

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HAPPINESS IN THE *REPUBLIC*: PLATO'S TWO PRINCIPLES¹

*Rachana Kamtekar*²

Abstract: In the *Republic*, Socrates says that social justice is 'doing one's own', i.e. 'everyone must practice one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best suited'. One would ordinarily suppose social justice to concern not only the allocation of duties but also the distribution of benefits. I argue that this expectation is fulfilled not by Plato's conception of social justice, but by the normative basis for it, Plato's requirement of aiming at the happiness of all the citizens. I argue that Plato treats social justice as a necessary but not sufficient means to happiness that guarantees only the *production* of the greatest goods; ensuring that these goods are *distributed* so as to maximize the happiness of the whole city requires a direct application of Plato's happiness principle, which I interpret individually and then use to explain women's equality in work and education.

I Introduction

In the *Republic*, Socrates says that social justice is 'doing one's own'. By 'doing one's own', he says he means 'everyone must practice one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best suited'³ (433a4–7, recalling 369e–70a).⁴ One would ordinarily suppose justice to concern not only the

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² Dept. of Philosophy, University of Michigan, 2215 Angell Hall, 435 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Email: rkamteka@umich.edu

³ Citations given without further identification are to Plato's *Republic*. All translations of Plato's *Republic* are taken from C.D.C. Reeve (rev.), *Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, 1997).

⁴ What are we to make of the fact that the definition of justice in the *Republic* is a candidate definition for temperance in the *Charmides*? In the *Charmides*, Critias (not Socrates) is the source of the view that *temperance* (not justice) is 'doing one's own', which Socrates refutes, on the grounds that craftsmen are temperate but make (do) things not only for themselves but also for others. To save the view, Critias distinguishes between doing and making, and between making and working, so as to be able to claim,

allocation of social duties but also the distribution of benefits⁵ — but about this the principle of ‘doing one’s own’ seems to be silent.

Commentators have often complained about the distance between Plato’s revisionist account and ordinary conceptions of justice. For example, Sachs argues that in order to show that justice is good for the just person, Plato needs, but fails, to show that Platonic justice, the state of psychic harmony that has been shown to be good for the just person (441d–42a, 444de), entails and is entailed by what is ordinarily called ‘justice’, that is, refraining from theft, murder and so on.⁶ With somewhat less restraint, Popper complains: ‘Why did Plato claim that justice meant inequality if, in general usage, it meant equality? To me the only likely reply seems to be that he wanted to make propaganda for his totalitarian state by persuading people that it was the ‘just’ state.’⁷ On the face of it, Plato offers at most a few extensional equivalences between concrete proscriptions of Platonic and ordinary justice: the just-souled person won’t rob temples or commit adultery (443a); the guardians won’t try to take away the belongings of the producing class (416ad). But even the extensional equivalences do not go very far, for ordinary and Platonic justice are quite far apart on many concrete issues: for example, Platonic social justice requires an end to private property (416d–17b) and to the biological and patriarchal family (457b–61e) for the upper classes. Readers of the *Republic* are forced to confront the question of what, if any, connection there is between ordinary and Platonic justice.

In this paper, I focus specifically on Platonic *social* justice and investigate its relationship to ordinary conceptions of social justice. I argue that the first, that craftsmen can make what is another’s while still doing what is their own and, second, that one’s work is always ‘accompanied by the admirable’, so that doing one’s own *work* is making something *good*. Socrates glosses one’s own, one’s work and the good things that one makes as ‘what one ought’ (*ta deonta*) and then refutes the revised definition on the grounds that since on this view craftsmen can do what they ought (their work, their own) without knowing whether it is beneficial or not, they can be temperate while being ignorant (*Charmides*, 161b–64c). (This last problem seems to be resolved in the *Republic* by the distinction between full and civic virtue, where full virtue requires knowledge but civic virtue does not.) Are Socrates’ (and/or Critias’) glosses on doing one’s own in the *Charmides* accepted by Plato, or do they serve simply to refute Critias, who ought to have a clearer understanding of what ‘doing one’s own’ means? Fortunately, our interpretation of ‘doing one’s own’ in the *Republic* does not depend on our interpretation of the *Charmides*, for in the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates *say* that he means by ‘doing one’s own’ that each citizen does the work to which he is best suited by nature (433a4–7, see above.)

⁵ Socrates himself conceives of social justice as that which best allows the city to be a mutually beneficial social arrangement (369b *et seq.*, 433a).

⁶ D. Sachs, ‘A Fallacy in Plato’s *Republic*’, reprinted in *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays, Vol. II: Ethics, Politics and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, ed. G. Vlastos (New York, 1971), pp. 45–50.

⁷ K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. 1: The Spell of Plato* (Princeton, 1962), p. 80.

ordinary intuition that social justice concerns the distribution of goods (and not only duties) is fulfilled not by Plato's conception of social justice, but by the normative basis for it, Plato's principle of happiness. Plato's principle of happiness requires the city to aim at the happiness of all the citizens. I proceed as follows: I begin (in Section II) with the most promising account to date of how Plato's principle of social justice distributes goods, namely that doing one's own work entitles one to those goods required for one's work and, more importantly, *is itself* one's most important good. Against this view, I show that Plato does not regard work as a good, and I argue that therefore Plato's principle of social justice guarantees only the *production* of the greatest goods; to ensure that these goods are *distributed* so as to maximize the happiness of the whole city, the ideal city must have recourse to some other principle(s). In Section III, I propose that the happiness-maximizing distribution of goods is achieved by a direct application of Plato's happiness principle. I argue first for an individualistic interpretation of this principle that allows it to guide distribution. I then give an account of the goods to be distributed and the basis for their distribution: on my account, the chief good to be distributed is education, and education (and other goods) are to be distributed differentially according to citizens' capacities to enjoy them, in order to bring about their greatest happiness. Together, the principles of social justice and happiness give us the formula for basic social organization in Plato's ideal city: 'from each according to her ability, to each according to her capacity for enjoyment'. I conclude (in Section IV) by applying my account of Plato's two principles to a practical matter: the education and mobilization of women to do civic work in Plato's ideal city.

II

Functional Reciprocity

Gregory Vlastos asks whether 'there is such a thing as a theory of justice in that dialogue whose formal theme is *dikaiosune*',⁸ and answers that there is: social justice in the *Republic* is 'the justice of reciprocity', according to which 'it would be just for us to give of our best to benefit others who would be will-

⁸ G. Vlastos, 'The Theory of Social Justice in the *Polis* in Plato's *Republic*', in *Interpretations of Plato: A Swarthmore Symposium*, ed. H. North (Leiden, 1977) (hereafter Vlastos, 'Social Justice'), p. 3. Vlastos is considering which of the two possible senses of *dikaiosune* distinguished by Aristotle — complete social virtue or righteousness, and the particular social virtue because of which each has his own — Plato is concerned with in the *Republic*. His evidence is that (i) justice is only one part of social

ing to give of their best to benefit us'.⁹ Plato supposedly articulates this intuition in a principle Vlastos calls 'functional reciprocity', according to which 'each has a right to those, and only those, socially distributable benefits which will maximize his contribution,¹⁰ regardless of the ratio which the value of services rendered bears to that of benefits received'.^{11, 12} Vlastos is able to regard this as a genuine theory of justice because, in the first instance, it allocates rights — that is, rights to goods — and so would seem to fulfil my weaker requirement that a theory of justice concern itself with the distribution of goods.¹³

virtue; (ii) it is paired with equality and opposed to taking more than one's share (*pleonexia*); (iii) it is conceived of as abstaining from what is another's; finally, (iv) the formula of doing one's own, i.e. one's duty, means acting with the intention that each should have his own, i.e. his rights (Vlastos, 'Social Justice', pp. 7–10). NB regarding (i) Vlastos says justice is not identical to each of the other virtues — wisdom, moderation and courage — but of course that would be the case if justice was comprehensive social virtue. What Vlastos wants as evidence that justice is not comprehensive social virtue is that it is not identical to (wisdom & temperance & courage).

⁹ Vlastos, 'Social Justice', p. 11–12. It is difficult to see the textual evidence for this, or to see what Vlastos thinks ought to be done if (i) people are not willing to give of their best and (ii) giving of our best is not necessary for or productive of the best for others.

¹⁰ Vlastos must mean by this that each person is to maximize his contribution consistent with every other person's maximizing his contribution — so that the net result is to make the maximal benefit available to the city.

¹¹ Vlastos, 'Social Justice', p. 24. Cf. Vlastos' companion piece, 'The Rights of Persons in Plato's Conception of the Foundations of Justice', in *Morals, Science and Society*, ed. H. Tristram Englehardt Jr. and Daniel Callahan (Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, 1978), pp. 172–201 (hereafter Vlastos, 'Rights of Persons'), p. 178: 'All members of the polis have equal right to those and only those benefits which are required for the optimal performance of their function in the polis.'

¹² Vlastos considers functional reciprocity a superior conception of social justice to the meritocratic principle of proportional equality (benefits proportioned to merit) which is advocated by the oligarchic faction in Athens and by Plato in the *Laws*. For although functional reciprocity has the consequence that citizens' 'unequal capacities will dictate unequal rights to share in the distribution of the goods produced and in the governance of their common life', it 'will still operate as an effective constraint on permissible inequalities, blocking those for which a functional justification cannot be found' (Vlastos, 'Rights of Persons', pp. 182–3). So, for example, functional reciprocity prevents the super-efficient maker of valuable flutes from getting more goods for less work than his co-citizens who have less socially valuable skills. Again, it is functional reciprocity that results in guardian men and women having equal rights to education and work in the happy city.

¹³ For Vlastos, '[t]he aim here is to determine what social, economic and political rights people ought to have in consequence of the moral rights they do have' (Vlastos, 'Social Justice', p. 11). He offers a contextual definition of rights which he claims is met by the moral code of the *Republic*: '“A has the right to X against B” will be true for persons bound by a given moral or legal code if and only if B is required by the norms of that code to engage in X-supporting conduct (action or forbearance) demandable of B by A and/or others acting on A's behalf.' (Vlastos, 'Rights of Persons', p. 193.) I will not

Vlastos criticizes Plato's conception of social justice, characterized as functional reciprocity, on two main counts: first, it grants citizens only formal equality, or impartiality of treatment, not substantive equality.¹⁴ Second, it does not accord rights to persons as human beings; instead, 'what it offers is an idealization of the justice of the work-ethic — the domain in which, generally speaking, persons must earn their rights through their productive labor'.¹⁵

While an arrangement that guarantees workers what they need to do their job may be more or less just, it is unclear why we or Plato's contemporaries or even Plato himself should consider it to *be justice*. Even if functional reciprocity yields an egalitarian distribution of a kind, justice is concerned not only with equality, but also with *what* is to be equalized, or at any rate distributed, and thus a theory of justice should be concerned with all important socially distributable goods. If the theory proposes that some of these goods not be distributed by the state, it should provide a reason why — for at least *considering* the distribution of all socially distributable goods would seem to be part of the work of a theory of social justice. In the *Laws*, Plato not only considers but actually extols the pooling of all resources, including citizens' eyes and ears and hands.¹⁶ So even if functional reciprocity guarantees workers not only the tools they need to do their work but also their livelihood (as a requirement for doing one's job), it fails to say anything about those socially distributable goods that are not required for the performance of one's job (e.g. harmless pleasures, education above the level required for one's job). As a principle for the distribution of social goods, functional reciprocity is either miserly or incomplete.¹⁷ Vlastos' own conception of

address the appropriateness of talking of rights here, for my argument does not depend on what the state accords to citizens being their right (or not). But for the record, we might note that citizens will have the rights they do because exercising these rights leads to the greatest overall happiness — whereas we might expect a right to be the sort of thing that a citizen could fall back on even when her behaviour conflicted with producing the greatest overall happiness.

¹⁴ Vlastos, 'Social Justice', pp. 19–20.

¹⁵ Vlastos, 'Rights of Persons', pp. 192–3.

¹⁶ Plato, *Laws*, 739cd.

¹⁷ It is somewhat unclear whether functional reciprocity is the basis for distributing *all* socially-distributable goods or whether it is the minimum standard to which citizens can appeal for what they may have as their right (and if it is only the latter, then what governs the distribution of goods apart from, or above, this minimum?). On the one hand, Vlastos characterizes the ideal city as having the goal that 'all may be burden-bearers and benefit-reapers, each according to his individual capacity for work and enjoyment' (Vlastos, 'Social Justice', p. 13), and justice as adopting as one's own this goal of maximizing the common happiness: 'everyone will behave justly if, and only if, he so conducts himself as to maximize his individual contribution to the common happiness' (*ibid.*, p. 22) and '[t]he duty of justice . . . is fulfilled in doing one's best to contribute to the happiness and excellence of everyone in the *polis*, and to that alone' (*ibid.*, p. 18). On

justice presents a striking contrast: justice entitles people to equal benefits *at the highest obtainable level*.¹⁸

However, it turns out that on Vlastos' view functional reciprocity does cover the distribution of the most valuable goods, and this is because on Vlastos' view one's work is itself one's good (or the most important element in it).¹⁹

One's function, as Plato conceives of it, is both the citizen's master-duty and, at the same time, his master-right . . . the discharge of this function is for each of these people a privilege, an infinitely precious one, the basis of the worth and meaning of their life, so much so that if through some calamity they were to become unfit to do their work, life would lose its value for them: if they cannot do their function, they would just as soon be dead.²⁰

Vlastos' identification of one's own work with one's own good depends on an implausibly positive assessment of the value of work. One problem is that the value of work on his account looks extremely subjective: talk of 'the basis of the worth and meaning of their life' suggests that the value of one's work is to give one a feeling of self-worth. For Plato to value this feeling of self-worth, however, it would have to be grounded in something of objective value in one's (doing one's) work. We can amend Vlastos' account by substituting, in the place of this subjective-sounding talk, Richard Kraut's interpretation of the value of work in the *Republic*.²¹ Kraut also says that the craftsman's job is what makes his life worth living, that his love of his craft is the other hand, he seems to take functional reciprocity to be the principle of distribution of goods in general: 'all are assured . . . that their individual reward . . . will be fixed on the scale which is most likely to elicit from each maximal contribution to the happiness and excellence of the polis' (*ibid.*, p. 26 fn. 94). Vlastos *should* distinguish between what the city aims at (maximizing each person's happiness) and what, on his account, a citizen can claim is his right (those goods that are required for him to do his work). From the point of view of the state, this would be the distinction between directive principles and rights; for there may be some discrepancy between what it is right for citizens to have or what a good or just city aims for them to have, and what they may demand is theirs as a matter of right. Suppose there is more to distribute than is strictly necessary for the performance of civic functions: on Vlastos' account citizens would not have a right to this something more, but it would seem right or just for them to have it (unless it hurts them to), and unjust for them not to have it.

¹⁸ Vlastos, 'Justice and Equality', in *Social Justice*, ed. R.B. Brandt (New York, 1962), pp. 58–62.

¹⁹ Not only Vlastos; this view is widely held. Cf. '[a] man's happiness consists in doing his work as well as he can . . . The theory of medieval monasticism might in effect be expressed thus: You are going to serve God; let the external organization of your life express that; do without everything that is not really necessary to the service of God. Plato's theory is the same, with the substitution of the community for God.' (R.L. Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London, 1958), pp. 136–7.)

²⁰ Vlastos, 'Rights of Persons', p. 179.

²¹ Richard Kraut, 'Reason and Justice in the *Republic*', in *Exegesis and Argument*, ed. E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos and R.M. Rorty (Assen, 1973), pp. 207–24, esp. pp. 219–20. Kraut's account may be restricted to the producing class (see below).

the analogue to the philosopher's love of wisdom, and that he loves his craft for its own sake rather than because of the money it earns him, so much so that he would rather die without it. But on Kraut's account this subjective attitude has an objective grounding: a craftsman who loves his job for its own sake²² is a rationally ruled craftsman. Doing only one job, single-mindedly, to make the best product one can, is both necessary and sufficient for having the psychological unity, harmony and justice which makes life worth living.

Unfortunately for the Vlastos–Kraut view, Plato cannot, on pain of contradiction, think that one's good lies in (doing) one's work. At times he deems some people's work straightforwardly bad.²³ For example, Socrates says that mechanical (banausic) work cramps and spoils the soul (495e1–2, cf. 590c1–2). But since such work is necessary for the city's functioning, it is presumably someone's own work (otherwise getting it done would violate the one-person-one-job aspect of doing one's own). One might think that mechanical work is a special case, bad for the soul in a way that no other work is — that perhaps it is Plato's analogue to the work Aristotle reserves for natural slaves, and so not any citizen's 'own work'. But it is a fairly extensive special case, then, including, apparently, the work of all kinds of artisans and craftsmen²⁴ — and these groups certainly seem to be citizens in the *Rep-*

²² Kraut says: 'In the *Laws*, 643b–d, Plato explicitly states that in an ideal polis the education of a craftsman will make him love his work.' (Kraut, 'Reason and Justice', p. 219 n. 14.) But the *Laws* passage only says that people can be made to like their work as much as possible if they practice it at play, from childhood on. The implication is that making them like their work is a problem to be tackled, for maximum (but not necessarily complete) success, by habituating them to it from early on.

²³ *Axiochus*, 368b, invokes the crafts as evidence of the badness of life — one of the reasons for which we should welcome death.

²⁴ What exactly is the range of banausic work? Standardly, a *banausos* is a craftsman or artisan (H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1996), q.v.). Plato seems to extend it to include any profession or anyone that aims at making a profit or that is concerned with the body. *Laws*, 741e, forbids citizens from buying or selling their allotment and generally seeks to limit profit-making and to reduce the need to engage in commerce, on the grounds that a gentleman's character is coarsened by *banausia*. *Laws*, 743d, says that since the legislator's aim is the citizens' happiness and friendship, he will do away with gold and silver, thereby reducing injuries and lawsuits; in particular, he will see to it that not much money can be made out of *banausia*-charging interest, prostitution — although he will allow a limited profit to be made from farming.

Plato frequently contrasts banausic with genuine wisdom or education: *Laws*, 644a, contrasts a real education with the sort of education that is directed towards petty trade or the merchant-shipping business or acquiring money or a robust physique — the latter is *banausos* and *aneleutheros*, not worthy of being called an education.

Symposium, 203a, contrasts the person who is wise about god's concourse with humans and the person who is wise about the crafts and manual work (*peri technas he cheiourgias*), calling the former spiritual (*daimonios*) and the latter *banausos*.

Theaetetus, 176cd, contrasts the genuine wisdom of the godlike with the expertise in crafts had by the *banausoi*.

ublic.²⁵ When he is searching for the study that will turn the mind towards ‘what is’ and qualify it to rule well, Socrates deems the crafts unsuitable, for, he says, *all* the crafts are mechanical (522b, cf. 495de).

But Socrates also says that *every* craft and science involves counting and so number (522be), and that the study of number itself is one that ‘naturally leads to understanding — although no-one uses it correctly’ (522e). These remarks suggest that the value or disvalue of a sort of work depends on the sort of object it presents to the mind of the worker, whether only sensible objects, or also abstract ones.²⁶ Since every craft is mechanical *and* every craft involves number, however, the picture must be that all the different types of work allow for the possibility of contemplating sensible and abstract objects — so that it is possible either to do one’s work mindlessly or to think about it in a mind-improving way — but that certain kinds of work prompt thought better than others. For example, the general’s work affords leisure and requires a comprehensive view of things, while the cobbler’s work presents the mind with leather, hammers and nails — but neither does so inevitably, since the general might be obsessed by the carnage of the last battle and the shoemaker may be able to meditate on the function of the shoe, the well-being of feet, and so on.

Alcibiades I, 131b, points out that no doctor, trainer, farmer or tradesman, qua doctor, trainer, etc., knows himself, which is why one considers their skills beneath oneself.

Lovers, 137b, says that people who pursue the skills are *banausoi*.

Epinomis, 976d, asks which science is wisdom, making its possessor wise and good and not *banausos* and foolish.

²⁵ Are these groups banned from citizenship in the *Laws*? 919d and 920a only refer to the banning of traders — unless artisans are among those who ‘perform a service for . . . private individuals who are not of [their] status’. If so, is it because Plato recognizes that they receive no benefit (no education, no moral improvement) from citizenship and so the city can’t claim them as citizens? Or because their depravity would harm the city? Historically, it seems that although upper-class disrespect for artisans was widespread, depriving them of citizenship was rare. According to Brunt: ‘Aristotle mentions a law at Thebes that denied office to anyone who had followed a trade in the previous ten years ([*Politics*] 1278a25, 1321a28) . . . Xenophon, *Resp Lac.* 7.1 seems to regard the Spartan prohibition on citizens from engaging in banausic activities as unique in his day.’ See ‘The Model City of Plato’s *Laws*, Appendix D. Banausic Occupations and Civic Rights’, in P.-A. Brunt, *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford, 1997), p. 277.

²⁶ The elitist disdain of banausic work is common to Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle, although their complaints against it differ (Xenophon’s is that banausic crafts impair the craftsmen’s bodily strength, soften his spirit and leave him no time for his friends and city (*Oeconomicus* IV.2f)). As Brunt points out: ‘Th[is] depreciation of the artisan’s work was only a special case of aversion to any occupation that denied a man leisure for the good life, and though Aristotle’s conception of the use to be made of leisure materially differed from that of the leisured class in general, his apophthegm (EN1177a12), *ascholoumetha gar hina scholazomen*, would surely have been widely accepted.’ (Brunt, ‘The Social Thought of Dio Chrysostom’, in *Studies in Greek History*, p. 213.)

In general, however, Plato neither lauds nor laments work; he treats it as necessary or merely instrumentally valuable. He calls the crafts ways of making money (e.g. 357c) and craftsmen money-makers (e.g. 434a). When Socrates first describes the organization of the city, he says that it is need which determines what work must be done, what jobs there must be in the city, and the distribution of jobs across the population so that one person does only one job, according to her talent and qualifications. The passage discussing the rationale for and application of the principle of specialization abounds with the language of need.²⁷

T1 (Socrates:) I think a city comes to be because none of us is self-sufficient, but we all need many things . . . And because people need many things, and because one person calls on a second out of one need and a third out of a different need, many people gather in a single place to live together as partners and helpers. And such a settlement is called a city . . . Come, then, let's create a city in theory from its beginnings. And it's our needs, it seems, that will create it . . . Surely our first and greatest need is to provide food to sustain life . . . our second is for shelter, and our third for clothes and such . . . How, then, will a city be able to provide all this? Won't one person have to be a farmer, another a builder, and another a weaver? . . . (369bd)

Need is so omnipresent a reason for the arrangements in the city that when Socrates asks Adeimantus whether he can find justice and injustice in the city just described, Adeimantus answers, 'I've no idea, Socrates, unless it was somewhere in some need that these people have of one another' (372a). By contrast, it is not work but leisure — reclining on beds strewn with yew and myrtle, feasting with their children, drinking wine, wearing wreaths and hymning the gods (372b) — that Plato characterizes as the source of happiness. It is not only producers' work that Plato treats as merely instrumentally valuable but also rulers': in general, when good people rule it is because otherwise worse people than themselves will rule them (346e–47c); and in the happy city philosophers rule out of gratitude for their education and because it is just for them to do so (519e–20a) — in neither case because ruling is fulfilling or intrinsically valuable.²⁸

²⁷ *chreia*, 369c2, c7, d1, 371a1, d4, 372a2; forms of *ananke* 369d7, 370b7; forms of *dei* 369b6, e2, 370d2, 6, 8, 9, 371a2, 3, 4, 7, b1–2, c3, d1.

²⁸ Vlastos does not say that doing one's own work is sufficient for justice either, but adds the qualification, 'with the intention that each should have his own' (Vlastos, 'Social Justice', p. 9). But I do not see how having this intention either requires or brings about any improvement in understanding, or how it benefits the agent in any other way. Vlastos might try to argue that a person would not have this intention unless she saw the reason why each should have his own, or saw why it is good for each to have his own. But that ratchets up the cognitive requirement so far that we are once again left with the suspicion that it is not doing one's own work, but rather knowing what is good that is good for the agent.

None of the above entails that one does one's work solely for the benefit of others, or that no happiness accrues to one as a result of doing one's own work; it only means that the contribution of doing one's own work to one's own happiness is indirect, because doing work is itself only an instrumental good.

There *is* one passage in the *Republic* which seems to favour Vlastos' and Kraut's positive assessment of work.

T2 (Socrates:) . . . [Asclepius] knew that everyone in a well-regulated city has his own work to do and that no one has the leisure to be ill and under treatment all his life. It's absurd that we recognize this to be true of craftsmen while failing to recognize that it's equally true of those who are wealthy and supposedly happy . . . When a carpenter is ill, he expects to receive an emetic or a purge from his doctor or to get rid of his disease through surgery or cautery. If anyone prescribed a lengthy regimen to him, telling him that he should rest with his head bandaged and so on, he'd soon reply that he had no leisure to be ill and that life is no use to him if he has to neglect his work and always be concerned with his illness. After that he'd bid good-bye to his doctor, resume his usual way of life, and either recover his health or, if his body couldn't withstand the illness, he'd die and escape his troubles.

(Glaucon:) It is believed to be appropriate for someone like that to use medicine in this way.

(S:) Is that because his life is of no profit to him if he doesn't do his work?

(G:) Obviously.

(S:) But the rich person, we say, has no work that would make his life unlivable if he couldn't do it.

(G:) That's what people say, at least.

(S:) That's because you haven't heard the saying of Phocylides that, once you have the means of life, you must practice virtue.

(G:) I think he must also practice virtue before that.

(S:) We won't quarrel with Phocylides about this. But let's try to find out whether the rich person must indeed practice virtue and whether his life is not worth living if he doesn't or whether tending an illness, while it is an obstacle to applying oneself to carpentry and the other crafts, is no obstacle whatever to taking Phocylides' advice . . . [T]he most important [obstacle] of all, surely, is that it makes any kind of learning, thought, or private meditation difficult, for it's always imagining some headaches or dizziness and accusing philosophy of causing them . . . (406c–7c)

Plato's target in this passage are the idle and self-indulgent rich, to be brought to shame by the example of the lowly carpenter. Plato makes the point that although 'we say' that the rich have no work that would make their lives unlivable if they couldn't do it, the rich ought to practise virtue to make their

lives worthwhile, and suggests that a sickly body is as much a distraction to the practice of virtue as it is to the practice of carpentry, so that a sickly rich person ought to eschew medical treatment and prefer to die if his illness hinders the practice of virtue. For if a rich person fails to practise virtue, his life lacks even the lower-grade worth of the practising carpenter. So the lesson for the rich person is that what makes his life valuable is the presence of virtue in it — without virtue, his life is worthless.

If Plato embraces the view of the differential worth of the different classes expressed in this passage, then he may believe that the producing class's good consists in their work, but this does not generalize to the other classes. Even with this restriction, however, Plato's statements are in serious tension with one another, for how can the producers' work both cramp their souls and be their good? On the other hand, Plato may not embrace all the attitudes aired here.²⁹ When Glaucon protests that one must not wait to practise virtue until one has the means of life, Socrates seems to take his point, which would suggest that the ailing carpenter would have a worthwhile life as long as he could practise virtue (407a). Perhaps whether one is able to work or not is an indication of whether one is able to practise virtue or not. Perhaps Plato's final view would be that carpentry is the carpenter's function *qua* carpenter, but *qua* human being, it must be justice, the excellence of the soul (cf. 335be).

Whatever his view of the value of work for the producing class, Plato cannot mean to reduce the value of the upper classes' lives to the value of their jobs. Suppose a philosopher suffers a stroke which leaves her intellectual capacities untouched but prevents her from communicating the results of her contemplation or using them to shape the city or other individuals; in this case, Plato should surely judge that her life continues to be valuable to herself, since contemplation is a (supremely) intrinsically valuable activity. How could Plato think that this philosopher should receive no social goods? One might be tempted to say that the philosopher *is* doing her work, which is

²⁹ He clearly does accept the attitude we are most likely to find problematic: that human life is not intrinsically worthwhile but must be made so. The problem is that the judgment on the worth of a life passes, in this passage, from the carpenter's legitimate first-person reflection ('my work is what makes my life worthwhile'), to a de-personalized, third-person endorsement of his view, that is, the judgment that the carpenter's life is worthwhile only as long as he works. (I am grateful to discussion with Rae Langton on this point.) Our intuition that this sort of 'disquotation' is illegitimate and pernicious raises some questions for us: must the carpenter's judgment about the worth of his life be true for us to find it legitimate? If the judgment is true, then why is there a problem with someone else making the same judgment? If it is false, then should we not disapprove of his first-person judgment as well as of the impersonal judgment? How do our ideas about the unconditional and foundational worth of human beings fit with thoughts about how to *make* our own lives worth living? Note that for Plato, value is value *to* someone (the carpenter *is/is* not of use to himself and/or anyone else). Plato just does not address the question of whether the someone to whom other things have value has a different or similar kind of value.

contemplating. But her contemplating makes no civic contribution (except in the trivial sense that since the philosopher is a member of the city, contributing to her own welfare is contributing to the city's welfare), and so it is unclear how it is *work* rather than simply a valuable *activity*.

I have argued so far that getting to do their own work cannot be the intrinsic good or benefit that citizens get from living in Plato's ideal city. But if citizen's work is not their good, and if, as on the principle of functional reciprocity, the goods citizens do receive are the 'tools' they require to do their jobs, then it seems that Plato is subordinating what is intrinsically valuable to what is instrumentally valuable.³⁰ In other words, work is an instrument for the production of goods, some of which, one would have thought, would be intrinsically valuable. Functional reciprocity treats these goods as instruments for work, which is itself an instrument. This turns the justification for Plato's principle of social justice on its head: initially, each citizen was to specialize in the work best suited to her because this made it possible for everyone to have the goods they needed without having to do all the different kinds of work by themselves (369e–70c).³¹ But as we can now see, Plato's principle of social justice does not guarantee that the goods available will be distributed in such a way as to maximize citizens' happiness. At the very least, its silence about the distribution of non-productive goods leaves it open for these to be distributed in all kinds of unhappy ways. The only distribution of goods it guarantees is one that presses some goods into service for the sake of production. What makes this arrangement count as a conception of justice — rather than, say, efficiency?³²

³⁰ The fact that the rulers need to enforce the principle of 'doing one's own work' does not show that work is any kind of good. The rulers must enforce it because most people are not in a position to judge what work they would be best at and would most benefit the city by, but take up occupations for all sorts of (bad) reasons: because their parents or friends do it, because they have some vague notion that they would be good at it or enjoy it, or because of associated perks. For example, a craftsman may be puffed up by wealth, by having a majority of votes, or by his own strength, and so attempt to enter the class of soldiers; or the same person may try to do the work of all three classes at once (434ab).

³¹ One supposed that as work was the means whereby citizens in the first city could have their needs met, with the shift from need to good in the second city, work would be a means to their happiness.

³² To put the point somewhat differently, if work is not intrinsically good but functional reciprocity or the principle of specialization entitles one to the goods one needs qua worker, we need an account of how these required goods are intrinsically good and sufficient for happiness, rather than only instrumental to doing one's work. In the absence of such an account, certain sorts of objections to the *Republic* are especially pressing. For example, Annas, who accepts the functional reciprocity account of Platonic social justice, complains: 'it is disturbing that in the state there are no rights which antecedently limit what may be done to people in the interests of producing either efficiency or morality' (J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), p. 178); Popper's complaint that Plato is concerned only with the interest of the state, not

Interlude: Distribution of Duties or Distribution of Roles?

So far, I have argued that social justice in the *Republic* accounts for the distribution of duties but not the distribution of goods in Plato's ideal city. To this, a historically-minded reader of the *Republic* might object: 'What Plato is distributing in the *Republic* is not exactly burdens and benefits, but rather roles, and particular duties and privileges are packaged together into a particular role. Consideration of burdens or benefits independently of one another is unplatonic and misleading.'³³

There is much to be said for the historically-minded objection. First, Plato gives 'doing one's own' a much broader scope than simply doing one's own job or work. So, for example, he describes the corruption of guardians as their no longer doing their own but instead becoming money-makers (415e) or household managers and farmers instead of guardians (417a). It can hardly be anyone's job to appropriate others' property, so the 'role' of a money-maker would seem to include non-work-related behaviour that is to be expected of money-makers. Second, understanding 'one's own' as one's role, or even more comprehensively as one's life, would explain how Plato can move, without argument, from his claim that justice is 'doing one's own' to the claim that justice is the having as well as the doing of one's own (433e–34a).³⁴ Most important for my argument, however, is that if 'one's own' is the role or life that is one's own, then the problem I have been discussing, that social justice seems to overlook the distribution of benefits, disappears.

I think I can concede all this and still find it worthwhile, and in the spirit of the *Republic*, to analyse roles into their component benefits and burdens. There is no immediately obvious reason why all the elements that make up a role go together, and Plato himself calls into question some traditional packages of roles — for example, by denying the guardians private property (416d–17a), and by relieving guardian women of most reproductive work

of individuals, seems to be basically this worry (Popper, *Open Society*, pp. 89–90, 106–8, 76, 79).

³³ This historically-minded objection comes from Stephen Menn.

³⁴ This would answer Popper's charge that in this passage Plato is attempting to associate, without argument, the ordinary conception of justice as 'having one's own' with his view that justice is 'doing one's own' in order to lure his readers to the view that justice is a matter of keeping to one's station (Popper, *Open Society*, pp. 97–8; cf. Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, p. 120; cf. 'Plato is looking for a point of contact between his own view of Justice and the popular judicial meaning of the word, and finds it in *hexis tou oikeiou*' (J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge, 1902), p. 239/433b *ad. loc.*). Defending Plato, on the specific question of what licenses the move from the premise that justice, which is what judges aim at, is 'having one's own', to the conclusion that justice consists (in part) in 'doing one's own', N.D. Smith argues that Plato holds the general principle that what it is to do one's own is to act in such a way as to aim for each having his own. See 'An Argument for the Definition of Justice in Plato's *Republic* (433E6–434A1)', in *Philosophical Studies*, 35 (1979), pp. 373–83.

(455d, 460d). In both cases, Plato takes the work to be done (guarding, civic work in general) as the essential core of the role or life and adjusts other elements traditionally associated with that role so that they contribute to and do not detract from the work to be done. So if there are roles or lives that Plato has inserted into the ideal city without analysis, we may, on Platonic grounds, analyse them into their component benefits and burdens, and demand to see either how these relate to the work that defines a given role or else how the benefits are good for their possessor. Plato seems to put some benefits and burdens together on the basis of an implicit psychological theory, e.g. that the sort of person who is good at masonry also values money, or that a farmer will not work the land unless he owns it. The thought seems to be that people who value money or the body are also good at making money and dealing with bodily things, and so the benefits a mason or farmer should be given are money or land. But none of this is impenetrable to an analysis in terms of benefits and burdens, and indeed it looks as if the benefits are distributed on the basis of people's values, whereas the services are collected on the basis of their talents. A final point in favour of retaining an analysis in terms of benefits and burdens is that we are looking for points of contact between Platonic and ordinary conceptions of social justice, and we do not ordinarily think of social justice as distributing roles or lives — especially if some of what makes up a life comes from nature.

III

Plato's Two Principles

A fuller account of the distribution of goods, to complement the principle of justice's distribution of civic duties, comes directly out of Plato's happiness principle. This is the principle that citizens receive whatever goods they are capable of benefiting from, and this, although not part of Plato's theory of justice, is its normative basis — it is what makes it possible for us to see the *Republic* as offering a theory of social justice.

On three occasions in the *Republic*, Socrates 'reminds' Glaucon and Adeimantus:

T3 in establishing our city, we aren't aiming³⁵ to make any one group outstandingly happy but to make the whole city so, as far as possible. We

³⁵ This wording allows for the interpretation that they should not *aim* to make only one group happy, but the result of their aiming to make the whole city happy is that the happiness of those utility monsters, the philosopher-rulers, is what is maximized. Plato does not rule out this solution, but it turns out that even the guardians, who have been required to sacrifice all sorts of benefits in order to be guardians, are happier than Olympic victors, let alone producers (465d–66a).

thought that we'd find justice most easily in such a city . . . (420b; cf. 466a, 519e).³⁶

This general principle, Plato's happiness principle, applies to every institution and arrangement in the city (including the distribution of duties).

In stating this principle, Socrates asserts but does not argue that the happy city is the one in which happiness is distributed across all the groups rather than being concentrated in any one group. The status of this requirement is somewhat of a puzzle. For distribution rather than concentration of happiness looks like a requirement of justice,³⁷ a constraint on the ways in which the city's greatest happiness might be achieved. One might think that since Socrates is supposed to be defending his view of what justice is and of its goodness for the just person, ascribing this content to justice without argument or notice is begging the question. But perhaps a policy of distribution rather than concentration of happiness is an uncontroversial requirement of justice. Perhaps what is controversial is only whether it is good to abide by such a policy. Glaucon's social contractarian, for example, might agree that this is a requirement of justice, and admit that it is good to live in a society in which others abide by it, especially if one is weak (358e–59a). What Socrates has to show him, then, is that abiding by this requirement, behaving justly, is good for the strong as well as the weak. Alternatively, assuming that happiness-maximization is a characteristic of the whole of virtue, or of any part of it (433ce), Plato may be able to assume that the happiest city is just without begging the question — as long as he then shows either that justice is a virtue or, assuming that justice is a virtue, that the content he has ascribed to justice is sufficiently connected to what is ordinary called 'justice'. Since all the virtues are happiness-maximizers, he will need to distinguish justice in particular from virtue in general or as a whole, which he does by means of the infamous argument that justice ('each does his own') is the 'remainder' once all the other virtues, or happiness-maximizers, have been identified (433bc).³⁸

³⁶ 'Do you remember that, earlier in our discussion, someone — I forget who — shocked us by saying that we hadn't made our guardians happy, that it was possible for them to have everything that belongs to the citizens, yet they had nothing? We said, I think, that if this happened to come up at some point, we'd look into it then, but that our concern at the time was to make our guardians true guardians and the city the happiest we could, rather than looking to any one group within it and molding it for happiness' (466a).

'You are forgetting again that it isn't the law's concern to make any one class in the city outstandingly happy but to contrive to spread happiness throughout the city by bringing the citizens into harmony with each other through persuasion or compulsion and by making them share with each other the benefits that each class can confer on the community' (519e).

³⁷ Aristotle apparently takes aiming at the common advantage to be a requirement of justice: *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1129b14–16, 1160a13–14; *Politics*, 1282b16.

³⁸ Cf. C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 237–8, cf. p. 242.

Another possibility is that Plato comes to the requirement of distributing rather than concentrating benefits because he believes that this is in fact the best means to the maximization of happiness over the aggregate of the citizens. Socrates gives empirical reasons for there being little inter-class conflict over the distribution of benefits: there are three primary kinds of people, philosophic, victory-loving and profit-loving (581c)); they value different goods (e.g. the guardians are told they have gold and silver in their souls as a gift from the gods and do not need human gold, which would only defile their divine metals (416e–17a)); the philosophers' stream of desires runs towards wisdom and so away from the pleasures of the body valued by money-lovers (485de). We can supply a plausible empirical constraint for the intra-class case: since people within a class have roughly the same capacities (for happiness), as the distribution of goods diverges from equality, the increase in happiness that one person might have at the cost of another person's decrease in happiness is likely to increase the happiness of the whole at most only marginally, and (given marginalist assumptions) is more likely to decrease the happiness of the whole.³⁹

Whatever the exact relationship between Plato's happiness principle and justice or virtue as a whole, I want to argue that the happiness principle is a genuinely political principle,⁴⁰ with genuinely distributive applications. Plato does not regard the city as an organic entity over and above its citizens,⁴¹ or its happiness as distinct from the happiness of its citizens. Rather, the happiness of the city consists in the happiness of its citizens, with the further constraint that this happiness be brought about by the city's institutions. However, in arguing for an individualist and reductionist interpretation of the happiness principle, I do not mean to take a position on the question of whether the individual's good is to be construed broadly, as including the good of others or of the community, or narrowly, as excluding it.⁴²

³⁹ We might then infer from Socrates' emphasis on maximizing the whole city's rather than one class's happiness that one class's benefits are not to be increased at the cost of another class's unless this results in a greater aggregate happiness. Richard Kraut has objected to even the in-principle possibility of the happy city being brought about by a concentration of happiness; on Kraut's view, the requirement to distribute happiness is a principle of non-aggregation, which does not tolerate the possibility of some classes being well off and others not; for according to the principle, 'even if we can make . . . [one] class so outstandingly happy as to offset the unhappiness of other classes, we should not do so' (comments delivered at APA Central Division Symposium on Greek Ethics, 23 April 2000). I cannot see how to justify, textually, such a strong reading of the passages that I have adduced for the happiness principle.

⁴⁰ Not merely an analogy for the moral psychology in the service of an ethical argument, as it would seem from a number of recent interpretations of the *Republic*, most recently J. Annas, *Platonic Ethics Old and New* (Cornell, 1998), Ch. 4.

⁴¹ Contra Popper, *Open Society*, pp. 79–81.

⁴² Fred D. Miller uses this criterion to distinguish between moderate and extreme individualist conceptions of the city and its good. On the moderate account, the city aims

Plato's account of the qualities predicable of the city is (perhaps surprisingly) reductionist. Socrates says that the characteristics of a city or constitution come from the characters of the people who live in it (435e, 544d). One might argue that at least some qualities are predicable of the city not in virtue of their being true of individuals in that city but in virtue of certain relations holding in the city, for example, justice: for on Plato's own account, a city is just in virtue of each of the three classes doing its own work — but only philosophers are just.⁴³ The solution to this is that Socrates distinguishes psychic and civic virtue (specifically courage, 430c), and while only philosophers are psychically just, in the sense that each part of their soul does its own work, members of all three classes are civically just, in the sense that they do their own work; and all that may be predicated of the state is civic justice.

Plato does not require all of the individuals in a city to have every quality predicable of the city — wisdom is predicable of the city because there is in the city one small class of people who are wise (428c–29a). But what *makes* the city have this characteristic is that this is the dominant class in that city,⁴⁴ and its character forms the city's constitution or way of life — such a small number of wise people living in a city ruled by a different type would not make that city wise by their mere presence in it.

Plato's interest in how to *make* a city virtuous and happy can help us to see why many obvious counter-examples to his account are beside the point. Consider 'harmonious':⁴⁵ it seems plausible to say that a city can be harmonious without its members being harmonious — for the underlying idea with harmony is that the whole has some new, emergent, feature (being harmonious) in virtue of the relations of its parts. But since Plato is interested not simply in the relations between the characteristics of wholes and the parts that make them up, but in *making* the whole of the city have certain characteristics, he will dismiss fortuitous harmonies and concentrate instead on those harmonies that came to be because someone organized the city in a certain way. But if someone organized the city to be harmonious, she will have done so on the basis of some pattern in her soul, but having this pattern in her soul simply is

at the good of each individual, but this good includes virtue, and so concern for the good of others; by contrast, on the extreme individualist account, the good of the individual aimed at by the city is his narrow self-interest. I do, however, want to rule out all holistic conceptions of the city and its good, according to which the city has a good distinct from the good of its parts. These include the extreme view that the good of the individual is a mere means to the good of the city, mattering only to the extent that it makes the city good, and the moderate view that sees the city's good as constituted by both the good of individuals and an irreducible communal good (F.D. Miller, *Nature, Justice and Rights in Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 194–210).

⁴³ This objection was made to me by David Robinson.

⁴⁴ B. Williams, 'The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's Republic', in *Exegesis and Argument*, ed. Lee, Mourelatos and Rorty, p. 200.

⁴⁵ This example is due to Tim Williamson.

being harmonious herself (cf. 500d). Presumably this is why the predicates Plato considers are all character-traits and why he appears untroubled by obvious counter-examples such as ‘large’.⁴⁶

One complicating factor in the question of what qualities are predicable of a city on the basis of their being predicable of individuals in that city is that Plato distinguishes between perfect virtue and civic virtue and predicates civic virtue of the city on the basis of the civic virtue of its citizens, but there is no corresponding distinction in happiness — there is no civic happiness citizens have on the basis of which the whole city can be called happy. (There is no civic wisdom, either.) Perhaps this is because one can be virtuous qua citizen or qua human being, but happy only qua human being.⁴⁷ In any case, Plato imposes stricter reductionist conditions on ascribing happiness to a city than on ascribing other qualities: the point of Socrates’ ‘reminders’ that the city’s aim is to maximize the happiness not of one class but of the city as a whole seems to be that for the city to be happy it is not sufficient for the dominant class to be happy. As Vlastos observes, Plato on several occasions contrasts the city as a whole with a group within the city, but never with all of the people in the city.⁴⁸

Despite all Plato’s reductionist gestures, and despite my view that Plato does not see the city as an entity over and above its citizens, it does not seem to me that one should insist that the happiness of the city is *nothing but* the happiness of its citizens, even though the happiness of its citizens is a necessary condition for the happiness of the city. Consider the case of a family. We do not call a family happy if its members are miserable. Nor do we call a family happy if its members are happy but estranged from one another. Rather, we say that a family with happy members is a happy family if, in addition to its members being happy, they do family-like things: they look after each other’s children, go on holiday together, etc., and are individually happy because of what they do for each other. It is not that the family’s happiness is *constituted* by any happiness over and above its members’ happiness, however; the family’s happiness is constituted only by its members’ happiness, but (at least part of) the members’ happiness should have been an effect of their being a family.

⁴⁶ Williams, ‘Analogy’, p. 197.

⁴⁷ Cf. Aristotle’s distinction between the good man and the good citizen (*Politics*, 3.4, 1276b16–77b32).

⁴⁸ Vlastos, ‘Social Justice’, p. 15. But cf. 420e–21a: ‘We know how to settle our potters on couches by the fire, feasting and passing the wine around, with their wheel beside them for whenever they want to make pots. And we can make the whole city happy in the same way, so that the whole city is happy. Don’t urge us to do this, however, for if we do, a farmer wouldn’t be a farmer, nor a potter a potter, and none of the others would keep to the patterns of work that give rise to a city.’ Although Plato says ‘the whole city’ is made happy in this way, he must mean all the citizens are, for when they are made happy in this way, they do not do the work that ‘gives rise to a city’. But this is not a real alternative: the ‘we can make’ should be understood as ‘we know what it would be like if’.

The two passages in the *Republic* most responsible for the impression that Plato's conception of the city and its happiness are organicist in fact fall far short of doing this.

T4 Suppose, then, that someone came up to us while we were painting a statue and objected that, because we had painted the eyes (which are the most beautiful part) black rather than purple, we had not applied the most beautiful colors to the most beautiful parts of the statue. We'd think it reasonable to offer the following defense: 'You musn't expect us to paint the eyes so beautifully that they no longer appear to be eyes at all, and the same with the other parts. Rather you must look to see whether by dealing with each part appropriately, we are making the whole statue beautiful.' Similarly, you musn't force us to give our guardians the kind of happiness that would make them something other than guardians. We know how to clothe the farmers in purple robes, festoon them with gold jewelry, and tell them to work the land whenever they please. We know how to settle our potters on couches by the fire, feasting and passing the wine around, with their wheel beside them for whenever they want to make pots. And we can make all the others happy in the same way, so that the whole city is happy. Don't urge us to do this, however, for if we do, a farmer wouldn't be a farmer, nor a potter a potter, and none of the others would keep to the patterns of work that give rise to a city . . . if the guardians of our laws and city are merely believed to be guardians but are not, you surely see that they'll destroy the city utterly, just as they alone have the opportunity to govern it well and make it happy (420d–21a).

This passage is easily read as saying that making the whole beautiful requires subordinating the beauty of each part to the beauty of the whole, so that in a beautiful whole each part may not be as beautiful as it could be, considered individually.⁴⁹ This seems to be in some tension with the interpretation I am proposing, according to which each part's being as beautiful as possible is a necessary condition for the whole's being as beautiful as possible. But what the passage says is that for the whole to be beautiful, each of its parts must be a beautiful *part*, and that requires that each part continue to *be* a part (i.e. retain its function in relation to the whole). If the eye were painted purple, it would no longer be an *eye* (eyes are not purple) — and, *a fortiori*, not a beautiful eye. A statue of a body in which there was no eye but something else where the eyes should be would be defective. So in the case of the city, if a guardian or potter were given the kind⁵⁰ of happiness inappropriate to a guardian or potter, they would cease to be a guardian and a potter. The reason, in the case of

⁴⁹ 'Thus at 419A (the beginning of Book IV), answering Adeimantus' objection that the guardians get a thin time of it, Socrates says that a city's being sublimely happy does not depend on all, most, the leading part, or perhaps any, of its citizens being sublimely happy, just as a statue's being beautiful does not depend on its parts being severally beautiful.' (Williams, 'Analogy', p. 197.)

⁵⁰ I take it that Plato intends by the kind of happiness something like the *means* to happiness — qualitatively different for different people.

guardians, is that they would be corrupted by such happiness: if they could own private property, the guardians would want the other citizens' property and so would attack them instead of defending them as their job requires (415d–17b). In the case of the potters the reason seems to be that they would not bother to make enough pots if they could just make them whenever they liked.⁵¹ The result of a guardian not being a guardian and a potter not being a potter is, of course, that there will be no city. For in order to produce the resources that enable a city to have the sort of happiness that is appropriate for a city rather than a festival (a happiness that endures and meets lifelong human needs),⁵² people must do the work they are best at. Without a city, most of the (would-be) citizens will not be happy. (However, if virtue is sufficient for happiness, then a wise and luckily uncorrupted few may be happy without a city.)

It might be thought that the line, 'and we can make all the others happy in the same way . . .' implies that Plato is admitting the possibility of everyone being happy by having good things without having to work, but rejecting it in favour of an arrangement that constitutes a city. But this cannot be Plato's view, because, recall, the reason for setting up a city in the first place was that the division of labour saved people from having to make everything they needed by themselves — which would hardly have been a happy arrangement. I take this passage as conducting a thought-experiment, and the line as saying, 'We know what it would be like to make each of the others happy, considered singly, by giving them good things and not requiring them to do any work. But if we work through our thought-experiment, we will see that the result for all the citizens, and therefore for each of the citizens, would be scarcity and misery.'⁵³

⁵¹ So there must exist some form of compulsion for potters to make pots — the exchange mechanism through which producers sell what they make and get what they need, if Plato intends to leave the producing class and its relations unreformed, or some form of policing if they too receive goods on the same basis as the guardians.

⁵² One might flesh out the festival–city contrast by comparing the happiness brought about by *Republic's* city with that brought about in Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen* (which looks like a parody of *Republic V* except for the fact that all external evidence points to its predating *Republic V*): in *Assemblywomen*, roles are reversed and celebrations foreshadow their own end — leaving aside considerations about what, objectively, are the goods that make for even synchronic happiness, the happiness of the *Assemblywomen* obviously cannot last.

⁵³ This should make it clear that I see the value of social justice as instrumental. Readers may be puzzled by the disanalogies between social justice on my account and psychic justice, which is supposed to be intrinsically good. On my view, Socrates is committed to the view that both psychic justice and just behaviour are intrinsically good, not that social justice — the condition of the city in which each does his own — is intrinsically good. For something to be intrinsically good it would have to be valued for itself — not for its consequences — by an agent, and I do not see how this could be the case with social justice.

Let's turn to the second passage that has been thought to favour an organicist interpretation of the city:

T5 Is there any greater evil we can mention for a city than that which tears it apart and makes it many instead of one? Or any greater good than that which binds it together and makes it one? . . . And when, as far as possible, all the citizens rejoice and are pained by the same successes and failures, doesn't this sharing of pleasures and pains bind the city together? . . . What about the city that is most like a single person? For example, when one of us hurts his finger, the entire organism that binds body and soul together into a single system under the ruling part within it is aware of this, and the whole feels the pain together with the part that suffers. That's why we say that the man has a pain in his finger. And the same can be said about any part of a man, with regard either to the pain it suffers or to the pleasure it experiences when it finds relief . . . Then, whenever anything good or bad happens to a single one of its citizens, such a city above all others will say that the affected part is its own and will share in the pleasure or pain as a whole (462ae).

This passage recommends a goal for a city: the kind of sharing of feelings more typical of a family or indeed a single individual with respect to the parts of his body. But setting identification and through it unification as a goal does not require taking the parties to be unified as distinct from the whole produced by their unification. That the city aimed at is *most* like a single person does not mean that it is in every way like a single person. When Aristotle criticizes the *Republic* for aiming at a degree of unity appropriate to a family or individual but inappropriate for a city (*Politics* 2, 1261a10–b15) he is criticizing Plato for his *goal* of shared feelings and possessions among the citizens, not his conception of the *kind* of entity a city is, i.e. something over and above its citizens.

I'd like to turn, at last, to the content and basis of the distribution of goods prescribed by Plato's happiness principle.

T6 . . . we should consider whether in setting up our guardians we are aiming to give them the greatest happiness, or whether — since our aim is to see that the city as a whole has the greatest happiness — we must compel and persuade the auxiliaries and guardians to follow our other policy and be the best possible craftsmen at their own work, and the same with all the others. In this way, with the whole city developing and being governed well, we must leave it to nature to provide each group with its share of happiness. (421bc)

Now (unlike some modern inegalitarians)⁵⁴ Plato does not suggest that nature provides each group with its share of happiness in any and every society as though what is natural is therefore inevitable. Evidently in Plato's estimation

⁵⁴ E.g. R.J. Herrnstein and C. Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (London and New York, 1994), pp. 312–13.

most societies are bad enough to derail nature, and bringing about the natural distribution takes quite a bit of human and social effort.

The simplest way in which the happy city might achieve a happiness-maximizing distribution would be to allow each citizen access to those goods from which she can benefit or which she can enjoy. This way of distributing benefits could well be what Plato has in mind when he connects justice as ‘doing one’s own’ with ‘having one’s own’ (433e–34a). ‘Having one’s own’ would be, on my view, Plato’s specification of the principle of happiness, i.e. ‘to maximize the happiness of the whole city, give to each citizen the sorts of goods s/he can most benefit from’. In this case, the connection between ‘doing one’s own’ and ‘having one’s own’ would be that the former is a means to the latter, social justice a means to civic happiness.

Different types of goods will need to be distributed somewhat differently, depending on their features. It will be helpful, then, to enumerate the socially distributable goods.⁵⁵ These far exceed the material goods produced by the producing class. When he first distinguishes the types of goods, Glaucon lists as examples of intrinsic goods harmless pleasures (an example of which might be the pleasures of smell (584b)), joy, knowing, seeing and being healthy (357bc). Then there are the natural abilities people have by birth: recall that the *Laws* says the best city even pools the resources of citizens’ eyes and ears and hands.⁵⁶ The most important good provided by the state is education in virtue: as in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates says that happiness consists in education and justice,⁵⁷ in the *Republic* too, the most important intrinsic goods are knowledge and virtue (virtue: 444de, 580bc; knowledge: 581d–83a; both: 585b–86e). Not all the goods distributed are unconditionally good, but citizens will still be able to enjoy them in the right circumstances — for example if their use is guided by philosophers. The value of education in this list of goods needs to be underscored: like justice, education is good both instrumentally and intrinsically.

While competitive goods may need to be parcelled out to individuals, resources like talents and labour may be held in common; goods that depend for their goodness on being shared, such as gymnasia, creches and common dining halls, *must* be held and used in common. The most important good, education, which leads to knowledge and virtue, is not a competitive good⁵⁸ — more of it for Agamemnon does not mean there is any less for

⁵⁵ We may lack an account of what the good is and even of the good-making features of intrinsically good things, but still be able to identify which things are intrinsically good. Although Socrates in the *Republic* explicitly denies knowing what the good is, this does not stop him from saying that knowledge of the form of the good is more important than knowledge of the virtues (505ac) or from arguing that justice is intrinsically good.

⁵⁶ Plato, *Laws*, 739cd.

⁵⁷ Plato, *Gorgias*, 470e.

⁵⁸ Although realistically speaking, the money that funds education is a competitive good, this may be less obvious when the educational ideal is poverty and contemplation.

Achilles — and its benefits can be enjoyed by those who do not have it (e.g. they can be directed or instructed by the educated).⁵⁹ So distributing education in proportion to citizens' capacity to benefit from it is like filling jugs when there is an abundant supply of water — each jug is filled until it can hold no more; each citizen is given as much education as she can benefit from. There is a natural limit to how much education one can benefit from, exceeding which might actually be harmful, as is suggested by Socrates' remarks on the harmfulness of dialectic for those who are not mature enough to study it without losing their values (535c–39d.) But goods like private property and honours are competitive,⁶⁰ and achieving an optimal distribution may be more complicated in these cases.⁶¹ Giving these goods to one party involves withholding them from another — not only when the former will benefit from them while the latter will not, but also when the former will benefit more from them. In addition, distribution will affect production, since many of the goods to be distributed are tools of production, e.g. land. So the goals of producing as much of what is good as possible and of distributing goods to maximize happiness need to be harmonized.⁶²

⁵⁹ In thinking about the different sorts of goods there are and how they might be distributed, I have been helped by E. Anderson, 'The Ethical Limitations of the Market', *Economics and Philosophy*, 6 (1990), pp. 179–205.

⁶⁰ Even if there is a lot of some things to go around, e.g. land, more for Achilles means less for Agamemnon, and worries about securing future wellbeing might lead both to seek more and more land and thus come into conflict.

⁶¹ Since on Plato's view bodily pleasures, like leaky vessels, require constant replenishment, the correct distribution of these may be well below the level of diminishing marginal returns.

⁶² (a) This is not as obvious, and not so obviously devastating, a problem as it might seem today when certain assumptions of neoclassical economics have the status of natural laws — for example, that an egalitarian distribution of goods results in scarcity because increase in production requires the concentration of capital. Even Mill did not share these assumptions when he argued that while production must be carried out according to economic laws, how this amount is distributed is determined by society, on the basis of moral considerations.

The laws and conditions of the production of wealth partake of the character of physical truths. There is nothing optional or arbitrary in them. Whatever mankind produce, must be produced in the modes, and under the conditions, imposed by the constitution of external things, and by the inherent properties of their own bodily and mental structure. Whether they like it or not, their productions will be limited by the amount of their previous accumulation, and, that being given, it will be proportional to their energy, their skill, the perfection of their machinery, and their judicious use of the advantages of combined labour. Whether they like it or not, a double quantity of labour will not raise, on the same land, a double quantity of food, unless some improvement takes place in the processes of cultivation. Whether they like it or not, the unproductive expenditure of individuals will *pro tanto* tend to impoverish the community, and only their productive expenditure will enrich it. The opinions, or the wishes, which may exist on these different mat-

ters, do not control the things themselves. We cannot, indeed, foresee to what extent the modes of production may be altered, or the productiveness of labour increased, by future extensions of our knowledge of the laws of nature, suggesting new processes of industry of which we have at present no conception. But howsoever we may succeed in making for ourselves more space within the limits set by the constitution of things, we know that there must be limits. We cannot alter the ultimate properties either of matter or mind, but can only employ those properties more or less successfully, to bring about the events in which we are interested.

It is not so with the Distribution of Wealth. That is a matter of human institution solely. The things once there, mankind, individually or collectively, can do with them as they like. They can place them at the disposal of whomsoever they please, and on whatever terms. Further, in the social state, in every state except total solitude, any disposal whatever of them can only take place by the consent of society, or rather of those who dispose of its active force. Even what a person has produced by his individual toil, unaided by any one, he cannot keep, unless by the permission of society. Not only can society take it from him, but individuals could and would take it from him, if society only remained passive; if it did not either interfere en masse, or employ and pay people for the purpose of preventing him from being disturbed in the possession. The distribution of wealth, therefore, depends on the laws and customs of society. The rules by which it is determined, are what the opinions and feelings of the ruling portion of the community make them, and are very different in different ages and countries; and might be still more different, if mankind so chose.' (J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (Toronto, 1965), Book II, ch. 1, s. 1, pp. 199–200.)

(An example of a law of production would be Ricardo's law that the cost of production determines the price of the product, so the total amount that can be appropriated and distributed between landlord, labourer, capitalist and state through taxation is determined by cost of production.)

(b) Let me dispense with two sceptical objections about Platonic distributive justice. First, one might object that it does not matter to Plato how material goods are distributed, since the only real goods are spiritual (this objection comes from Elijah Millgram). But even though Plato considers spiritual goods to be the most important of goods, it does matter to him how material goods are distributed, because material goods have conditional value (when their use is directed by wisdom, they are good for their user/possessor). Second, one may object that if the solution to the problem of how to distribute the most important good, education, depends on the non-scarcity of education, then it is not a problem of distributive justice, for, as we have known at least since Hume pointed it out, scarcity is one of the circumstances of justice (this objection comes from Vinit Haksar). But Plato is dealing with a problem of scarcity — not of material goods, to be sure, but of the scarcity of leisure in which to do what really matters, i.e. contemplate or learn.

(c) One type of conflict between the requirements of distribution and production of goods may seem particularly acute for this account, and this has to do with what is asked of the individual citizen. For if one receives benefits in accordance with one's capacity for enjoying them, what motivates people to do their work and contribute to the common good? (I do not mean to ask what enforcement mechanisms there are, but rather why anyone should think it rational/good for them to contribute.) This issue has come up most insistently in the context of the requirement that philosophers rule even though contemplation is the better activity, but given what I have argued about the merely instrumental value of doing one's own work, and about the distribution of goods according to people's

Clearly Plato intends, by the claim that nature gives to each class in the city its share of happiness, to justify his inegalitarian distribution of both goods and work. This inegalitarian distribution is the result of his combining his view of the empirical inequalities in capacities for happiness and the principle that everyone's happiness be taken into account. Does Plato combine these two views so that social arrangements reflect, compound or compensate for nature's inequalities? The guardians may be capable of greater happiness than the others, but they must take on the onerous burden of ruling so that others can be happy as well — even though these others are only capable of a lesser happiness. Maximizing happiness across people who have different inborn capacities for happiness need not require giving more goods to those whose ceiling for happiness is higher — instead, it may involve directing a lot of social benefits towards the naturally disadvantaged because achieving their wellbeing takes more resources (e.g. supplying wheelchairs and building ramps for people who can't walk).⁶³ We should not assume that because the ruling class end up being virtuous and educated and having the best pleasures and so being the most happy that this is because the state has given them more of its total resources than it has the producing class — who have, after all, all the private property. Certainly the ruling class has received the best goods — through education — that the state has to offer. But it need not be supposed that the other classes have borne the cost of this by being deprived of some good that could have made them happier.

It is correct but misleading to say that on this account goods are distributed according to merit. For on the one hand, better people get better goods and worse people lesser goods (philosophers get mathematical and dialectical education; producers only get private property). But on the other hand, it capacity for enjoying them, it is a perfectly general problem. Nicholas White argues that the requirement that philosophers rule is the sole exception to the principles that justice is always in the interests of the agent and that one should always act in one's best interests (N. White, 'The Ruler's Choice', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 68 (Band 1986), Heft 1, pp. 22–46). My discussion suggests that the very general requirement of doing the work for which one is qualified may need to be justified in some other way than by direct reference to the agent's own interests — not only for philosophers, but for everyone. A possible exception here would be the producing class, since Plato says very little about it in the *Republic*. He may not want to restructure distribution among the producers but to let buying and selling according to need govern distributions among them, and to have the state simply tax them for the upkeep of the guardian and ruling classes and to keep a check on extreme inequalities. But notice that the question is in principle much more easily answered for philosophers than for anyone else: philosophers will rule because they can see all the considerations in favour of their doing so (whatever these are, and I do not pretend to have a substantive answer to this question), because they (somehow) see and are moved to act by what is, all things considered, best. But everyone else in the happy city must also do their own work — and without the benefit of this understanding.

⁶³ Utilitarians have to justify this by appeal to the great marginal utility it affords, but Plato need not take this route; he might insist instead on the happiness of *each*.

would not be right to think of this distribution as *deserved* by anyone in the way that a reward or punishment for good or bad contributions might be deserved. To clarify the claim about desert, it may be helpful to consider what Plato is *not* proposing as a principle for distributing goods. He is not proposing an arrangement in which because I contribute x (to the common good), I receive y in exchange because y has been judged equal (or proportionate) in value to x — that would be, in Aristotle's terms, appropriate to rectificatory justice (which includes compensation for voluntary transactions such as sales, as well as involuntary ones such as thefts).⁶⁴ In this case, there is a strong sense in which I deserve y : I have paid for it. But people in Plato's happy city can only be said to be entitled to the benefits they are capable of enjoying in virtue of what they can do with them, not in virtue of anything they have done. The notion of desert here is vanishingly thin,⁶⁵ and the entitlement based on considerations of what they can do with the goods they receive to produce or enjoy happiness for themselves as well as for others.^{66, 67}

⁶⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1130a1–10. In distinguishing distributive and rectificatory justice, Aristotle says: 'Of particular justice and that which is just in the corresponding sense, one kind is that which is manifested in distributions of honour or money or the other things that fall to be divided among those who have a share in the constitution (for these it is possible for one man to have a share either unequal or equal to that of another), and another kind is that which plays a rectifying part in transactions.' (*Ibid.*, 1130b31–31a1.) Distributive justice is 'geometrical proportion' (*ibid.*, 1131b13) according to which 'awards should be according to merit' (*ibid.*, 1131a24); rectificatory justice, however, gives awards 'according to arithmetical proportion' (*ibid.*, 1132a2); that is, when an injustice has been done, rectificatory justice 'restores equality' (*ibid.*, 1132a25) with regard only to redressing the injustice, and not with regard to the overall merit of the parties. Aristotle adds: 'And when the whole has been equally divided, then they say they have their own — i.e. when they have got what is equal' (*ibid.*, 1132a27–82, trans. W.D. Ross, rev. J.O. Urmson in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Vol. 2 (Princeton, 1984)). At which account, Hobbes (rightly) scoffs: 'As if it were Injustice to sell dearer than we buy; or to give more to a man than he merits.' (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, ch. 15.)

⁶⁵ This goes along with Plato's theory of punishment, which is mostly forward looking, concerned with reform and deterrence.

⁶⁶ It might be objected that Plato's doctrine of reincarnation in the myth of Er points to the presence in the *Republic* of a much thicker notion of desert than I have allowed, for people have the lives they chose for themselves in the afterlife and for that reason deserve their lives (617d–20e). So perhaps by 'leaving it to nature' to apportion happiness to people, Plato intends a distribution according to desert in a strong sense, of social benefits as reward. But there is a real difference between thinking that god or nature doles out the lives people deserve and thinking it society's business to administer reward and punishment. Thinking the former is at least compatible with thinking that society's job is to do its best by all its citizens, irrespective of their ultimate standing with god or in nature.

⁶⁷ This raises a general question about Plato's appeal to nature: if nature is the distributive mechanism responsible for each group getting its share of happiness, what, if any, role is played by human beings and human institutions in bringing about the natural

To conclude the argument of this section, I want to emphasize a point of contact between our intuitions about social justice and the arrangements of the *Republic's* happy city which has emerged in this discussion: the happy city regards its citizens, quite apart from their value as contributors, as subjects whose wellbeing matters. The point can be put negatively: although Plato grades both social benefits and social contributions and divides people up into classes according to what they contribute and what goods they enjoy, *citizens are not benefited in compensation for their contribution*. The relationship between contribution and benefit is actually the reverse of compensation: you contribute what you do because of the goods you have received, but you received the goods you did because of your ability to benefit from them,⁶⁸ and not by the contribution you made. This may be why Socrates invokes something like gratitude in explaining why the philosophers should rule when they could contemplate, which would be better for them:

T7 Observe then, Glaucon, that we won't be doing an injustice to those who've become philosophers in our city and that what we'll say to them, when we compel them to guard and care for the others, will be just. We'll say 'When people like you come to be in other cities, they're justified in not sharing in their city's labors, for they've grown there spontaneously, against the will of the constitution. And what grows of its own accord and owes no debt for its upbringing has justice on its side when it isn't keen to pay anyone for that upbringing. But we've made you kings in our city and leaders of the swarm, as it were, both for yourselves and for the rest of the city. You're better and more completely educated than the others and are better able to share in both types of life. Therefore each of you in turn must go down to live in the common dwelling place of the others . . .' (520ab)⁶⁹

distribution? The interpretation I have advanced maintains that the natural distribution is far from inevitable but actually requires human effort, and that the role of human institutions is to provide for people with different capacities as much of whatever it takes to make them as happy as possible. In this scenario, nature's contribution is to set limits — upper and lower, on people's capacity for happiness (e.g. they will not be happy without X amount of honour and they cannot be made happier by adding to Y amount).

⁶⁸ I should add a caveat here: you are benefited according to your capacity to benefit no matter what you contribute, but only so long as you are not harmful to the city by being incurably bad (whatever the reason, e.g. a miscalculation in mating or breeding). In that case you are exiled or killed. But in that case, not only are you of no positive value but are rather of negative value to the city, you yourself cannot be benefited, so neither the city nor anything else is of positive value for you. Given the thesis that goods apart from wisdom and virtue are conditional, even living and its supports are of negative value to the person who is incurably bad.

⁶⁹ Socrates' invocation of justice in this demand on the guardians to give something back to the city in return for their education may suggest that justice has some other content than doing one's job, and that this other content, expressed here in terms of repaying a debt, is quite close to one of our intuitions about what justice should be concerned with. But in fact the guardians are also being asked to do their job, and that is why what they are being told is just, at least at the level of the 'basic structure' which is

The same point can be made positively: although citizens are included in the city in the first instance because they can contribute to one another's wellbeing, once they are citizens they are not regarded only or primarily as contributors, but rather *as subjects whose wellbeing matters*.⁷⁰ Vlastos, recall, had complained that Plato's principle of justice does not accord people rights as *human beings*. This was certainly true of functional reciprocity; I take it to be true of any arrangement that treats entitlements to goods as compensation for contribution. One may argue that it is also true of Plato's principles of distribution on my interpretation, since it is as citizens and not human beings that their wellbeing/happiness matters. But it would be parochial to require that Plato formulate his views in exactly these terms. What Plato does is to recognize that a political association should bring about the wellbeing of its members (or that a political association exists for the sake of its members' wellbeing). When Aristotle makes it a criterion for the genuineness of a constitution that it aim at the common good (*Politics*, 1279a17–21), he is merely making explicit this feature of the *Republic*;^{71, 72} and when the Stoics extend the requirements of justice to cover all human beings and not merely co-citizens, they do so through the metaphor of the cosmopolis.

Notice, however, that the point of contact I've just remarked on is not between ordinary and Platonic conceptions of social *justice*, but rather between ordinary intuitions about justice and Plato's happiness principle — the requirement that the city maximize citizens' happiness by giving each citizen whatever goods she or he can benefit from. I've suggested that the source of this requirement cannot be justice — it may be the city–soul analogy or determined by the distribution of goods and duties. (I am taking the notion of a basic structure, of course, from Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA, 1971).) Note that the requirement to repay their debt is only on the guardians, not on the city, and is compatible with doing one's own at the level of the 'basic structure'. The general principle of 'doing one's own' that establishes social justice must be able to accommodate subordinate conceptions of justice as repayment of a debt, or truth-telling, just as the general principle of happiness must be able to accommodate good distribution as reward and incentive (e.g. sexual privileges for valour in battle, 468bc). Thanks to David Velleman for getting me to think about the relationship between this passage, our intuitions about justice, and Plato's 'doing one's own' formula for social justice.

⁷⁰ Scanlon identifies 'wellbeing matters' as a fundamental moral fact, and argues that utilitarianism's great appeal is based on the belief that it is the only such fact. See T.M. Scanlon, 'Contractualism and Utilitarianism', reprinted in *Moral Discourse and Practice*, ed. S. Darwall, A. Gibbard and P. Railton (Oxford, 1997), pp. 271–2.

⁷¹ In his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* Robinson says that Aristotle is bringing the question whether the constitution seeks the common advantage into greater prominence than Plato ever did (R. Robinson, *The Politics of Aristotle Books III and IV* (Oxford, 1962), p. 22). But Robinson is only thinking of the contrast with the *Statesman* (where the criterion for genuineness is whether the constitution is according to law or not) and not of the similarity with the *Republic*.

⁷² Perhaps also of existing constitutions — but one difficulty with ascertaining this is that the word used will not be 'citizen' (*polites*) but, e.g., 'Athenian' (*Athenaios*).

empirical conjectures about happiness or something else; Plato does not argue for it. To us, however, this is the morally significant principle, and this is what might count as, or be the normative basis for, a principle of justice. It is a morally significant principle for Plato because, and to the extent that, the value, or claim to be a virtue, of 'doing one's own' lies in its contribution to the happiness of the whole.⁷³

IV

Women, Work and Education

Plato famously argues in the *Republic* that women and men of the guardian classes should receive the same education and do the same work. Annas has argued that Plato's reasons for granting women equality in work and education are all wrong: 'far from the modern liberal arguments that women should have equal opportunities with men because otherwise they lead stunted and unhappy lives and lack the means for self-development', since traditional women's work 'leads to boredom, neurosis, and misery', Plato advocates that women be allowed to do the same work as men because they 'represent a huge pool of untapped resource for the city'.⁷⁴ Annas assumes that the good being extended to women is work,⁷⁵ and that the education they receive is of

⁷³ This account of the contact between ordinary intuitions about social justice and Plato's conceptions of social justice and the city's happiness remains indeterminate on some questions. Even if citizens are not valued or benefited in proportion to their contribution or as contributors at all, are they valued and benefited in proportion to their capacity for enjoyment, as I have claimed, or in proportion to their worth (however this is to be understood)? We could try to press the issue with Plato by imagining a scenario of such scarcity that the city must choose between benefiting rulers and benefiting producers — e.g. between higher education and farm subsidies. Plato wants to harmonize away such scenarios, but if forced to pass a judgment on this sort of scenario, would he say that the rulers are to be benefited because that increases overall happiness? Or because a ruler's life is more worthwhile since it realizes the highest good, wisdom? Or would he oppose benefiting only the rulers on the grounds that even in this case the happiness of the whole city demands attention to the happiness of the other classes?

⁷⁴ J. Annas, 'Plato's *Republic* and Feminism', reprinted in *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Ward (New York and London, 1996), pp. 8, 10.

⁷⁵ If it were the case that work was an important good being equalized across the sexes, one would expect Plato to extend the principle of equality in work across the sexes from the guardian to the producing class, but he does not. But if it is education, rather than work, that is the good to be distributed, then it is a little more understandable why Plato does not extend his equalization of work to women of the producing class. For work is only instrumentally valuable, and apparently Plato thinks that there is no shortage of people who can do producers' work. As for equality of education for women of the producing class, the *Republic* does not seem to provide any education to men of the producing class, presumably on the grounds that they could not benefit from it. If training in a craft is a valuable (although lower-grade) type of education, and the *Republic* provides it to men but denies it to women of the producing class, then Plato is inconsistent. But if the same educational goals can be achieved by, e.g. exposure to the

instrumental value — that is, valuable insofar as it qualifies them to do the same work. But if Plato thinks poorly of most men's work as well as of housework, he is unlikely to make the argument Annas wants him to. He is (still) right: most men's jobs, like most women's jobs, are deadening (perhaps that is why so many workplaces have various employee appreciation schemes and why so many people answer the question 'Do you like your job?' by saying 'I like the people I work with'). Perhaps there is a lesson for contemporary feminists in Plato's strict separation of the value of work and that of education: perhaps we need to be less impressed by equality of opportunity and more concerned about *what* equality of opportunity affords us.

As for regarding women as an untapped resource for the city, Plato clearly does this, but this is compatible with regarding them as part of the city and their happiness as its reason for existence. Their happiness provides a straightforward reason for the city to provide them with an education.

The structure of Plato's argument for equal education and work for women bears out my claim about the quite different values of education and work (for a full account of this argument, see the appendix). Plato actually gives separate arguments for why women and men should do the same work and for why they should receive the same education. They should do the same work because they are able to (453b–56b). A conditional argument says that if they are to do the same work, then they had better receive the same education — education *is* (also) instrumentally valuable, in that it qualifies people to work (451e–52a). But this does not establish that it is good for them to do the same work — Plato never argues this. He does, however, argue that it is good for them to receive the same education, and here he appeals to the *intrinsic* goodness of education: the unconditional reason for women to receive the same education as men is that it contributes to their happiness (456d–57a).

Appendix

Plato makes one argument for men and women doing the same work and another one for their having the same education; the argument for their doing the same work appeals only to their ability to do so, while the argument for their having the same education simply appeals to the goodness of education for them. The argument falls into three sections:

First, a conditional argument which establishes that men and women should be educated alike *if* they should do the same work (A):

A. Conditional argument that women and men should have the same education

1. Two creatures educated differently cannot do the same work (451e).

right sorts of stories in childhood, then perhaps he is not. Plato says so little about the producers that it is difficult to know.

2. Therefore, if women and men are to do the same work, they must receive the same education (in music, poetry, physical training, and warfare) (451e–452a).

Now although this is a conditional argument, Glaucon has already said that he thinks women and men should do the same work, as do male and female guard dogs, rather than men alone working and having all the care (451d). But except for the dubious analogy between guardians and guard dogs,⁷⁶ there is as yet no justification for Glaucon's judgment. To establish that women and men should do the same work, Socrates needs to argue that it is possible and desirable for women and men to do the same work. To show that it is possible, he entertains and responds to an objection that it is not (B).

B. The argument that women and men can do the same work

1. An Objection (453b–c):
 - 1a. Different natures are suited to different work (453b).
 - 1b. Women and men have different natures (453b).
 - 1c. Therefore, women and men should not be used for the same things (453c).
2. Reply (454b–e): That it is possible (not contrary to nature) for women and men to do the same work.
 - 2a. A difference in nature only justifies a difference in work if that difference is relevant to the performance of that work, e.g. A difference in soul (454c).
 - 2b. If the only difference of nature between women and men is that women bear children while men beget them (i.e. a bodily difference), then they may do the same work (454d).
 - 2bi. There is no work at which men are not better than women (455c).
 - 2bii. However, many women are better than many men in many things (455d).
 - 2c. Therefore, there is no work that belongs to a woman because she's a woman, or to a man because he's a man (455d).
 - 2d. Therefore, the differences of nature relevant to work are distributed across the sexes (455d).
 - 2e. Therefore, women and men should be given (*apodotea*) the same work, depending on what nature, relevant to work, each possesses (455e–456b).
 - 2f. Therefore, women and men should receive the same education (456b).

⁷⁶ The analogy seems to be called into question by the emphatic *anthropine*, which qualifies *physis he theleia*, at 453a1.

Two points about this argument. First, (2e) does not strictly follow, for all that is shown by the irrelevance of sex to work is that women and men may be given the same work; to warrant the ‘should’,⁷⁷ it would also have to be shown that it is desirable for them to do the same work. Second, the conclusion (2f) goes beyond the possibility or desirability of men and women doing the same work — it is about their receiving the same education. Now one might think that (2e) and (2f) are proleptic, and that having established its possibility, Socrates will go on to establish the desirability of men and women doing the same work. But he does not. Instead, he argues only (in support of 2f) that it is desirable for men and women to be *educated* in the same way (C).

C. That it is good for women and men to be educated in the same way

1. The best thing for the city is to have the best possible men and women as its citizens (456e).
2. Education makes men (and women) better (456d).
3. Then it is best for a city that its women as well as its men be educated (457a).

The surprising structure of this argument leaves some questions to be answered: why does Socrates not complete the argument and argue for the desirability of men and women doing the same work as well as having the same education? Does Plato not think it desirable that men and women do the same work? If this is so, and if he can give an independent argument for the desirability of education, what was the point of the conditional argument (A)?

My argument above, that Plato regards work as only instrumentally valuable, and education as intrinsically good, suggests a simple explanation: in these passages, Socrates gives two separate arguments for the two different parts of his proposed reforms. On the one hand, he argues that women and men should do the same work because they can — it is not against nature for them to do so, and they will be qualified to do the same work if given the same education (this is simply the correct application of justice as ‘doing one’s own’ to the case of women). On the other hand, he argues that women and men should have the same education because education is good, that is, intrinsically good for the one educated (and instrumentally good because it trains one to do one’s work).

R. Kamtekar

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

⁷⁷ Thanks to Mitzi Lee for drawing my attention to the imperative here.