plato and Socrates and can be seen as an objection to Socrates; in fact, "the very arguments of the dialogues in which Socrates is made to be the main speaker also reflect some of that criticism [of Socrates]" (Frede, 1992, p. 205).

Furthermore, this disagreement may also be rallied to support the claim that there are in fact two Socrateses in Plato's dialogues in general and in Book I and the rest of the *Republic* in particular.[26] Socrates in Book I seems to be closer to the historical Socrates, while in the rest, he serves as Plato's "mouthpiece" for Plato's own views (Reeve, 2004;

[23] The use of the skill analogy in the discussions concerning virtues is not peculiar to Socrates, rather it is quite prevalent among ancient philosophers (Dougherty, 2020).

[24] See Penner (2008) on the question concerning whether virtues, which are crafts or skills according to Socrates, are impartible.

[25] Reeve (2004) touches upon the relationship between education and Plato's famous cave allegory (pp. xiv-xv). See Aygün (2015) for a phenomenological reading of the cave allegory from the perspective of the prisoners with an emphasis on the notion of education. See also Storey (2022).

[26] The consensus among the analytically oriented scholars seems to be that the character of Socrates in Plato's early (Socratic) dialogues is a faithful representation of the historical Socrates as well as, possibly, in Book I of the *Republic* (Wolfsdorf, 2019).

Lane, 2008).[27] (Perhaps this more-Socratic Socrates of Book I may be seen as Plato's tribute to his teacher's influence on his early works.[28])

Overall, the discussions between Socrates and his two collocutors, Cephalus and Polemarchus reveal that a behavioralist approach falls short of capturing the nature of fairness as fairness is not exhausted in following certain rules and performing certain actions. It is rather something internal (an excellence or virtue according to Socrates). This can be considered to be preliminary to Plato's own account of fairness: "as a matter of not the performance of certain defined actions, but of the state of a person's soul" and "a matter of knowledge, not of blindly following convention" (Annas, 1981, p. 34). The second point signals that Plato wants to place moral objectivism on firmer grounds, in this way he may hopefully contribute to alleviating dissatisfaction with the traditional view.

5. A Tough One: Thrasymachus

Then, Thrasymachus joins the conversation. He is a much more serious opponent with dangerous views, and it is often claimed that the other books are written in response to his philosophy or the kind of philosophy that his philosophy exemplifies (Annas, 1981; Reeve, 2004).

[27] See Aygün (2018) and Mulhern (1971) for arguments against the "mouthpiece view". Aygün, echoing Mulhern, argues that the attribution of the views expressed by the characters of a work (e.g., the *Republic*) to the author of that work (e.g. Plato) is a logical mistake. He also questions the tendency among scholars to attribute the views of only some of the characters (e.g., the views of Socrates but not Thrasymachus or Glaucon) to the author and accuses this tendency of being arbitrary. This is a legitimate objection, and I agree with Aygün that it does not deductively follow that a writer holds the views that she has her characters express. However, I am inclined to think that we can come up with abductive (i.e., inference to the best explanation) arguments in favor of the claim that Socrates, in the *Republic* except Book I, serves as Plato's "mouthpiece" for Plato's own views. I do not have enough space to develop such an argument here.

[28] Some scholars argue that Plato's philosophy consists of developmental stages and that the earliest stage is considered to be Socratic in the sense that the dialogues written during this stage faithfully display "the philosophy of the historical Socrates" (Wolfsdorf, 2019, p. 980). In this regard, Book I is akin to the dialogues written in this stage. Yet, Gill (2006) classifies Book I as one of the middle dialogues in which Plato does not restrict himself to displaying the philosophy of the historical Socrates, instead he exceeds the thought of the historical Socrates by preserving the philosophical kinship with the historical Socrates. However, unless this is not a claim only about the periodization of Book I, which does not seem so, if, as noted previously in the text, Plato argues for his own views in detail in the following books, it is dubious whether he would feel the need, while writing Book I, to exceed the views of the historical Socrates. That is, it is not clear to me why Plato would have bothered to develop and offer new views in conjunction with the ones belonging to the historical Socrates if he was going to replace them or offer some other new views instead in the following books. Moreover, on most points, e.g., being elenctic and aporetic, Book I resembles the other early Socratic dialogues (Cooper, 1997, p. 971), but this issue requires a detailed comparison of Book I with the other dialogues, which is beyond the scope of this essay. See Kahn (1993) on some close similarities between Book I and the earlier Socratic dialogues (p. 135). See Cooper (1997), who argues that we simply lack evidence to hold a clear-cut periodization as often held in the literature, for arguments against the chronicling of Plato's dialogues based on the abovementioned view that Plato's philosophy consists of developmental stages (pp. xii-xviii).

Scholars' opinions differ as to what Thrasymachus' real account is. This is because he first claims that "fairness is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger" (338c) but then reformulates his position as "fairness is the good of another one" (343c). The first thing we should notice is that he does not mention only some purportedly fair actions, but rather he provides a proper definition that displays what is common to all fair acts (Beversluis, 2000, pp. 224-225). This fact seems to imply that Socrates is now facing a more powerful opponent compared to the two previous.

To explain his position, Thrasymachus considers various *poleis* where legislation promotes the benefits of the rulers, who are in power and are identified as "the stronger ones". His account is therefore founded on a relationship of power between rulers and their subjects. This is important because, through Thrasymachus' account, Plato, in a sense, draws attention to the fact that as something deeply relational, fairness cannot be considered in isolation, that is, solely from an individual's perspective.

Socrates, in reply, says that every craft or skill has its object (e.g., horse training and horses, respectively) and it benefits its object; therefore, since rulers practice a certain skill (i.e., ruling) and the objects of this skill are their subjects, they benefit their subjects (341d-342e). Regardless of whether this view is true or not, one merit of it is that it preserves the insight that fairness, which is a craft or skill for Socrates, cannot be considered in isolation because this view presumes that where there is a craft or a skill, there are two parties—one who practices the craft or skill, and another person (or object) on or for whose benefit the craft or skill is about to be practiced. So, we are provided with another ground to maintain that fairness, for Plato, has to be relational.

At first glance, Socrates appears to have a point. For instance, medicine can be considered a skill that is exercised on the ill with the explicit purpose of healing them. That is, it indeed benefits the objects of medicine, not its practitioners. On the other hand, assassination can be considered another skill that requires practice for one to master it. The object of assassination seems to be the victim, and it would be implausible to maintain that an assassin seeks the victim's benefit. This observation raises the following question. Why should the (craft or skill of) ruling be similar to medicine but not assassination?

Variety in skills does not allow one to make a broad generalization, namely that all skills are beneficial to the object that they are exercised on. Socrates builds his argument on some shaky ground and takes some questionable theses for granted. However, I do not claim that Socrates is totally wrong; he might be right in maintaining that a ruler is not necessarily an exploiter (but he may very well be so) (Annas 1981, p. 51). In the course of their discussion, Thrasymachus detects similar flaws in Socrates' reasoning and arguments. In this respect, it would not be wrong to say once again that if fairness as a traditional value is to be re-established, one must do it properly and with more convincing arguments than the ones Socrates offers in Book I.

As a response to Socrates, Thrasymachus says that the relationship between rulers and their subjects parallels the relation between shepherds and sheep; the shepherds benefit

their sheep but primarily for their own interests (343b-c). He makes another important move and claims that "fairness and what is fair are actually the good of another one, [namely] the advantage of the stronger and the ruler" (343c). This claim is actually less controversial than it appears. Kerferd (1964), Nicholson (1974), and Annas (1981) agree that this claim is true only from a weak person's standpoint. When the stronger one is the "other", fairness is the advantage of the stronger. Otherwise, including the stronger one's standpoint, the ultimate characterization of fairness is the good of another one.[29] It is plain that Thrasymachus' account is so dangerous for Plato's purposes that, among these three scholars, the consensus is that the rest of the books are written so as to provide a reply to this account, which equates being fair with prioritizing someone else's advantage or benefit over one's own. In other words, once one pursues one's own benefit, one acts unfairly.

For Thrasymachus, the ultimate end of acting unfairly is being a tyrant who is in a sense stronger than everyone and rules them and simultaneously pursues his own advantage (344a-b). Indeed, Thrasymachus says that someone who commits tyranny "is called happy and blessed instead of shameful names not only by citizens but also by others who might learn by hearsay that he committed the ultimate unfairness" (344c). We can rightly say that Thrasymachus is an "immoralist" since, unlike a skeptic, for instance, he does not deny that fairness "has a real existence all right" (Annas, 1981, p. 37). On the contrary, he does believe fairness has a real existence but thinks that fairness is not worth pursuing. That is, from his perspective, fairness is not beneficial for the people themselves, so it is more rational to be unfair and prioritize one's own benefit.[30]

Another crucial point Thrasymachus makes, knowingly or unknowingly, is that what fairness is and whether it is beneficial or not for the people are so tightly interwoven that it is almost inconceivable to think of one without the other (Annas, 1981). Thrasymachus considers fairness "a noble naiveté" and unfairness as "prudence" (in response to Socrates' question concerning whether fairness is a virtue or an excellence), reaffirming that acting fairly is not quite rational (348c).[31] This view, I believe, must be seriously addressed by Plato if he is to show that fairness is favorable.

The debate between Socrates and Thrasymachus is long, and I prefer to briefly mention a few other points crucial to the rest of Plato's work. As opposed to Thrasymachus, Socrates claims that unfairness is not beneficial for it "will render one unable to act by rebelling and not being of the same mind with himself, then [will make him] both his

[29] Needless to say, this point about Thrasymachus' account of fairness requires a more detailed discussion which is beyond the scope of this essay.

[30] See Chappell (1993) on the question concerning whether Thrasymachus makes a descriptive claim, namely that those who act unfairly prioritize one's own benefit, or a prescriptive claim, namely that one ought to do what is unfair. Chappell argues that Thrasymachus' claim is a descriptive one. I do not opt for either option and will not address this issue because regardless of whether he makes a descriptive or a prescriptive claim, in either form, his claim is so detrimental to Plato's purpose that Plato needs to disprove it in the following books, and it is sufficient to highlight this need for the current essay.

[31] The Greek term translated as "prudence" is *euboulíā* (εὐβουλίᾱ). Chappell (1993) translates it as "practical intelligence" (p. 9), which can be a better alternative.

own enemy and enemy of fair ones" (352a), that is, unfairness will end up with an "internal conflict" (Annas, 1981, p. 53). To illustrate, "a city, an army, robbers" cannot succeed if their members treat each other unfairly because unfairness stirs up hatred and creates friction among the people and consequently divides them into rival groups; when an individual is unfair, the same things will happen within himself (351c-e). However, if, say, denizens of a city manage to be unfair to one another and benefit from it, they will probably continue to do so. After all, a tyrant, whom Thrasymachus idolizes, is someone who manages to become completely unfair and benefits from it. If Socrates were right, in other words, if unfairness created the same problems within the individual, a tyrant would not be able to act and therefore could not become a tyrant. Yet, a tyrant *ex hypothesi* did become one in the first place. Socrates might nevertheless be right that unfairness might result in an internal conflict. However, some other well-grounded reasons are required to demonstrate that being unfair is not to one's benefit, assuming that those stated by Socrates do not succeed in this task.

Furthermore, towards the end of the book, Socrates concludes that "the fair soul and the fair man will live well, while the unfair man will badly" (353e) and that "the fair man is happy, while the unfair man is miserable" (354a). He argues that everything is supposed to have a function which can be characterized as a duty or an aim that something must fulfill (353a).[32] Each function, according to Socrates, comes with a certain virtue without which nothing can perform its function properly (353b-c). As a further claim, he thinks that the soul's function is living, and the accompanying virtue is fairness. Therefore, provided that a man or his soul has this virtue, "the fair soul and the fair man will live well, while the unfair will badly" (353e), and living well makes one happy (353e-354a).[33] In other words, one cannot be happy unless one is fair because one cannot live well when one does not possess the accompanying virtue, namely fairness.

However, it is far from obvious why fairness should be the relevant virtue that is required for one to live well even if we grant that living is the function of the soul. Why, for instance, not rationality? Again, if rationality suggests pursuing one's own benefits as Thrasymachus suggests, then to survive and thrive, rationality can be a more appropriate virtue via which the soul functions well. Yet Thrasymachus does not state a similar counterargument, despite believing that fairness does not contribute to one's thriving as one does not benefit from it (Chappell, 1993, p. 8). It is worth noting that, towards the end, Thrasymachus ceases arguing against Socrates. He now only affirms what Socrates says and gives the responses Socrates wants him to give. Socrates takes his own philosophical views as commonplace and uses them as premises while arguing against Thrasymachus and reaching a conclusion.

[32] The Greek term for function is *ergon* (ἔργον). Annas (1981) explains the term as "what a thing does qua a thing of that kind" (p. 54) and Irwin (1995) explains it as the "essential activity" of something (p. 179).

[33] Socrates claims that he and Thrasymachus agreed that fairness is the soul's virtue. However, as also Annas (1981) points out, there is no part in the dialogue confirming Socrates' claim. This inconsistency on Socrates' part would have been obvious to the reader, making it perhaps another instance of a Platonic gesture.

Putting aside similar concerns as to whether fairness is the accompanying virtue, we can conclude that, from Socrates' standpoint, it is best to pursue fairness because fairness is more beneficial than unfairness. This is the view Plato intends to argue for in the rest of the *Republic* primarily because he notices the charm of Thrasymachus' immoralist account and also because he notices that Socrates' arguments against Thrasymachus' immoralist account are not satisfactory; after all, Thrasymachus masquerades as the defeated side of this debate, nonetheless, he is not convinced at all by Socrates' arguments (Annas, 1981).[34]

We should not therefore confuse Thrasymachus' unwillingness to carry on resisting Socrates with a possible concession to Socrates' points or an abandonment of his own beliefs; in fact, it would not be wrong to assert that "Thrasymachus remains doggedly unconvinced" during the whole discussion between him and Socrates (Scott, 1999, p. 24). In this light, it can be said that Socrates, in the course of his discussion with Thrasymachus, could not employ his method of elenchus as neatly and successfully as he did in the course of his discussions with Cephalus and Polemarchus, respectively. After all, only the latter two are convinced by Socrates and abandon their initial claims. Scott (1999) argues that Plato purposefully creates this contrast between Thrasymachus on the one side and Cephalus and Polemarchus on the other to show that "some interlocutors are so enamoured of their opinions that they will never relinquish them" (p. 25). Moreover, he claims that through this contrast, Plato aims to demonstrate that Socrates' method (i.e., elenchus), in particular, or philosophical discussion (as Socrates opts for), in general, proves to be fruitless when the respondent is someone akin to

[34] Evrigenis (2010) argues that Socrates' triumph over Thrasymachus is, despite appearing as a triumph, is in reality a defeat (almost like a Pyrrhic victory) and is from the very beginning meant to be a defeat, in other words, Socrates' attempt to face the challenge posed by Thrasymachus is doomed to be abortive. He claims that the discussions between Socrates and sophists like Thrasymachus are perceived "as shows of superiority in [argumentative] skill" from the standpoint of the spectators in the dialogues (and presumable readers of these dialogues): "Time and again, in Plato's works, curious interlocutors seek to find out from eye witness how Socrates performed against this or that opponent. In this case, therefore, Socrates' failure is necessary if Thrasymachus' contention that justice [fairness] is the advantage of the more powerful is to be disproved in fact […] because if Socrates merely overpowers his opponent in argument, then in an important sense Thrasymachus will have been proven right. A defeat at the hands of Socrates would merely show that Socrates was mightier than Thrasymachus, but such an outcome would paradoxically confirm that 'might makes right'" (p. 371). In other words, Evrigenis' point is that given that Thrasymachus opines that fairness is the advantage of the stronger one, Socrates would indirectly confirm Thrasymachus if he defeated Thrasymachus by having greater argumentative skills or strength and had the last word on the matter since now he is the stronger one in this debate and what fairness is is what he advocates for. I am unsure how tenable this claim is. Although, on the face of it, Thrasymachus seems to argue that the might makes right, we saw that the ultimate characterization of fairness, according to him, is the good or advantage of another person. It is not obvious whether Socrates' having the last word directly or indirectly shows that Thrasymachus is right in claiming that fairness is the good or advantage of another one. Putting aside this controversial point as to what Thrasymachus' real account is, the major problem I observe with Evrigenis' claim is that, if, as he claims, defeating one's opponent in a discussion proves Thrasymachus' view, then Plato takes himself to a dead-end as the whole *Republic*, which is supposed to argue against Thrasymachus' views, turns out to be a very long proof of these views. That said, I agree with Evrigenis that Socrates' Pyrrhic victory has some significance since it can mayhap be interpreted as yet another instance of a Platonic gesture for Socrates on occasion is being unfair while arguing against Thrasymachus and Plato might have intended to show that by discussing unfairly or acting thusly, in a broader sense, one could not achieve much.

Thrasymachus. If he is right in his observation that Plato does not utilize the method of elenchus in the following books, this preference might illustrate Plato's own dissatisfaction with not only Socrates' position and some of his views *per se* but also with the manner in which he defends his position and argues for his views.[35] (After all, I argued that the method of elenchus cannot establish or reveal the truth but at most eliminates the beliefs that have a higher chance of being false, though they are not guaranteed to be so at all. Yet, from Plato's standpoint, this much is by no means sufficient; although both Socrates and Plato are in search of the truth, Socrates' method falls short of revealing it, which is unsuitable for Plato's purpose.) Therefore, a proper—not à la Socrates—argumentation is needed if Plato is to convince people that fairness is worth pursuing.[36]

At the end of Book I, Socrates admits his mistake in that he engaged in the question concerning whether fairness is beneficial before having a clear grasp of what fairness is and suggests that without answering the latter, one cannot answer the former (354b-c).[37] So, the problem concerning what fairness is remains unsolved. Moreover, Socrates' last remark again reveals that these two questions are inextricably interwoven, so the subsequent books are expected to deal with these two issues.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, in Book I, (Plato's) Socrates examines "the authority of tradition, the authority of the many, the authority of self-styled experts" (Frede, 1992, p. 217). Cephalus' and Polemarchus' views may correspond to the first two, while Thrasymachus' views may correspond to the third sort of authority. Plato knows that traditional views contain a degree of truth and validity but are so weakly defended that they can come under serious attacks from skeptics, relativists, or immoralists like Thrasymachus. Among the three, Socrates' discussion with Thrasymachus is of primary importance because, as I tried to argue in this essay, the rest of the *Republic* has been

[35] Gill (2006) seems to agree with Scott: "Book I shows Socrates refuting the immoralist [Thrasymachus] through *elenchus* – though leaving him quite unconvinced; Books II–X show him constructing a complex argument, combining ethics, epistemology, psychology, and politics in a quite new way that seeks to meet and answer the immoralist's substantive claims" (p. 146, original emphasis). This observation also supports the claims that Book I differs from the rest of the *Republic* and that we are faced with two different Socrateses.

[36] In Book II, we are presented with a critical stance toward the arguments marshaled by Socrates in Book I for Glaucon takes over Thrasymachus' view so as to receive a new response from Socrates that fares better than the one Socrates provides in Book I. Irwin (1995) argues that through Glaucon's dissatisfaction with Socrates' response to Thrasymachus, "Plato intends to provoke dissatisfaction" with this response among the readers (p. 169).

[37] Schofield (2008) claims, in opposition to my claim (see §3), that Book I "does not end in formal *aporia*" as Socrates and Thrasymachus agree on certain points such as a fair one lives happily but cautiously adds that this agreement is only in appearance, whereas in reality, Thrasymachus does not agree with Socrates (pp. 203-204, original emphasis). I agree with Schofield on the second point that there is no genuine agreement between Socrates and Thrasymachus. Still, I disagree with him on the first point that Book I does not end in formal aporia because we must not forget that the initial problem that Socrates and others grapple with is the problem of what fairness is, and this problem, as I mentioned in the text, remains unsolved as Socrates himself confesses. In this regard, Book I does end in aporia.

designed as a novel detailed response to the intellectualist challenge of traditional values. As such, this point concerning Book I, albeit accurate, is incomplete since it disregards the fact that Socrates' examination itself is also (perhaps indirectly) placed under examination through the articulation of some of Socrates' controversial and ill-grounded claims and certain Platonic gestures, for instance. In other words, although it is to a certain extent standardized to acknowledge that the subsequent books of the *Republic* respond to Thrasymachus, the fact that inasmuch as they respond to Thrasymachus, they also respond to Socrates is often overlooked. In this way, Plato seems to justify his search for a novel defense of what is attacked by Thrasymachus, namely the traditional values. After all, Plato might have started the *Republic* directly from Book II by having Glaucon report Thrasymachus' views to push (the character) Socrates to contemplate whether these views were accurate—"O Socrates, have you heard about Thrasymachus? For I once heard that he said…"—and then might have moved to disprove them by bypassing (the historical) Socrates' (possible) answers to the Thrasymachean challenge. But Plato did not bypass Socrates, so there must be a reason that he devoted some time to exhibiting Socrates' answers. I argued in this essay that Plato might have intended to question Socrates himself (in addition to Cephalus and Polemarchus) by commencing the *Republic* with a Socratic dialogue. In this light, Book I serves purposes similar to an introduction section of a contemporary academic essay. It presents the current literature (already existing, mutually contradictory ideas), points out the gaps in it, and poses the fundamental themes and questions to be addressed in the rest of the work.

Thanks

I would like to thank my dear professor Haris Theodorelis-Rigas for his extremely valuable comments on the earlier drafts of this essay, from which I benefited a lot. I also thank the two anonymous referees for their highly beneficial comments.

REFERENCES

Annas, J. (1981). *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Aygün, Ö. (2015). A Phenomenology of the Cave. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/40288576/2015b_Sunum_%C3%96mer_Ayg%C3%BCn_A_Phenomenology_of_the_Cave

Aygün, Ö. (2018). Yaygın Platon Okumasının Bir Eleştirisi. [A Critique of the Standard Plato Reading]. *Kaygı. Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Felsefe Dergisi* (31), 57-91.

Benson, H. H. (2002). Problems with Socratic Method. In G. A. Scott (Ed.), *Does Socrates Have a Method?* (pp. 101-113). Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Ben-Yami, H. (2017). Vagueness and Family Resemblance. In H.-J. Glock & J. Hyman (Eds.), *A Companion to Wittgenstein* (pp. 407-419). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Beversluis, J. (2000). *Cross-Examining Socrates: A Defense of the Interlocutors in Plato's Early Dialogues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brickhouse, T. C. & Smith, N. D. (2000). *The Philosophy of Socrates*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Brickhouse, T. C. & Smith, N. D. (2002). The Socratic *Elenchos*?. In G. A. Scott (Ed.), Does Socrates Have a Method? (pp. 145-157). Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press

Chappell, T. D. J. (1993). The Virtues of Thrasymachus. *Phronesis*, *38*(1), 1-17.

Cooper, J. M. (1977). The Psychology of Justice in Plato. *American Philosophical Quarterly 14*(2), 151-157.

Cooper, J. M. (1997). *Plato: Complete Works* (J. M. Cooper & D. S. Hutchinson, Eds.). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

Davidson, D. (2006). A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge. In D. Davidson (Ed.), *The Essential Davidson* (pp. 225-241). Oxford: Calderon Press.

Dougherty, M. (2020). The Importance of Roles in the Skill Analogy. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *17*(1): 75-102.

Doyle, J. (2010). The Socratic Elenchus: No Problem. In J. Lear & A. Oliver (Eds.), *The Force of Argument: Essays in Honor of Timothy Smiley* (pp. 68-81). New York: Routledge.

Evrigenis, I. D. (2010). The Power Struggle of "*Republic*" I. *History of Political Thought*, *31*(3), 367-382.

Frede, M. (1992). Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form. In J. C. Klagge & N. D. Smith (Eds.), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues* (pp. 201-219). Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Supplementary Volume. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gill, C. (2006). The Platonic Dialogue. In M. L. Gill & P. Pellegrin (Eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (pp. 136-150). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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

Irwin, T. (1995). *Plato's Ethics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kahn, C. H. (1993). Proleptic Composition in the *Republic*, or Why Book 1 Was Never a Separate Dialogue. *The Classical Quarterly*, *43*(1), 131-142.

Kerferd, G. B. (1964). Thrasymachus and Justice: A Reply. *Phronesis*, *9*(1), 12-16.

Lane, M. (2008). Socrates and Plato: An Introduction. In C. Rowe, M. Schofield, S. Harrison, & M. Lane (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (pp. 155-163). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leigh, F. (2007). Platonic Dialogue, Maieutic Method and Critical Thinking. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *41*(3), 309–323.

Mulhern, J. J. (1971). Two Interpretative Fallacies. *Systematics*, *9*(3), 168-172.

Nicholson, P. P. (1974). Unravelling Thrasymachus' Arguments in "The *Republic*". *Phronesis 19*(3), 210-232.

Penner, T. (1973). Socrates on Virtue and Motivation. In E. N. Lee, A. P. Mourelatos & R. Rorty (Eds.), *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos* (pp. 133-151). Phronesis Supplementary Vol. I. Assen: Van Gorcum.

Penner, T. (2008). Socrates. In C. Rowe, M. Schofield, S. Harrison, & M. Lane (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (pp. 164-189). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Plato. (1997). Meno (G. M. A. Grube Trans.). In J. M. Cooper & D. S. Hutchinson (Eds.), *Plato: Complete Works* (pp. 870-897). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

Reeve, C. D. C. (1985). Socrates Meets Thrasymachus. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 67*(3), 246-265.

Reeve, C. D. C. (2004). Introduction. In Plato, *Republic* (C. D. C. Reeve Trans.) (pp. ix-xxvii). Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.

Sayre, K. (1992). A Maieutic View of Five Late Dialogues. In J. C. Klagge & N. D. Smith (Eds.), *Methods of Interpreting Plato and his Dialogues* (pp. 221-242). Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy Supplementary Volume. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schofield, M. (2008). Approaching the *Republic*. In C. Rowe, M. Schofield, S. Harrison, & M. Lane (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (pp. 190-232). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scott, D. (1999). Platonic Pessimism and Moral Education. In D. Sedley (Ed.), *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* (pp. 15-36). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sedley, D. (1996). Three Platonist Interpretations of the *Theaetetus*. In C. Gill & M. M. McCabe (Eds.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (pp. 79-103). New York: Oxford University Press.

Steadman, G. D. (2011). *Plato's* Republic *I: Greek Text with Facing Vocabulary and Commentary*. Retrieved from https://geoffreysteadman.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/platorepublic-july12.pdf

Storey, D. (2022). The Soul-Turning Metaphor in Plato's *Republic* Book 7. *Classical Philology 177*(3), 525-542.

Thanassas, P. (2021) Justice as Happiness: *Republic* and Its Proems. In E. Kaklamanou, M. Pavlou & A. Tsakmakis (Eds.), *Framing the Dialogues: How to Read Openings and Closures in Plato* (pp. 107-139). Brill's Plato Studies Series Vol. 6. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Vlastos, G. (1994). *Socratic Studies* (M. Burnyeat, Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical Investigations* (4th ed.) (G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, & J. Schulte, Trans.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. (Original work published 1953)

Wolfsdorf, D. (2003). Socrates' Pursuit of Definitions. *Phronesis*, *48*(4), 271–312.

Wolfsdorf, D. C. (2019). Socrates, Vlastos, and Analytic Philosophy. In C. Moore (Ed.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Socrates* (pp. 973-993). Brill's Companion to Classical Reception, Series Vol. 18. Leiden and Boston: Brill.