

The Nature of Justice

A critical evaluation of the nature of Socratic justice in Books I and II of Plato's

The Republic

by

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Abstract

In Books I and II of *The Republic*, Plato raises the arguments on the nature of intrinsic justice and its manifestations for those that are inherently just. Socrates argues that justice is good in itself, rather than for its consequences. He alludes to a series of analogies to demonstrate that justice is exclusive from its methods. (*ibid* pp. 332c-333e) He also asserts that justice is good for others and benefits them, by arguing that justice entails the maintenance of others and fundamentally creates unity with all those that participate. (*ibid* pp. 335d; 339e; 342c; 333c; 351a-352b) Yet, Socrates' detractors object to the Socratic doctrine, and argue that justice is instrumental. (i) Justice is constructed under 'natural right' and the will of the stronger; (*ibid* p. 338c) (ii) Justice is merely an appearance. (*ibid* pp. 359a-b) This is illustrated with the analogy of the moral contract and the intrinsic nature of the unjust; (*ibid* pp. 359a-b; 366c-d) (iii) Both the just and the unjust would act with injustice where there was no detection of wrong-doing. (*ibid* pp. 360b-c) This is illustrated by the myth of Gyges of Lydia and a ring that enabled the ring-bearer to become invisible; (*ibid* pp. 360a-b) (iv) Instrumental justice offers *greater happiness* than intrinsic justice, due to the freedom of action it entails. (Plato *op cit* pp. 361a-b) This thesis addresses the question of instrumental justice versus Socratic intrinsic justice. Furthermore, it is argued that justice is instrumental and that Socrates' argument does not demonstrate that intrinsic justice is an actuality.

Introduction

In Books I and II of Plato's *The Republic*, Socrates argue that justice is intrinsic in human behaviour. He argues for three main points. First, justice is something that does not require maintenance to exist. For example, justice could be compared to the sun, in that it does not require something to maintain it as it offers sun-shine to the inhabitants of earth. (*ibid* pp. 332c-333e) (2) It does not assume to rely on other things, such as consequences in order to demonstrate itself. For example, justice is not chosen because of its consequences, such as extrinsic things like social order, protection of the weak¹ from the strong, and so forth. (*ibid* pp. 331c-332c) (3) An individual's life is happier and more beneficial to himself and others by being just, in promoting fairness and unity. For example, through the intrinsic nature of justice, one has a virtuous soul, and from this, one acts in accordance with the good. (*ibid* pp. 351a-352b; 335c-d; 339e) Socrates does not support the views raised by Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus who all support the view that justice is instrumental, rather than intrinsic to human nature, and that one benefits greater from being unjust, than by being good in reality.

Socratic justice

Justice is a broad concept and has many different meanings surrounded by various contexts. I will attempt to define what Socrates meant by the term justice. Justice can be argued as “the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.” It can be considered a form of conforming to X, where X is in the best interests of Y. (“Justice”, 2012 para. 3-5) According to Slote in the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, the Socratic conception of justice is demonstrated by individuals who do not conform to the rules and norms of institutions and laws for the sake of

¹ The legal system is an example where the instrumentality of justice is implemented to protect individuals from the effects of physical and non-physical harm from other individuals. This is demonstrated by retributive punishment. In effect, individuals who are considered stronger, due to having attributes that would oppress others, are limited by the instrumental justice of the legal system, so that those who have less are not at the mercy of the will of those who have more.

preserving a just and harmonious society. Instead, “the just individual is someone whose soul is guided by a vision of the Good², someone in whom reason governs passion and ambition through such a vision. When, but only when, this is the case is the soul harmonious, strong, beautiful, and healthy, and individual justice precisely consists in such a state of the soul.” (2010 para. 3) Justice is defined as one who acts justly, in conformity with a just and harmonious soul.

The Socratic definition of justice does not support the idea that justice is extrinsic and instrumental, which operates purely by conforming to norms, laws and institutions. Moreover, it does not permit that one acts in conformity with just principles to obtain the consequence of acting so, such as obtaining a good reputation and character. (Rogers, 1971 p. 79) Justice is not about denouncing the virtuosity of the soul and the ethical interior of an individual. Socrates deliberately and radically defines justice as the internal condition of an individual being good, who is inclined to perform just actions due to having an ethical soul. (Slote, *op cit* para. 4)

The definition extends to the Socratic conception of the *Theory of Forms*. Many scholars have argued for an accurate, unambiguous definition of *the Forms*. In its essence, Socrates argues that X is X because it participates in X. For example, one is considered just because one participates in justice. This is regarded as self-predicating. (Nehamas, 1979 p. 93) Forms are the true essence of things. Forms are considered to “...stand to particulars as physical originals stand to their copies or resemblances.” (White, 1977 p. 195) In regards to this definition, Socrates in *The Republic* asserts the argument that justice is intrinsic and that it is the essence of the just soul. (Lorenz, 2009 para. 28) *The Forms* presuppose that justice can only exist if one who has a just soul by being just, in relation to self-predication. Therefore,

² I will define ‘the Good’ as knowledge of justice. Vlastos (1971) mentions that justice is good for the just man, because it contributes to his well-being and happiness. (p. 67)

the idea of the concept of justice must be true in itself for it to have particulars. (White *op cit* p. 195) If this is not the case, justice is merely an appearance of a thing, and has no essence³.

The position taken

My position in this thesis is to primarily exemplify and extrapolate the dialogue in Books I and II only to highlight the fundamental arguments that Socrates makes in his introduction to *The Republic*. I will focus on Socrates, who insists that justice has intrinsic qualities and Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus who argue the opposite and advocate that goodness is instrumental. The individual will act upon justice purely for its results⁴. Socrates raises arguments to support his doctrine by relying on *techne*⁵, to demonstrate that justice is self-sufficient and does not require other things to exist. (*ibid* pp. 332c-333e) He asserts that justice is utilitarian⁶, in that it promotes happiness to those who are ruled by it, because they are able to amend unjust laws made by the ruler. (*ibid* p. 339e) Socrates then focuses his argument on the concept of unity, in that justice creates a unification of individuals who, out of necessity, must coordinate their efforts as a cohesive whole, in order to carry out an activity. (*ibid* pp. 351a-352b) On the other hand, Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus, argue that justice is not self-sufficient and relies on consequences. They argue that Socratic justice is not beneficial, and it can harm the one that implements it. (Irwin, 1977 p. 179) Individuals are inherently selfish, and are concerned about themselves and profit making, rather than the needs of others. (Plato *op cit* p. 343b) They also contend that human nature is

³ For example, one who has mere belief cannot say that they have knowledge. It is the difference between the appearance and the substance of X.

⁴ For example, instrumental justice benefits one in society by obtaining a good reputation and fame of character.

⁵ *Techne* is traditionally translated as a “craft”, though this may be an over-simplification. The term used by the Greeks, refers to a skilled activity, such as music, cookery, navigation, soldering and medicine. Furthermore, there is no precise English term to equate to *Techne*. Therefore it will be sufficient to refer to it as a craft that embodies any skilled activity. (Plato *op cit* p. 336a) The limitations of *techne* will be discussed in Chapter I.

⁶ Utilitarianism is a doctrine proposed formally by John Stuart Mill. He argued that “...the aim of action should be the largest possible balance of pleasure over pain or the greatest happiness of the greatest number.” (“Utilitarianism”, 2012 para. 1)

fundamentally unjust, and that individuals use justice as a social tool to pursue their selfish endeavours, such as wealth acquisition. (*ibid* p. 361b)

I will argue that the Socratic concept of intrinsic justice fails on the three points that Socrates uses to implement his doctrine in Books I and II of *The Republic*⁷. Referring back to the arguments that Socrates raises in Books I and II, I will demonstrate that justice is instrumental, rather than intrinsic, and that it is used as a facade to hide unjust actions that individuals perform to obtain their interests. Moreover, I will argue that individuals are selfish, and focus primarily on what they can individually obtain in any given situation. I will extrapolate on the idea that justice and altruism in relation to selflessness do not co-exist.

There are a number of objections to the Socratic concept of intrinsic justice that I will raise:

(i) Thrasymachus raises the point that the concepts of justice and injustice rely on and are underpinned by power. He asserts “that justice or right is really what is good for someone else, namely the interest of the stronger party...” (Plato *op cit* p. 343c) I will argue that Thrasymachus’s objection is valid. The stronger party does control the weaker party and Socrates’ attempted rebuttal does not succeed in defeating Thrasymachus’ point.

(ii) Justice is a social tool that is used to balance the ability to do wrong and the ability to avoid being wronged and consequently having to suffer. (*ibid* pp. 359a-b) It is the secretly unjust who are not detected by the masses and subsequently appear just, that are able to do whatever they so wish. Moreover, as Adeimantus states “...whereas if I am unjust, but contrive to get a reputation for justice, I shall have a marvellous time.” (*ibid* pp. 365b-c) It will be argued that justice is an appearance, rather than a reality.

⁷ Refer to p. 2.

(iii) I will argue that the myth of Gyges' Ring illustrates that the just and the unjust would both act unjustly if they both had the capacity to be invisible. This is on the premise that individuals are socially conditioned by their environment. If the environment in which they reside has no law and order due to their invisibility, individuals would commit injustice⁸. With this ability, both parties would be able to do anything that they desired, for example, stealing, coveting, commit murder, pillaging and so forth. (*ibid* pp. 359c-360b) "...Everyone would violate the accepted rules of morality if there was no possibility of detection." (Murphy, 1951 p. 88)

(iv) Glaucon states that by implication, the unjust man would be happier than the just man, due to the public ridicule that the just man would suffer as a consequence of his perceived bad reputation amongst the masses. Furthermore, the unjust man is happier⁹ due to his ability in any given situation to 'make it his own' and serve his own interests. (Plato *op cit* pp. 361c-362c) This is in contradistinction to the Socratic notion that justice is intrinsic and is more beneficial than injustice by subsequently offering *eudaimonia*. (Vlastos *op cit* p. 67) It will be asserted that the Socratic notion of *eudaimonia* is rejected, due to its explicit association with a virtuous soul¹⁰. Consequently, it is argued that the unjust man is happier than the just man, due to having the flexibility in his decision-making from negating the restrictions of morality.

In Chapter 1 I will describe the arguments that Socrates raises in Books I and II of *The Republic* and the attempted rebuttals made by his detractors. In Chapters 2 and 3 I will critically evaluate the four objections aforementioned and contend that justice is

⁸ The conscience is merely a product of social engineering. For example, sociological studies have found that an individual's conscience is learnt through modelling parents' behaviours and the standards they set. Societal standards also play a role. ("Conscience", 2006 para 1)

⁹ Happiness refers to the Greek term *eudaimonia* which is commonly interpreted in English as "flourishing" or "well-being". (Hursthouse, 2012 para. 20)

¹⁰ 'Eudaimonism' is the doctrine advocated by Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. The doctrine propagated that virtue and *eudaimonia* are partially or wholly interrelated. Plato and Aristotle asserted: (1) that virtue serves reason and (2) virtue is interrelated with *eudaimonia*. Furthermore, Plato asserted that virtue was associated with the soul. Therefore, with reason guiding the virtuosity of the soul, it allowed for *eudaimonia*. (Parry, 2001 para. 3-4)

fundamentally extrinsic and instrumental, that it has nothing to do with the internal machinations of the soul, and that one flourishes far greater by being unjust, than the man who is just.

Chapter 1 the arguments of Books I and II

In this chapter, I will explain the narrative of Books I and II. I will describe and assess the terms and arguments that Socrates implements to support his doctrine of intrinsic justice. In particular, I will focus on Socrates' arguments based on the idea that justice is eternal, in that it does not require anything, and yet it offers everything that is considered good. For example, it offers mutual trust, interest in the welfare of others and unity of participation of individuals. It does not seek to compete, but instead to cooperate with individuals who alike. (Plato *op cit* pp. 332c-333e; 338c; 345d; 351a-352b) I will also describe and assess the arguments made primarily by Thrasymachus who advocates for natural right and inherent selfishness of the individual. (*ibid* pp. 336a; 338c-e; 339a; 343b)

The Socratic conception of intrinsic justice and its benefits

The setting of the dialogue in the opening of Book I of *The Republic* and through to the end of Book II was written by Plato who was born in 427 B.C. The protagonist Socrates argues for intrinsic justice, in that it is good in itself and is more beneficial than injustice. (Irwin *op cit* p. 177; Plato *op cit* p. 366e) He has five opponents who argue for the case of injustice¹¹. Socrates was a philosopher who was concerned with the truth. This was related to everyday concepts such as justice. He was a man who did not hold onto prestige and wealth, as he spent most of his life homeless. (Russell, 1961 p. 108) He was a man as mentioned in the *Apology* as stating that a life where one does not examine it, was worthless. (Matson, 1968 p. 77) Yet, Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus are the opposite. Especially Thrasymachus,

¹¹ Namely Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon and Adeimantus.

who was a professional sophist, hungered for money and prestige, and was aggressive and impatient¹². (Barney, 2011 para. 8)

Polemarchus begins as the primary respondent¹³ of Socrates who argues that justice is a concept that does not require ‘other things’ in order to be. Instead Socrates uses Polemarchus to attempt to advocate that justice is, what it is, by ‘being’ without any unnecessary appendages. Socrates begins by offering the analogy of a craft such as medicine. Using the craft analogy, he states that medicine offers health to one’s friends and potential death to one’s enemies. Yet according to Socrates, unlike medicine, justice does not require payment in order to excel in on one’s craft, nor does justice require there to be a service, such as providing health to one’s friends and harming one’s enemies. Justice is good in both war and peace, while medicine is only good for offering patients health and is not good in failing to prevent a patient’s sickness. Therefore, justice is a craft¹⁴ exclusive from its methods. (*ibid* pp. 332c-333e)

Thrasymachus’ first objection

In Book I of *The Republic*, Thrasymachus resumes the argument where Polemarchus had withdrawn from the discussion. He raises concerns about the truth of the points made with the Socratic conceptualization that justice is good in itself. He asserts that what benefitted Y could harm X even when one is acting in accordance with just principles (Irwin *op cit* p.

¹² For the period of Plato’s life, Athens went into a tyrannical dictatorship with the Council of Four Hundred and then Five Thousand, which led to the militarization of the state, similar to Fascism of the 20th century. Athens then had its downfall in 404 B.C. (Plato *op cit* p. 11-13)

¹³ In Book I, Cephalus begins the dialogue with Socrates; it is Thrasymachus that the Platonic ideas of justice start to be fully developed. (*ibid* pp. 331c-d)

¹⁴ *Techne* has limitations that make it difficult for Socrates to argue his case for intrinsic justice. The term refers to a skilled activity, yet comparing it to Socratic justice does not necessarily have an accurate association. As Irwin points out, the craft analogy is open to the abuse of the craftsman making a product that is required of his excellence, thereby creating a virtuous action, or the opposite. (*op cit* p. 77) There is no way that one can know whether the craftsman will always create a virtuous action, that abides in the context of Socratic justice, or instead, creates something below his standard of excellence, entailing a vice and a moral ill, thereby dissipating the definition of the just that Plato sets out in Books I and II.

179). For example, the ‘ruler’ acts for himself rather than his ‘subjects’ because he is the strongest in his kingdom, and so acting for others would cause harm to his interests. Thence it is better for one to act in self-interest rather than to be preferential to the needs of others.

Morality and justice are nothing more than the needs of the stronger influencing the rest of society with what the ruling class requires. (Plato *op cit* pp. 336a; 338c-e; 339a)

Thrasymachus continues his argument, that what is ‘right’ is in what the ruling class declares, whether the political system is aristocratic, tyrannical, socialist, communist or democratic. In each system, the ‘government’ is the strongest and will enact what is ‘right’ by implementing laws that benefit themselves. (*ibid* p. 339a)

By Thrasymachus’ definition, justice is not related to virtue as Socrates might suggest, but to the needs of one’ self in relation to its instrumental value. Virtue is not relevant, because it is harmful; injustice pays. It offers one to obtain whatever they want. If one is being successful at being unjust, according to Thrasymachus, one is being good. (*ibid* pp. 348c-349a) Furthermore, his objection is not uncommon. In contemporary philosophy, Ayn Rand in *The Virtue of Selfishness* argued that “...life is an end in itself, so every living human being is an end in himself, not the means to the ends or the welfare of others—and, therefore, that man must live for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself. To live for his own sake means that *the achievement of his own happiness is man’s highest moral purpose.*” (1961 p. 23) Therefore I agree with Rand; selfishness is fundamental, rather than acting for others. Whether by genetic predisposition or environmental conditioning, one acts for themselves in everything they do. For example, when I assist others, it still ends up serving my interests more due to the perception I receive from society. I will be considered charitable, selfless and kind to others. But before my acts of charity were made, I was not considered these things. All one’s actions are aimed at what

one can receive, even if one gives. One would not give to another, without thinking about how it would serve themselves first.

Socrates argues against this definition of justice in reference to self-interest by stating by analogy that the athlete who is stronger than most would not force others to eat beef, even though he requires it to increase his strength. In other words, the athlete is the strongest in his craft, yet by his just accord, he would not force everyone else to be the strongest as well by eating a certain food¹⁵. (*ibid* p. 338c) He would realize that competition against other individuals would not improve their disposition in athleticism because they would first need to eat beef before they could compete. He still gets what he wants, in being an athlete, but he also takes into account the welfare of others, by giving them the free-will to choose to eat beef or not whilst engaging in athleticism. Analogously, this argument refers to the possibility of tyranny where free-will is negated for the sake of the ruler or state. Being an expert in a craft and forcing others to follow in that craft, such as athleticism and beef eating, could lead to a totalitarian regime, where individual freedoms are diminished for the sake of a collective craft.

Socrates asserts that Thrasymachus' argument has to be inverted in order to demonstrate that the ruling class require the masses to correct their mistakes in the law, when the elite make errors in law-formation. (*ibid* p. 339e) Justice benefits the ruler who prescribes the just action for the ruled to abide by. (*ibid* pp. 338e; 343c-d) Asserting the craft analogy, Socrates argues that ruling involves a skilled activity analogous to the general practitioner which involves a skilled activity by administering the art of prognosis. Yet if there are any defects in the skilled activity in question; any limits to the knowledge or perfection of that art, then it would need something else to replace it. This argument could lead *ad infinitum* assuming

¹⁵ There is an obvious weakness to the 'analogy of the athlete'. Namely, athletes need more than just a diet of beef in order to excel at their craft. For instance, they would require a consistent routine in gymnastics and fitness training.

that the defects were not removed from the skilled activity. (*ibid* p. 342a-b) One does not obtain any self-interest, but instead the subject-matter itself is the interest in its independence from the professional. The professional attends to the subject-matter in a selfless manner¹⁶. (*ibid* p. 342c) Furthermore, in relation to the idea that justice does not contain any defects, the ruler must be just in enacting laws for his subjects to abide by, and it is implied that a just ruler would allow the masses to correct his mistakes in law-formation. Therefore, the ruler would have the interests of the masses in mind, rather than his self-interest. (*ibid* p. 342e) The ruler would be solely concerned with the welfare of his subjects, so that he can be assumed to have discharge his duties as ruler as his skilled activity requires him to do so. (*ibid* p. 345d) He must do this because his art or science requires him to have knowledge that is concentrated upon the interests of the subject-matter. Consequently, this is not for the ruler to profit as would be the case with self-interest, but to have the interests of the ruled at the fore. (*ibid* p. 342e)

Socrates continues his reasoning in response to the first objection made by Thrasymachus by asserting that obtaining a fee for acting as ruler is additional to the activity of rulership. (*ibid* p. 346c) All professions, he argues, that are specialized in certain areas of social functioning conduct their specialities that are separate from the wage-earning function. For example, when a lawyer performs his duties of interpreting and implementing the common law suited to his jurisdiction, it is *after the work has been accomplished* that the professional will seek a fee for his service. It is not the intention of the art or science to seek a profit but to attend to the needs and the requirements of the subject-matter in which the professional attempts to perfect¹⁷. In perfecting his art he has authority over others. No one wants to correct others' mistakes without obtaining a wage, because the professional never thinks of

¹⁶ For example, a good hair cut does not involve the hairdresser's self-interest of profiting in hair-cutting, but instead it is the hair cutting itself that is the interest.

¹⁷ Lee notes that profit making is not the focus of a craft, but to attend to the specific tasks of the art, such as politics, whether they are done well or poorly. (*ibid* p. 342e)

himself, but only his subject-matter, and thence, the stronger attends to the needs of the weaker. (*ibid* p. 346e)

Thrasymachus' second objection

Thrasymachus reinstates the case for injustice using the craft analogy that is often used by Socrates when he attempts to justify his argument. He asserts that to perfect a craft does not assume that one is concerned with the benefit of others, for example, "...a shoemaker is concerned with the perfection, but not the interests of leather" (Irwin *op cit* p. 181) To perfect the leather assumes that the shoemaker would attempt to make a profit at the highest possible extent. According to Thrasymachus, the interests of the leather are negated, due to the shoemaker seeking his own self-interest to increase his happiness, by obtaining a profit. It would not be important to see what the leather actually required because the shoemaker is the master of the leather and could do what he likes with it. This is what Thrasymachus is asserting to Socrates in reference to the 'stronger party'. The ruler has the interests of himself at heart, not the ruled subjects (Plato *op cit* p. 343b). The ruler has the ability and the power to conduct himself in whatever way he pleases. He can be the tyrant if he so wishes, as long as he does not meet a stronger force that can commit him for his wrongdoings. (*ibid* pp. 344a-b)

Socrates argues against Thrasymachus by illustrating that the unjust ruler does not benefit more than the subjects who are ruled by the unjust ruler. He raises the idea of competition, in that the unjust would compete with both the just and the unjust to further their own selfish ends. On the other hand, the just would not compete with the just because they both would not work against each other, as it is presupposed that the just are wise and good¹⁸. It is

¹⁸ In this part, Socrates is referring to competition that is destructive, which ousts other individuals from their profession altogether. The Greek term is *Pleonexia* where an individual wants more than he is entitled to. This is juxtaposed to the professional who is just that not do this, and instead have self-restraint. (Pappas, 1995 p. 45)

through ignorance that one competes against one's likeness. Furthermore, in reference to the craft analogy, the unjust ruler is a bad craftsman compared to the subjects who are considered good craftsmen. This is in relation to the idea that the ruler who is the bad craftsman would attempt to obtain more than what his profession or excellence presupposes. He would try and obtain everything, from everyone. The good craftsman would only obtain what his profession requires and only compete against the unjust who lack such knowledge and therefore cannot pursue excellence that their craft presupposes. (*ibid* pp. 349c; 350a-c)

Unity follows justice

At this point in Socrates argument, he attempts to demonstrate to Thrasymachus that injustice equates to chaos in the personal, social and political spheres. Justice is more advantageous than injustice because it promotes unity. (*ibid* pp. 351a-352b) Unity would be promoted, because in comparison to the just, the unjust would hate each other; they would compete with each other; they would argue and disagree with each other and would “be incapable of any joint undertaking...”. (*ibid* p. 351e) He argues that such disunity would create hatred towards those who were unjust. Due to hatred, to their detriment, the unjust would advocate dissension, in that the group would not cooperate with each other and therefore chaos would result. (*ibid* p. 351d) Socrates illustrates this with an example of a group of thieves who would have to act with limited justice; in that they would have to cooperate within the group in order to carry out any activity. (*ibid* p. 351c) Outside of the group of thieves injustice could prevail, but not otherwise. (Irwin *op cit* p. 183) Socrates reasons from this craft analogy that just as the unjust man in a group of unjust men would argue with each other, an unjust man would conflict internally with himself also. (*ibid* pp. 351e-352a)

This argument is not a good one, because the group of thieves would not necessarily have to cooperate in order to steal and rob something. It would merely require that one of the thieves would have to steal or rob something. The concept of a group of thieves merely presupposes that the thievery would be more complex due to having more participants and that unity would not necessarily follow as ultimately they all would want to get what they could out of the unjust act. In fact, disunity would allow each thief to individually profit more if they did not cooperate with their fellow thieves. Since thieving by definition is an unjust act due to stealing or robbing things¹⁹, I do not see why they would act with unity. There is no necessity to do so in order to profit.

¹⁹ (“Thieving”, 2012 para 1).

Chapter 2 power and appearance

I will argue in this chapter that justice is instrumental and is based purely upon the concept of power. I will assert that power underpins any perspective in relation to morality. For example, power incorporates the good and bad ruler, the competitive element of individuals, and no act can have supremacy in society unless it is underpinned by power. (Plato *op cit* p. 343b; Nietzsche, 2006 p. 51) Furthermore, individuals by nature appear good in order to obtain the greatest benefit in a society that values instrumental justice²⁰. (Plato *op cit* pp. 359b-c) Socrates arguments implementing his concepts of the just soul, the destructiveness of competition and unity are not an adequate rebuttal. (Slote *op cit* para. 3; Plato *op cit* pp. 349e; 351a-352b)

The strongest party does implement their will

I believe that Thrasymachus' argument based on instrumental justice implies that the concept of justice involves power and those with the most power have the ability to control how one would rule one's subjects. He refers to the 'stronger party' as one who has the capacity to do what is in their will to do. They have the force, the power and the will to do what they wish. The unjust one is the tyrant who does what he wants in his tyrannical empire. He can enslave his kingdom if he so wishes. Thrasymachus' analogy of the shepherd with his sheep demonstrates that the master has the ability to "...fatten and take care of them..." because he is the master. (*ibid* p. 343b) It does not matter what perspective the shepherd has towards his flock. He can fatten them for the sake of their happiness or he can fatten them for his own happiness of making a profit. In either situation he is still the master who has the final say. He has the power to do whatever he pleases. This then follows that justice or injustice must have the power behind it in order for it to be validated within any given

²⁰ Such as entering into a moral contract.

society. For example, whether they are good or bad to his citizens the ruler has control of the government, the armed forces, and administers laws. The only way a bad ruler could be removed from government, would be to have a coup, insurrection or revolution. In either instance, the military must defect to the revolutionaries, or the general public must obtain arms to remove the unjust ruler. But even under the threat of civil unrest, the ruler can generally do whatever he so pleases, knowing that he has the strength of the armed forces and other relevant bodies to protect him while he acts unjustly. Moreover, this argument can be applied to the just ruler as well, who still requires the armed forces and control of government in order to implement his sovereign will.

Socrates does not raise this point in relation to the discourse on power. He argues that justice does not require power, but a good and harmonious soul. One who has a good soul will act justly. The just society would be created from individuals whose souls are in accordance with the good. (Slote *op cit* para. 3; Vlastos *op cit* p. 67) Therefore, it does beg the question. If justice was good in itself and is more beneficial than injustice, it would require power, yet Socrates exclude this idea.

The concept of power is underlined in the idea of competition. Socrates fails to demonstrate properly why the just who are the good craftsmen would not compete with other craftsmen of a similar nature in relation to *pleonexia*²¹. The weakness is found when Socrates uses the craft analogy to demonstrate that the just would not compete against fellow individuals who were just. He asserts that a musician who tightens the strings of a lyre would not attempt to outdo a fellow musician who would do the tightening to the same effect, but he would attempt to outdo a layperson that had no musical training. (*ibid* p. 349e) Yet, if one looks at society and the way it is composed, one can easily see that there are many different crafts and

²¹ Outdo someone else. (Pappas *op cit* p. 45).

professions. For example, there are doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants and so forth. They range from the technical to the basic, yet they all require knowledge which Socrates refers to as wisdom. (*ibid* p. 350b) Yet, with the many different professions available, to be competitive is inevitable. In fact it is even desirable. Socrates refers to knowledge as wise and good and to the opposite as ignorant and bad. (*ibid* p. 350c) The term ‘compete’ can refer to a form of ‘improvement’.²² In reference to the craft analogy of the musician tuning the lyre, if the musician was just and the layperson was unjust, and the musician did not compete against other musicians but did compete against the layperson, a couple of problems would arise. (i) Tuning a lyre involves a musician finding the right pitch. To find the right pitch involves trial and error. A musician would compete against another musician in tuning a lyre to find the right pitch. (ii) If the musician who was just, did not compete against other musicians but did compete against the layperson, then the musician would not be able to find the right pitch. In order to find the right pitch, it would involve competing with other musicians who would act as a point of reference. Moreover, if a point of reference did not exist, and the just musician did not compete with other musicians, then one would not know what the right pitch of the lyre was. Therefore, Socrates conceptualization that the unjust would compete against both the just and the unjust is contradictory, because the analogy illustrates that competition is inherent in both the musical and the unmusical in tuning the lyre contrary to 350b of *The Republic*. *Pleonexia* and ‘getting the better of’ someone else must be used in both the just and the unjust sense because in order to have knowledge and wisdom of tuning a lyre, logically both must continually compete to make sure that they are achieving and maintaining musicality so as to remain knowledgeable and wise in their profession. (Plato *op cit* pp. 350b-c)

²² According to the Macmillan Dictionary to compete involves “...try[ing] to win a competition.” It also means attempting to obtain something that other individuals also want. (“Compete”, 2012 para. 2-3)

Socrates attempts to overcome this by arguing that justice is more beneficial than injustice as it exemplifies unity. (Plato *op cit* pp. 351a-352b) He relies on the premise that the unjust would hate each other; they would compete with each other; they would argue and disagree with each other and would “be incapable of any joint undertaking...”. (*ibid* p. 351e) Socrates point is valid. There is the possibility that disunity would prevail due to the competitive nature of both the just and unjust. Yet, this point is also largely irrelevant due to the prevalence of power. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche highlights how power projects a concept into reality by impressing itself by force. He asserts:

“no matter how perfectly...[one has]...understood the *usefulness* of any physiological organ (or legal institution, social custom, political usage, art form or religious rite)...[one has]...not yet thereby grasped how it emerged...So people think punishment has evolved for the purpose of punishing. But every purpose and use is just a *sign* that the will to power has achieved mastery over something less powerful, and has impressed upon it its own idea [*Sinn*] of a use function; and the whole history of a ‘thing’, an organ, a tradition can to this extent be a continuous chain of signs, continually revealing new interpretations and adaptations, the causes of which need not be connected even amongst themselves, but rather sometimes just follow and replace one another at random.” (*op cit* p. 51)

The point that Nietzsche raises is what Thrasymachus adheres to with the idea that the stronger party has the prerogative to have mastery over the weaker party. It is not unity that benefits those that pursue justice, but those that have the *greatest amount of power*. For example, the law whether it be common, civil or theocratic relies primarily on power. The ruling elite substantiate the law with an armed police and military force²³. The law which is generally considered just by the masses whether created by parliament, derived from decrees or by divine inspiration does not have any substance without enforcement. Logically, enforcement is required because otherwise the masses would disobey just law. Individuals

²³ For example, the Roman Empire spanned over most of the known ancient world and last from 27 B.C.E to the collapse of the western empire in 500 A.D. The eastern empire lasted until 1453 A.D. (“Roman Empire”, 2005 para. 1)

would only disobey and breach just law if they saw the law as instrumentally just. By recognising the law as being instrumentally just, the masses would be willing to break it. Therefore, enforcement demonstrates and substantiates the instrumentality of just law.

According to Nicholson there is an inconsistency with the argument for power and justice. Thrasymachus initially raises the concept that justice is (i) the advantage of the stronger, for example, those that have control over others. But then he inconsistently states that it is (ii) the advantage of another. To assert both premises creates a contradiction. The stronger cannot have the interests of another at heart, other than themselves. Yet, Nicholson argues that it may not be a contradiction to associate (i) and (ii) together²⁴. (1974 pp. 212-213) Harlap disagrees with Nicholson, by arguing that Thrasymachus' underlining meaning has no reference to the stronger party, but to how the interests of another could be most effectively served. (1979 p. 357) Flew agrees with Harlap, that Thrasymachus is fundamentally illuminating the needs of others. He argues that, firstly, Thrasymachus elaborates on the idea that each form of government creates laws for its own accord, including democracies. Secondly, he refers to phrases in *The Republic* where Thrasymachus states that laws are created for the justice and advantage of others and to punish the unjust man. (1995 p. 442)

The objections to Thrasymachus' argument can be reconciled in relation to (i) and (ii) above, and are not contradictory to illustrate that his definition of justice, is actually the concept of injustice and identifies that conventional justice is subordinated to 'natural right'. (Chappell, 1993 p. 2) In defence of Thrasymachus' argument that justice is in the interests of the stronger and in the interests of another²⁵, Socrates raises the idea that the unjust ruler would require the masses to correct his errors in the law so as to make him just. (*ibid* p. 339e) This point made by Socrates does not necessarily damage Thrasymachus's claim of natural

²⁴ Justice is where one has the interests of another at heart, the stronger "...imposed at the expense of the subject who obeys him." (*ibid* p. 343c)

²⁵ (Plato *op cit* p. 343c).

right that justice is instrumental in human behaviour, and that one benefits more from such acts, than the Socratic concept of intrinsic goodness. Firstly, the premise that justice is in the interests of another does not defeat the premise that it is in the interests of the stronger²⁶.

Socrates states that the masses would want to correct the unjust ruler's laws so as to make him just. Yet even with the corrections made by the masses on laws that were considered unjust, the ruler would still have control over the laws that controlled his subjects. He would still be the one who had the *greater power* over the masses. He would therefore still execute his will as sovereign. (Chappell *op cit* p. 13)

The appearance of justice

Glaucon's argument in this part of the thesis exposes the weakness of Socrates' perspective. Glaucon demonstrates that justice is superficial and is used as an appearance rather than an actuality. He raises the concept of goods and divides them into three types. The first types of goods are those chosen purely for itself, for example, having the absence of pain. (*ibid* p. 357b) The second types of goods are those chosen both for itself and for their consequences, for example, having the ability to taste, having sight, intellect and so forth. (*ibid* p. 357c) The third types of goods are those chosen purely for their consequences, for example, obtaining a wage. (*ibid* pp. 357c-d) Socrates asserts that justice is to be placed in the second type of goods; that one chooses justice both for itself and for its consequences, for it ought to be placed "in the highest category...". (*ibid* p. 358a)

I believe that Socrates contradicts himself at this point in the argument because he had historically put justice into a category that involves consequences, thus, putting it in the third types of goods by implementing the craft analogy throughout Book I and the beginning of II. According to Irwin, in Book I Socrates argues for justice in relation to the third type of

²⁶ *ibid*.

goods, that one would choose justice for its consequences. This is demonstrated with the use of the craft analogy which is associated with the third type of goods to demonstrate that the just man is the most efficient at producing X, while the unjust man is not. Yet, Socrates revises his point and argues that justice is good in relation to the second type of goods, that justice is both good in itself and for its consequences. Subsequently, the craft analogy is rejected. (1977 pp. 184-185) Therefore, Socrates had to change his position in *The Republic* at 358a because Glaucon's argument favoured the concept that justice was chosen purely for its consequences; the third type of goods. If Socrates agrees with Glaucon here, then justice becomes instrumental, rather than intrinsic.

The moral contract

Glaucon's argument based on instrumental justice is fundamentally aimed at a moral contract²⁷ that is created between two or more consenting parties in order to avoid suffering. Justice is merely a social tool that is used to balance the ability to do wrong and the ability to avoid being wronged and consequently having to suffer. (*ibid* pp. 359a-b) Moreover, justice is practiced on the basis of pragmatism, that both the just and unjust "...are unable to do wrong." If they did do wrong, the ordering of society would malfunction and both parties would commit injustice. (*ibid* pp. 359b-c)

I believe that Glaucon advocates the view that individuals are inherently unjust, and contract with one another to avoid the suffering that could occur if one did not enter into an agreement due to the unjust actions of another. For example, both individuals contract because acting with justice would allow them to increase profits in a business partnership, rather than acting alone and with injustice towards each other. This is reminiscent of the 'group of thieves' analogy made by Socrates. (*ibid* p. 351c) Yet, the mutual agreement is a

²⁷ A mutual agreement of terms and conditions. (*ibid* p. 359a)

matter of limiting wrong-doing, without actually removing it altogether. The contract does still allow for injustice, as long as the terms of the agreement are not breached.

Justice is instrumental for the sake of limiting the wrongdoing of X to Y and the amount of suffering that would subsequently result. (*ibid* pp. 359a-b) According to Goldsmith (1995), the moral contract would make sense on the grounds that (i) not all acts of injustice would be compensated and (ii) “...more uncompensated wrongs are suffered than...[would]...be committed...”²⁸. (p. 358) Allen posits Glaucon’s argument succinctly in relation to the moral contract. He states that “justice consists simply in a kind of agreement that we will leave the other fellow alone if he will leave us alone.” (1987 p. 5) Subsequently, justice is like a remedy to a wound and is therefore a consequence, rather than a fundamentalism like intelligence or eyesight which is both good in itself and for its results. (*ibid*)

Glaucon’s objection is considered a form of contractarianism²⁹. The dichotomy of contractarianism splits into two opposing camps. On the one side, there is Rousseau’s *Social Contract* theory which propagated that all citizens submit themselves to the general will and that every citizen is a part of the whole. (Bertram, 2011 para. 20) On the other side, there is Hobbs’ *Leviathan* where every citizen contracts to submit to the “authority of an absolute—undivided and unlimited—sovereign power.” (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2011 para. 1) Glaucon argues for the view in both the *Leviathan* and *Social Contract* theory, in that individuals contract in order to limit injustice by submitting to the general will. (Irwin *op cit* pp. 185-186) Yet because Glaucon demonstrates that justice is instrumental, the unjust one would attempt to seize more than his neighbour, even when under the terms of a contract.

²⁸ Logically, one could argue that if all wrongdoings were compensated, then there would be no incentive to morally contract in the first place. (*ibid*)

²⁹ The doctrine that implemented the normative conditions for two individuals to contract, and therefore created the terms for those individuals to co-exist. The macro-level of this doctrine was the formulation of the arrangements of government authority. (Sayre-McCord, 1999 p. 3)

In response to this argument, Socrates would attempt to demonstrate that justice is inherently intrinsic. In Book I, he states that justice is a craft exclusive from its methods. It is good for individuals in all different contexts and environments. For example, justice is good for times of war and peace. It is also good for business transactions as commerce requires reliability and trust, something that would only be if someone was intrinsically just. (Plato *op cit* pp. 332c-333c) Yet, it is unknowable what justice is in times of war and peace. Is it the absence of conflict, hence peace, or is it the continuation of peace, hence the absence of war? It is not possible to comprehend whether justice is underlying in anything or separate. Socrates does mention in *The Republic* at 346c that by analogy, justice just like a profession, attends to the subject matter and is distinctly separate from the wage-earning function. But this still begs the question as to what justice is and why it should be intrinsic. Instead, Socrates argument for intrinsic justice appears to be instrumental.

According to Sayre-McCord "...moral contractarianism's appeal has grown substantially with the sense that moral constraints must in some way be a reflection of human reason or social convention, not of God or (non-human) nature." (*op cit* p. 9) I believe that Glaucon's argument raises these points. Justice is a contractual obligation entered into by unjust individuals on the basis of social convention or a principle of reason, who by doing so, limit the amount of suffering incurred in obtaining compensation for the wrongdoing committed by one of the parties. (Plato *op cit* pp. 359a-b) Allen elucidates contractarianism succinctly. He refers to a simple contract. Such a contract is implemented by the analogy of selling a book. X pays a lump sum for the book, while Y receives the payment. X ends up with a book, and Y ends up with the lump sum payment. A contract is cooperative, in that both parties must honour the conditions, yet there is the competitive aspect where both parties attempt to obtain more than the other party under the terms of the agreement. (*op cit* p. 6) Under such a competitive atmosphere, Glaucon's argument regarding the moral contract is valid. It is a way

to limit the damage incurred between X and Y and its just underpinnings of cooperation are purely utilised for its consequences and not its intrinsic value that Socrates attempts to propagate.

Injustice is inherent

Glaucon continues his argument that justice is not good in itself and is not beneficial in comparison to injustice. He offers the idea of the diametrically opposed just and unjust man. The perfectly unjust man must be able to conduct his wrongdoing without detection, and appear good. Even if he makes an error that is noticed by others, the perfectly unjust man must be able to repair it as quickly as possible, with or without force and with the usage of wealth and connections if required. On the other hand, the perfectly just man who is in actuality good, will publicly appear bad and will therefore have him “...strip[ped]...of everything except his justice...”. (Plato *op cit* pp. 360e-361c)

Adeimantus supports Glaucon’ view by adding some further elaboration on instrumental justice. He asserts that by convention, one appears just to obtain all the benefits and rewards it offers, for example, by obtaining a better reputation than the man who is overtly unjust. (*ibid* pp. 363a-365c) According to Adeimantus “...he will know that unless a man is born with some heaven-sent aversion to wrong-doing, or unless he acquires the knowledge to refrain from it, he will never do right of his own free will...”. (*ibid* pp. 366c-d) Therefore, justice is not good in itself and that injustice is more beneficial than the good.³⁰

According to Annas (1981), both Glaucon and Adeimantus illustrate that justice has two different categories of consequences. By analogy, justice has natural consequences, such as health and intelligence. Justice also has artificial consequences that are generally instituted by

³⁰ If Adeimantus can demonstrate that justice is merely a utility implemented to satisfy self-interested motives, then justice would only be chosen purely for its consequences, thence it would concede that it is the second type of goods that Socrates supports in Book II of *The Republic*. (*ibid* p. 358a)

social norms and functions. The latter category generally relies on the existence of human relations, compared to the former category which can exclude social interaction in order to exist. (p. 66-67) Yet, injustice is prevalent, and it is inherently more likely, according to Adeimantus, that one would act with injustice, and appear just. It is in the artificial consequences of justice that man is in fact, the exemplification of the natural consequences of injustice. The unjust man's knowledge is naturally unjust. (Plato *op cit* pp. 366c-d)

Machiavelli in *The Prince* supports the idea of the inherent unjust man. He asserts "...love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage...". (2001 p. 66) This point alludes to the idea that man, by natural consequences, is unjust. Love is considered an artificial consequence. It is only under obligation that one is to love, as it offers individuals the capacity to survive. It is also just to love. For example, family and friends rely on love for cohesion. Through cohesion, a family can grow, obtain things and flourish. He acts according to his advantage, attempting to obtain more for himself. Things such as love are artificial consequences created in order to secure social harmony. Injustice then, is inherent in the human condition, and it is only through the process of artificial consequences that are considered just, that one can become just. This is what Adeimantus prescribes to, when he argues that justice can only become inherent when "...he acquires the knowledge to refrain from [injustice]...". (Plato *op cit* pp. 366c-d)

Socrates would attempt to refute the perpetuation of Adeimantus' argument that the artificiality of justice led to the natural consequences of justice. With the use of the craft analogy, Socrates argues that the horse trainer who punishes the horse would not improve it and make it more just. (*ibid* p. 335b) He implies that the animal is inherently just, for justice cannot harm another who is just, and since harming the horse would not benefit it, it must then be intrinsically just. (*ibid* pp. 334e-336a) Punishment can only improve those who are inherently unjust since the just do not benefit from being harmed. (*ibid* p 335c-d)

For Socrates' argument to make sense, I believe some points have to be accepted. (i) Punishment is evil for the just as they do not require discipline to correct themselves. They are behaving appropriately. The analogy of the horse demonstrates this. Therefore punishment of the horse is evil as it is already behaving appropriately and justly. (*ibid* pp. 334e-336a) (ii) Punishment is good for the unjust, as it improves³¹ the natural consequences of the unjust and the unjust one benefits with being disciplined, as his behaviour is inappropriate. With punishment his unjust behaviour would be corrected to acting justly³². (*ibid* p 335c-d) Yet, the analogy of the horse trainer is confused and subsequently the Socratic argument is invalid. Firstly, one does not know what punishment is. It could refer to one who inflicts physical damage on another, one who verbally damages another, or it could be one who deprives something from another, for example, intentionally not feeding the horse. Secondly, one does not know implicitly why the horse would inherently be just and would not require punishment whatsoever. For example, it is implied that a horse trainer, trains the horse. This could require some sort of punishment for the horse to be trained. If this was not the case, the horse would remain wild and unusable for the horse trainer to utilise it. Lastly, it is not clear as to why punishment would improve the unjust. If Socrates agrees that punishment would not benefit the horse that is just, because it makes the natural consequences of the horse "...worse...", then why is a human who is inherently unjust an exception to the rule? (*ibid* p. 335b) It is more likely that punishing X would always cause harm to X whether or not X was inherently just or unjust. Socrates explanation is that as the musician cannot make his pupils unmusical, one cannot use his justice to make another unjust. (*ibid* pp. 335c-d) It is assumed here that to 'use his justice' refers to a form of

³¹ The word 'improved' is ambiguous. Improved could refer to making the unjust man just by being punished or it could mean that the unjust man is gradually becoming just.

³² This excludes the horse.

punishment, because it is permissible to punish the unjust to improve them³³. (ibid) Yet, this explanation is unsatisfactory and still begs the question as to why harming another can be permissible in certain circumstances³⁴. Therefore, Socrates fails here to illustrate the intrinsic nature of justice, because one does not know why one is inherently just and another is not. Furthermore, punishing X does not refer to natural consequences, but to artificial consequences and is considered a social convention used under certain circumstances, for certain types of individuals. It illustrates the instrumentality of justice in that some types of individuals are inherently unjust, because if they were inherently just, they would not require punishment.

³³ Such as incarceration for criminal behaviour.

³⁴ Incarceration in developed nations such as the US is referred to as 'corrective' services and facilities. Specifically, the *National Institute of Corrections* has developed a cognitive-behavioural treatment for criminal conduct to 'correct undesirable' social behaviour. (Milkman & Wanberg, 2007)

Chapter 3 Gyges' ring and *eudaimonia*

I will assert in this chapter that the myth of Gyges illustrates that all human nature has the tendency to act with injustice and avoid justice altogether if there is no possibility of detection from others. (*ibid* p. 360b) Moreover, the unjust are happier than the just because they can focus on themselves, obtain everything that they desire, by negating the welfare of others which demotes the amount of time one has for one's self. In other words, the unjust do not have to abide by social mechanisms that can restrict an individual's freedom³⁵. Socrates arguments rely on psychic interest, which fails to substantiate genuine happiness by negating the needs of the individual for the sake of the collective. (Irwin *op cit* p. 178)

Gyges' ring illustrates the relativism of justice

In Book II, Glaucon argues for the relativism of justice by alluding to the allegory of Gyges of Lydian who found a gold ring. The ring enabled Gyges to become invisible when he had placed it on his finger. Gyges' Ring had the ability to "...seduce...the queen, and with her help attack...and murder...the king and seize...the throne". (*ibid* pp. 360a-b) Glaucon elaborates on this point and asserts that both the just and the unjust would act with injustice because of the ring's ability to give both parties impunity. Moreover, injustice is chosen by ones' own free will. (*ibid* pp. 360b-c) Therefore, justice is conducted only for its instrumentality, rather than its intrinsic nature.

According to Nichols, Glaucon's myth of Gyges' Ring demonstrates that the one who wears the ring has the ability to become the tyrant³⁶. It was worn to illustrate that one truly desires to be unjust by being "...able to take from others whatever he likes, and make it his own." (1984 p. 36) The things that separate one individual from another are only

³⁵ Consequently their functionality is improved in comparison to the just. Refer to p. 34.

³⁶ This supports Thrasymachus' argument that the tyrant has the power to do whatever he so wishes (Plato *op cit* pp. 344a-b).

appearances, and that both share in the desire to become the tyrant. One wants nothing hidden from himself and from the things that he possesses. (*ibid*) Dustin & Schaeffer (2006) assert that Gyges' Ring allowed the ring-bearer to have to come to terms with the unjust, by experiencing the power of impunity by accident³⁷. (p. 452) Moreover, they argue that the ring does not illustrate that injustice would be inherently pursued. In terms of seducing the queen, it would involve more than just being invisible. The ring-bearer would also require "...force or charm...[and] the best protection of all...would be to make her fall in love with him." (*ibid* p. 456)

The myth of Gyges' Ring has been debated³⁸. In *The Histories of Herodotus*, the protagonist was forced by the king to view the naked body of the wife, thereby, the initial injustice was a compulsory one, rather than committed voluntarily³⁹. (1890 pp. I.8-10) He was not invisible when he viewed the queen, because she noticed him when he had committed the act. (Shell *op cit* p. 16) When the queen knew that she had been seen by Gyges due to the bidding of the king, she demanded that he kill her husband or be killed. So he murdered the king and took his throne with the queen as his wife. (*ibid* pp. 1.11-13) Yet, due to the act of injustice committed by Gyges, he became a tyrant over Lydia.

Socrates would attempt to argue against the intrinsic nature of injustice by raising the craft analogy in reference to the unjust ruler who is perpetuated as a bad craftsman. The bad craftsman would attempt to claim everything, from everyone because he lacks the knowledge and consequently, he does not have the excellence of his craft. (Plato *op cit* pp. 349c; 350a-c). But this fits exactly with Glaucon's objection of the Socratic doctrine. The unjust ruler would

³⁷ The ring-bearer became invisible by a chance incident of twisting the ring to the inside of his hand. (Plato *op cit* p. 359e)

³⁸ The *Histories of Herodotus* demonstrate differences in Gyges' Ring that *The Republic* seems to omit through the accentuation of mythologizing. (*ibid* p. 452)

³⁹ Nakedness was a taboo for the Lydians and breaking such a law was considered heinous, especially since it was the queen. (Shell, 1993 p. 15)

attempt to obtain everything from all, because he has the ability to do so. The myth of Gyges' Ring demonstrates the ability of the unjust who would attempt to claim everything, because he has the power to do so, regardless of whether he is invisible or not⁴⁰. Glaucon's adaptation of Gyges' ability to be invisible or not is merely a technicality of his argument. At 360b of Book II, Glaucon raises the thought-experiment of intrinsic injustice by stating "imagine now that two rings existed and the just man put one on, the unjust the other⁴¹." (*ibid*) Neither party would resist the permissibility to commit injustice, because both the just and the unjust would not be rebuked for such unjust acts. Furthermore, the myth exemplifies the idea that where an overarching umbrella of justice ready to punish injustice did exist, due to the Ring's ability to hide the perpetrator, such unjust acts would obtain *greater* benefit than otherwise.

In the case for secret injustice, I believe that Glaucon raises a valid point concerning the appearance of things. Inherently, individuals do not pursue X because of its 'inherentness'⁴² of being X. Instead, one does pursue X for the sake of Y. X is pursued because it is enforced to be X by Y. When a society is considered just, by definition it must be someone stronger, with *greater power* who enforces the concept of the just. Yet Gyges' Ring removes the stronger party and allows for social and political chaos⁴³. With the stronger party removed, there would be no reason to be just, as the consequences of justice would become meaningless without the stronger party. Therefore, injustice would come naturally to both the just and unjust alike. He would "...steal...whatever he wanted without fear of detection...".

(Plato *op cit* p. 360b)

⁴⁰ The historical account of Gyges' Ring fluctuates between Book II of *The Republic* and Book I of *The Histories of Herodotus* as to whether Gyges had a ring that enabled him to be invisible or not.

⁴¹ As Dustin & Schaeffer point out "[Glaucon's]...thought experiment is designed to allow us to observe both a just and an unjust person under the conditions of freedom to pursue whatever they desire...". (*op cit* pp. 453-454)

⁴² Innateness.

⁴³ "A state of utter confusion". ("Chaos", 2012 para. 4)

Glaucon raises the idea that one would practice justice “...only under compulsion...”. (*ibid* p. 360c) Yet, as stipulated above, Dustin & Schaeffer disagree by arguing that Gyges found out about the power of the ring by chance. Furthermore, one would still have to do more than just be invisible to commit injustice. He would have to seduce the queen by force or make her fall in love with him. (*op cit* p. 456) Herodotus also demonstrates that it was king that initially forced Gyges to commit the initial injustice, not himself. (*op cit* pp. I.8-10) Therefore, injustice is not inherent in the human condition, but learned by experience.

From my perspective; (i) In relation to Dustin & Schaeffer’s claim⁴⁴, firstly, with the intention of using the ring, whether it was by accident or design, it still begs the question as to why one would use it if they were inherently just, as it clearly is invasive, for example, to an individual’s privacy. Such an act is clearly unjust as nobody ought to be allowed to view another individual’s person without their consent. Secondly, the act of injustice is committed upon the viewing of the queen’s naked person. It only adds to the act of injustice when he attempts to seduce her by implementing force. It is also irrelevant whether he does Y⁴⁵ after he has already committed X⁴⁶. (ii) In Herodotus’ account of Gyges of Lydia, even under the duress of the king’s forced demand to view the queen’s naked person, it does not change the fact that Gyges chose to commit injustice. Herodotus asserts that “...since...[Gyges]...might not avoid it, gave consent: and Candaules...[the king]..., when he considered that it was time to rest, led Gyges to the chamber⁴⁷...”. (*op cit* p. I-10) Yet, the initial injustice was conducted by requiring the sight of the queen. He had to observe the body before acting with injustice. (Shell *op cit* p. 16) The king had created the circumstances upon which Gyges was to view the naked person of the queen when she undressed to lay with the king. (Herodotus *op cit* p.

⁴⁴ As cited on p. 28.

⁴⁵ Seducing the queen.

⁴⁶ Viewed her naked person.

⁴⁷ The common view advocated by scholars is that Gyges was forced by the king to commit the first injustice. (Dustin & Schaeffer *op cit* p. 454; Nichols *op cit* p. 34; Shell *op cit* p. 14)

I-10) Therefore, contrary to common belief, the act of injustice was voluntary. Furthermore, when the queen demanded Gyges kill the king or be killed⁴⁸, this apparent quest for justice, was instrumental, rather than intrinsic, as the act of injustice was already committed when he had viewed her naked person.

The unjust are happier than the just

Socrates attempts to argue that the just man is happier than the unjust man in relation to the concept of *eudaimonia*⁴⁹. As noted in the *Introduction*, *eudaimonia* is commonly translated as “flourishing” and “well-being⁵⁰”, where an individual is able to achieve “goodness⁵¹”.

Goodness is found in the Socratic notion of a virtuous soul, where reason guides the soul to be internally ordered. Consequently, when reason has guided the appetite of the Socratic soul, one begins to behave justly and appropriately to others. (Parry *op cit* para. 3-4) Subsequently, *eudaimonia* has an inextricable link to ‘virtue ethics’ as Socrates refers to happiness as having an ethical dimension⁵².

Socratic virtue such as goodness in relation to *eudaimonia* has to be rejected when evaluating happiness with the just and unjust man. As noted, Socrates relates *eudaimonia* to ‘virtue ethics’ in the form of an ethical soul. (*ibid*) Yet, this definition is not empirical. (i) One cannot know when one has an ethical soul, because one does not know what a soul is. (ii) Is one born with an ethical soul, or is it learned? Either way, it leads to a metaphysical idea that cannot properly be substantiated and thereby assess *eudaimonia*. Instead *eudaimonia*

⁴⁸ See *ibid* p. I-11-13.

⁴⁹ Vlastos refers to the Socratic notion of *eudaimonia* as one who has the active state to act accordingly to another. This act would occur where one has a soul that was “...ontologically correct, hierarchic...[and]...internally order[ed].” (*op cit* pp. 67-70)

⁵⁰ (Hursthouse *op cit* para. 20).

⁵¹ Socratic virtue.

⁵² Socratic happiness has an implicit reference to the virtuosity of the soul. A virtuous soul will “...perform its work and live well. (Irwin *op cit* p. 183; Plato *op cit* p. 352d)

should be associated with functionality, where one who functions well, is considered to be ‘flourishing in X’. By functioning well, one is supremely happy.

According to Russell in *The Conquest of Happiness*, “...where outward circumstances are not definitely unfortunate, a man should be able to achieve happiness, provided that his passions and interests are directed outwards, not inwards...”. (1930 pp. 242-245) This relates to the concept of flourishing and well-being. (Hursthouse *op cit* para. 20) An individual who can function in X will flourish in X. For example, a man who can play tennis, and continue to function playing tennis, will flourish *at some point* in the game of tennis. Functionality must infer continuity in order for the concept to have validity. One cannot function momentarily in order to flourish. For example, by the Socratic definition of *eudaimonia* and an ethical soul, if one ‘flourished’ momentarily, it would be happy for a moment and then unhappy the next. Yet, according to Socrates, an ethical soul cannot be unhappy by referring to it as being beautiful, healthy, harmonious and good. (Slote *op cit* para. 3) Therefore, there must be a significant duration in functioning in order for there to be ‘flourishing’, otherwise *eudaimonia* becomes invalid.

The centrality of *eudaimonia* in relation to functionality is fundamental to the Socratic doctrine. In Book I, Socrates asserts by analogy, that the “...eye...[has]...[its]...own particular excellence...”, and subsequently allows “...it to perform its function well⁵³...”. (Plato *op cit* pp. 353b-c) Moreover, functionality is associated with intrinsic justice⁵⁴. In the excellence of being just, one is able to flourish in it. (*ibid* pp. 353e-354a) Consequently, the concept of *eudaimonia* and functionality without Socratic virtuosity allows for the doctrine of intrinsic justice proposed by Socrates and the doctrine of instrumental justice proposed by

⁵³ Flourish.

⁵⁴ According to Socrates, justice is a particular state of the mind, which must be good in order to allow for the functioning of justice. (*ibid* pp. 353d-e) Referring to justice as a mental phenomenon implies that it is intrinsic, rather than instrumental, as it does not rely on consequences, but a sound internal state.

Thrasymachus and supplemented by Glaucon and Adeimantus to be evaluated *on equal grounds*. Furthermore, the happy man will be the one who *functions to the greatest possible extent in X*.

Glaucon raises the argument that the unjust man would be happier than the just man. He asserts that the unjust man, who appeared just and “[was]...perfect in his wickedness...[who was]...able to commit the greatest crimes and at the same time get a reputation for the highest probity...” was happier than the just man who was good in reality. (*ibid* pp. 361a-b) In order for the unjust man to obtain his happiness, he would have to be excellent in his ability to recognize and rectify any mistakes made in appearing just. If the unjust man had failed to remedy any mistakes that were made while being secretly unjust “...he must be ready with a convincing defence...or be prepared to use force...” (*ibid* p. 361b) In comparison, the just man who was good in reality, was to have a reputation of a wrong-doer, and the masses would ostracize and ridicule him in all his misery for being just in an unjust society, defaming his name “...until death”. (*ibid* p. 361c)

In my opinion, the just man cannot be happier than the unjust man. For example, the just man must take into consideration the needs of others which can be time consuming and can take one away from what one wants to do in relation to his own self. The just man must act like a servant. He must do the will of others, by completing tasks that range from the advanced to the trivial. When the just man has completed all his tasks that have been allocated to him, finally he can do what he wants. Yet at that point, someone else will assert their will unto the servant. This can lead *ad infinitum*. By the just one not being able to do what he wants, he cannot be happy, because continually serving others becomes a chore and his own needs will be negated.

He has to abide by social norms, customs and ethical codes that generally do not adhere to the needs of the individual, but the needs of others⁵⁵. For example, the individual wants more of anything that allows him to advance his own interests. Social norms, customs and codes merely attempt to suppress the individual from doing whatever he wants. Laws apply a similar rule by levelling the masses to allow for equality amongst individuals. These rules may be considered just, because others have the capacity to obtain what they want too. Yet, the unjust man is happier than the just man, because he can negate such rules that hinder his own desires for advancement, by avoiding having to take into account other individuals' needs.

Socrates' argument for intrinsic justice in terms of functionality has generally concerned other individuals. In response to the unjust ruler, other individuals are considered just in rectifying the mistakes that the ruler would make in creating and enforcing laws. (*ibid* p. 339e) The concept of unity infers a group, separate from the individual who have to act with limited justice, in order for the group to function effectively and efficiently. (*ibid* p. 351c) Even when the individual is mentioned as being intrinsically just, it is with reference to others, such as the analogy of the 'group of thieves', and the craft person who attends to the subject-matter and does not compete, but instead cooperates with his just peers. (*ibid* pp. 349c; 350a-c; 351e-352a) Consequently, Socrates' argument for justice is instrumental, because his concept of *eudaimonia* relies on referring to examples and analogies based on consequences, rather than illustrations based on intrinsic justice.

Socrates' detractors argue from the opposite of psychic justice that demonstrates the instrumentality of justice in relation to the concept of *eudaimonia*. They focus on the needs of the individual who is self-interested, selfish and desirous to advance his own interests above

⁵⁵ The masses could be associated with concern for others, which entails psychic interest. (Irwin *op cit* p. 178)

everyone else, including those who are also unjust. The unjust one is stronger than others and he is concerned with X purely because he wants to obtain the highest possible receipt in doing so. (*ibid* pp. 336a; 338c-e; 339a; 343b) Consequently, "...a shoemaker is concerned with the perfection, but not the interests of leather". (Irwin *op cit* p. 181) Moreover, there is no intrinsic justification to be just in order to function effectively. Both the just and unjust man function effectively⁵⁶. Justice is merely a tool implemented for the functioning of society. Therefore, Glaucon's argument for injustice is valid⁵⁷. There is no reason to be intrinsically just as propagated by Socrates in order to *achieve greater happiness*.

Happiness and hedonism

Glaucon and Adeimantus' argument for happiness rests upon hedonistic egoism⁵⁸. The intrinsically unjust man is supremely happy, because he is able to act upon anything he so desires. He is not restricted by any moral dogma that induces guilt or fear for acting in a certain way in particular circumstances. He does not require permission from others to satisfy his own will. (*ibid*) Its fundamental tenet is that "...each person has but one ultimate aim...[of maintaining one's]...own welfare. This allows for action,...aiming at things other than one's welfare, such as helping others, where these things are a means to one's welfare." (Shaver, 2010 para. 3) Therefore, the happy man, is one who is self-interested above all else even when it appears that he is just. (Plato *op cit* pp. 365c-d)

Critics of hedonistic egoism⁵⁹ contend that there are limitations to seeking hedonism. The hedonist generally avoids highlighting the meaningful relationships formed from co-existing

⁵⁶ The just man requires others to substantiate his justice as noted on p. 34, while the unjust man requires his power or the appearance of justice in order to legitimate his injustice as noted on pp. 11-12, 23-24.

⁵⁷ The doctrine of instrumental justice where one profits more than being intrinsically just, which was originally advocated by Thrasymachus based on the principle of natural right. (*ibid* p. 338c)

⁵⁸ The theory that all acts are done purely to maximize the amount of pleasure, regardless of the consequences. (Weijers, 2011 para. 13)

⁵⁹ Incorporating psychological egoism.

with others, such as with family and friends⁶⁰. Moreover, the hedonist doctrine cannot explain why one would choose altruistic ventures, such as protecting one's family, or giving one's life for another. (Shavers *op cit* para. 7)

Yet in my belief; (i) meaningful relationships are only propagated for the sake of the pleasure it entails. For example, X does not enter into a friendship with Y because he has pity for Y, and through his altruistic intuition X befriends Y not for the sake of pleasure, but for absence of it. Even if X did befriend Y for the sake of altruism, he would only do so because the hedonist would receive some sort of pleasure by conducting himself in such a way, for example, by obtaining a reputation for being altruistic. This point was made by Adeimantus, that the unjust one who perpetuated the guise of justice would obtain the *greatest pleasure* from doing so. (Plato *op cit* pp. 365b-c) (ii) The unjust hedonist would choose altruistic ventures, if necessary, only for the desire to serve his own self-interest. It is valid to argue that some varieties of altruism, such as defending one's family would be in one's self-interest, if the family offered the hedonist pleasure by existing. This is self-evident. If the family perished due to the inaction of defending one's family, then the hedonist would lose his source of pleasure, for example, by losing his loving wife and children. It is also fair to argue that self-sacrifice would be plausible for the sake of self-interest, if and only if, one's self-interest could be glorified by preserving one's family, way of life or religion⁶¹, by self-sacrifice. Hence, Glaucon and Adeimantus argue that hedonism is inevitable, due to idea that justice is merely a tool for the will of the unjust. Therefore, intrinsic injustice allows one to self-indulge, consequently obtain *eudaimonia* and escape the hard-work of justice. (*ibid* pp. 360d; 364a)

⁶⁰ Thought-experiment by Robert Nozick propagated that a life full of pleasure in the absence of reality, would generally not be preferential to a life where meaningful relationships were formed. (Weijers *op cit* para. 54)

⁶¹ Such as the martyr.

Conclusion

Socrates attempts to prove that intrinsic nature of justice is valid. The arguments he has put forward have been *inward looking*. There is an element of introspective self-analysis in Books I and II of *The Republic*. He attempts to demonstrate that all actions must come from the interior to the exterior; one acts with justice because one *is actually just*. Socrates feels comfortable with the idea that individuals are basically good and he focuses on how people are partially confused and disoriented in how to navigate such goodness. My antithesis to Socrates' position has been to demonstrate the naivety of intrinsic justice. Socrates propounds argumentation based on *techne* to illustrate justice and the good. I have found that the Thrasymachean contention quite appealing. Justice is instrumental and individuals pursue it for its results that correspond to their self-interest. Individuals look to the exterior; how an action *actually benefits the one performing the act* and completely ignores the interior; *how does the action actually relate to me personally*. Justice serves as a social tool to navigate individuals to optimise their self-interest. Justice does not have anything to do with intrinsic value. In the end, man is born alone and strives to succeed on his own without resorting to a mythical intrinsic moral compass in order to serve his self-interest.

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