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Craft and Virtue in Plato's Early Dialogues

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Abstract

Ancient philosophers are preoccupied with the idea of craft (*technê*)—art, expertise, skill, and not infrequently translated as knowledge or science. The idea is often seen by ancient thinkers as the pinnacle of rational agency and offers them a vital paradigm for thinking about the world and our place within it. One longstanding tradition is the view that virtue shares important features with the sort of expertise involved in practicing a craft. In this thesis, I investigate the relationship between craft and virtue in Plato, focusing especially on the early dialogues. The overarching aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Plato's thinking about craft is *central* to his views on virtue, including how he develops particular virtues like wisdom and justice as the basis for political rule. In the first half of this thesis (Chapters 1 and 2), I present the ways in which Plato's understanding of craft (and the diverse and wide set of examples that come to embody the idea for him) serves as a fruitful model of knowledge for developing the nature and structure of virtue, as well as illuminates key psychological features of the virtuous person. In the second half of this thesis (Chapters 3 and 4), I focus on another important way in which Plato relies on the idea of craft to think about virtue. This is in the context of his account of political rule. Here, I focus not on the idea of craft as a model of knowledge, but on how the sort of knowledge fit for political rule (e.g. wisdom, justice) relates to ordinary crafts, the latter represent the existing branches of expertise in various areas of human pursuit. I make the case that Plato understands the nature of political rule as an architectonic form of knowledge—a master knowledge fit to preside over ordinary crafts for the sake of promoting human welfare.

Keywords

Plato, *technê*, craft, virtue, skill, expertise, craft-analogy, *politikê*, architectonic, early dialogues, Socrates, justice, political rule, wisdom.

Summary for Lay Audience

Ancient Greek philosophers are preoccupied with the idea of *technê*, the Greek root from which we derive words like technical, technology, and technocrat. Though the concept of *technê* lacks an ideal translation in the English language, “expertise”, “craft” or “skill” come closest to capturing its meaning. It is the application of reason and intelligence to some specific area. One longstanding tradition in ancient Greek philosophy is the view that virtue—the kind of knowledge required for developing the excellence of one’s character and for living well—shares important features with the sort of expertise involved in practicing a craft. This idea is most prominent in the works of Plato (427–347 B.C.). My thesis investigates the relationship between craft and virtue in Plato’s early works. I show that Plato’s understanding of craft is *central* to his views on the nature of virtue and political rule. He relies on the idea of craft as a model of knowledge for developing the nature and structure of virtue, as well as the psychological features of the virtuous person. He also holds the view that political rule should be understood as a governing knowledge fit to manage all other expertise or crafts in order to promote human welfare.

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Abbreviations

Plato's Works

<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apologia</i>
<i>Chrm.</i>	<i>Charmides</i>
<i>Cra.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
<i>Cri.</i>	<i>Crito</i>
<i>Euthphr.</i>	<i>Euthyphro</i>
<i>Grg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Hp.mi.</i>	<i>Hippias Minor</i>
<i>La.</i>	<i>Laches</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Plt.</i>	<i>Politicus</i>
<i>Prt.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>
<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Respublica</i>

Aristotle's Works

<i>NE</i>	<i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Magna Moralia</i>
<i>Ph.</i>	<i>Physica</i>

All references to Plato follow the Stephanus pagination as found in Oxford Classical Texts (OCT), J. Burnet (ed.) (1990–22), *Platonis Opera* 5, vols. Oxford. The only exception is the *Republic*, I follow Sling's 2003 OCT edition of the text. All translations generally follow J. Cooper (ed.) (1997), *Plato's Complete Works*, though these are sometimes slightly modified.

All references to Aristotle are taken from *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Canon of Greek Authors and Works (TLG)*, 3rd ed. (1990), Oxford. Translations generally follow J. Barnes (ed.) (1984), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, these are also sometimes slightly modified.

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Introduction

1. And what about doing what's unjust? Is it when he doesn't wish to do it, is that sufficient—for he won't do it—or should he procure a power and a *technê* for this, too, so that unless he learns and practices it, he will commit injustice? (Socrates, Plato's *Gorgias*, 509d7–e2).
2. But virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the crafts (*technai*) as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II.1 1103a31–b2).
3. And in general, *technê* perfects some of the things which nature cannot complete, and imitates others. Therefore, if artistic things are purposive, clearly so are natural things (Aristotle, *Physics* II.8, 199a15–18).
4. They [the Stoics] also say that the wise man does everything well—that is to say, everything that he does: for as we say that the flute-player or the lyre-player does everything well, with the implications 'everything to do with lyre-playing', so the prudent man does everything well, so far as concerns what he does, and not of course also what he does not do. In their opinion the doctrine that the wise man does everything well is a consequence of his accomplishing everything in accordance with right reason and in accordance with virtue, which is *technê* concerned with the whole of life (Stobaeus, 2.66, 14–67, 4 = SVF 3.560).

Ancient philosophers are preoccupied with the idea of *technê* (pl. *technai*)—craft, art, expertise, skill, profession—and not infrequently translated as knowledge or science. The idea of *technê* is often seen by ancient thinkers as the pinnacle of rational agency and offers them a vital paradigm for thinking about the world and our place within it. The crucial role that *technê* occupies in ancient philosophy is a direct consequence of the idea's central importance and ubiquity in Greek intellectual culture, from tragic poets like Homer and Aeschylus to the Hippocratic medical writings, and ultimately, culminating in the Sophistic movement, the latter constituting a major part of the “Fifth-Century Enlightenment”, as it

has often been called.¹ Tracking this history of the development of *technê*, Leonid Zhumid writes:

In the second half of the fifth century, most activities involving skills based on knowledge and experience were subsumed under the notion of *technê*. Initially a term used in handicraft, this notion was thoroughly practical... With time, this initially practical conception of *technê*, opposed both to natural philosophy and to *mathemata*, took a more and more intellectual turn, until it finally served as an interpretative model of science itself. To a considerable degree, this change can be accounted for by the fact that the circle of disciplines taught by the Sophists included subjects related to intellectual activities that, though practically oriented, had little to do with traditional handicrafts. The very novelty of their pedagogical practice made it necessary for the Sophists to explain and justify it by arguing that the subjects they taught qualified as *technê*, since they involved both skill and knowledge... In the traditional pairing of skill and knowledge, it is knowledge that gradually comes into the foreground. Particular attention is paid to its origin, acquisition, and application. In the course of the fifth and the greater part of the fourth centuries, the notion *epistêmê*—which originally meant ‘knowledge’ and later came to mean ‘science’ as well—is used as a synonym for *technê*. The newborn scientific disciplines, such as mathematics, are also treated within the framework of the same model”.²

Given this close association of *technê* with *epistêmê* and the former’s role in the birth of intellectual activities, scholars have given a broader definition to *technê* that extends beyond modern views on craft, skill, art, and even knowledge. E.R. Dodds, for example, notes that *technê* refers to the “systematic application of intelligence to any field of human activity”.³ Echoing this sentiment, W.K.C. Guthrie writes that “it includes every branch of human or divine skill, or applied intelligence, as opposed to the unaided work of nature”.⁴

¹ This is most notably associated with Guthrie’s 1969 study, *A History of Greek Philosophy vol. III: The Fifth-Century Enlightenment*. For a survey of the pre-Platonic meaning of *technê*, see Roochnik (1996), 17–88. For an account of the general understanding of *technê* in the intellectual culture, see Nussbaum (1986), 94–99. For a historical study of *technê* as science, see Zhumid (2006), chapter 2. See Johansen (2021) for a recent edited volume of essays on the concept of *technê* in ancient philosophy.

² Zhumid (2006), 45–47.

³ Dodds (1973), 11.

⁴ Guthrie (1969), 115 n3.

At the centre of this development is the longstanding attraction to *technê* found in ancient conceptions of human virtue (*aretê*)—excellence of character. This idea is perhaps best associated with Socrates, who is depicted memorably in Plato’s dialogues as searching for a *technê* of the human and social kind (*Apology*, 20a6–b5, 20c). On Socrates’ use of *technê*, Zhumid writes, “[t]he Socrates of Plato’s dialogues quite naturally uses the word, which originally referred to the art of a cook or a stonemason, in discussing intellectual and moral problems. This seems to indicate that he relied not only on the common use of the word, but also on the *theory of technê* that had already been developed by the Sophists.”⁵ Thus by the time we enter into Plato’s dialogues, we are already in the midst of a rich and sometimes hotly contested discussion on the nature of *technê* in the larger intellectual landscape of the era.

This thesis is an investigation of the relationship between *technê* and virtue in Plato, paying close attention to their treatment in the early dialogues (I shall comment on the scope of this project in a moment). The idea that *technê* features prominently in Plato’s dialogues—often characteristically embodied in examples like medicine, carpentry, arithmetic, and navigation—especially in the context of virtue is manifest in even a cursory reading of Plato. In many of Plato’s works (especially the early dialogues), we find Socrates pursuing virtue as either a *technê* analogous to medicine or carpentry or as sharing important features with the sort of expertise involved in practicing them. This idea has often been referred to as the craft-analogy. Some dialogues, such as the *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, and later the *Politicus*, take up the nature of *technê* directly as its central theme.

Despite the dominant presence of *technê* and its close association with virtue in Plato, interpreters are generally cautious to conclude that virtue is a *technê* for Plato, at least not without qualification. Interpreters are also skeptical of the central role of *technê* in Plato’s moral and political philosophy, often questioning his commitment to the idea in his dialogues. One narrative that emerges is that Plato (perhaps taking the historical Socrates as a starting point) pursues virtue under the *technê* model of knowledge in the early dialogues. However, there are hints in these works that Plato is aware of the limitations of

⁵ Zhumid (2006), 46. Emphasis is in the original.

technê and has become dissatisfied with it as a model of knowledge. From here, they either argue that important developments take place in Plato's thinking about the nature of *technê* in light of these limitations or that he significantly moves away from it as a model of knowledge and even abandons it altogether.⁶

According to this general narrative, one glaring problem raised by *technê* is its inability to yield satisfying results about virtue. That is to say, thinking about virtue along the lines of a *technê* analogous to medicine and housebuilding does not actually illuminate much about virtue and how it ought to contribute to our well-being. Here, a few main features about the nature of *technê* are often mentioned as being unsuitable for conceiving of virtue. Most prominently, *technê* is the capacity for doing opposites. For instance, the medical *technê* makes the doctor an expert for both healing and killing. This is seen as an unwelcome feature for thinking about virtue since the latter does not appear to be the sort of expertise involved in doing good and bad things. Furthermore, *technê* is generally viewed as valuable only for its end, some specific product or result, whereas virtue is generally seen as valuable for its own sake. Similarly, the idea that *technê* is so wedded to its product or result makes inquiry into virtue ineffective since it is difficult to parse out what precisely is the product of virtue. Furthermore, *technê* is always concerned with some specialized area whereas virtue is concerned with the whole of life. Lastly, though this feature is never explicitly mentioned in the literature, there is general resistance to associating virtue—the kind of knowledge that develops our character and allows us to live well—with mundane and professional skills. The underlying feeling is that virtue is concerned with how to live well and how to be a good person, and this is weighty business. Thus it has little to do with the sort of banal skills we encounter in ordinary life. On this reading, Plato is attentive to at

⁶ As we will see in Chapter 2, the claim that Plato significantly moves away from *technê* (or abandons it) as a model of knowledge is overwhelmingly found in the literature on *Republic* I. Scholars see Book I as the decisive moment that Plato rejects the craft-virtue analogy. I list the complete references there. For some standard studies that propose this view, see Irwin (1977), 177 and Woodruff (1992), 102. For the view that Plato does not turn away from *technê* but important developments take place in light of him recognizing its limitations, see Parry (1996) and Sprague (1976). See Brickhouse & Smith (1994) for an interpretation of most of the dialogues I survey that is attentive to the importance of *technê*, although their focus and aims are significantly different than mine. For positive accounts of the relationship between virtue and *technê* in Plato, see Annas (1995) and Barney (2021). Lastly, see Roochnik (1996) for the view that virtue is *not* a *technê* for Plato.

least some these issues and he highlighted them in various places in order to express the flaws of *technê* for thinking about virtue.

Though this narrative does not capture all the complexities and nuances of the literature, the general sentiment is sufficiently dominant that I take it as the starting point of my project. To begin with, this narrative raises some thorny interpretative issues about the chronological ordering of the dialogues and the development of Plato's views. On this matter, the thesis does not advance any particular view nor does it assume some particular order of composition in order to make its central arguments. On the whole, I believe that Plato's thinking about *technê* is relatively consistent, though different elements of it will come to the foreground depending on the problems he is confronting and the particular philosophical commitments and goals of the dialogue. The scope of this thesis encompasses the relevant texts in a large group of dialogues characterized by their broad thematic affinities as noted by John Cooper in his introduction to *Plato: Complete Works*.⁷ These dialogues are *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Euthydemus*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*, and *Ion*. These works are conventionally referred to as Socratic dialogues or early dialogues, I have adopted the latter in this thesis. However, by choosing to focus on these dialogues, I do not intend to suggest that they represent the philosophy of the historical or the character Socrates nor do I intend to take any position with respect to their order of composition relative to the rest of Plato's works. My focus on these dialogues is on the basis that *technê* is discussed *in a certain way* in relation to virtue in these works. Notably, the craft-analogy is featured most prominently in these works, where we see Socrates pursuing moral knowledge by relying on ordinary examples from *technê*. Moreover, the majority of these dialogues (the only exception being the *Gorgias*) also end in *aporia*, without having arrived at a satisfactory account of the topic in question. For this reason, I have also included *Republic* I—a crucial text for understanding the relationship between *technê* and virtue and Plato's attitude towards their kinship. Again, I do so on the basis of the text's thematic affinities with respect to the craft-analogy, and not on its time of composition relative to the rest of the *Republic*.⁸

⁷ Cooper (1997), xv.

⁸ Throughout this thesis, I make references to dialogues outside of this list in order to provide corroborating evidence for my claims.

Before I discuss the overall aim and arguments of this project, I wish to make a few preliminary remarks on the translation of “*technê*”. Throughout this thesis, I mostly prefer to use “expertise” and “craft” as translations for “*technê*”, occasionally leaving the term untranslated when it is appropriate. The idea of expertise probably comes closest to capturing what is meant by “*technê*” in Plato and thus I frequently rely on this translation. Most English translations of Plato’s dialogues use “craft” and I have adopted this convention as well. However, readers should think of “craft” as a technical terminology for Plato, and not to be confused with our modern ideas of craft. As I will make it clear in this thesis, Plato’s account of craft should not be confused with Aristotle’s view either, who mainly identifies craft with production. In fact, Plato preserves much of the original meaning of *technê* as outlined in the history of the idea’s development above. It refers to the systematic application of reason or intelligence to some particular area. For this reason, we find a highly expansive and diverse account of craft in Plato, sometimes ranging as disparate as swimming and geometry.⁹ Furthermore, just as *epistêmê* and *technê* are used as synonyms for each other in the intellectual culture of the fifth and fourth centuries, Plato is also notoriously flexible with knowledge-denoting words, especially between “*technê*”, “*epistêmê*” and “*sophia*”. John Lyons has provided an influential analysis of these terms in his work, *Structural Semantics: An Analysis of Part of the Vocabulary of Plato*.¹⁰ Lyons, along with most scholars, agree that Plato tended to use these knowledge-denoting words interchangeably. This largely seems to be the case in the dialogues I survey, though some caution is needed depending on the particular context. I will make a note of the particular relationship, especially between “*epistêmê*” and “*technê*” when such caution is needed. Finally, throughout this thesis, I frequently use the term ordinary crafts to refer to established, conventional, or paradigmatic examples of craft in the Platonic corpus. They include all craft examples that appear in Plato with the exception of virtue, political rule, and controversial cases like poetry and oratory.

⁹ See Balansard (2001) for a complete index of activities, skills, and bodies of knowledge referred to as craft in Plato.

¹⁰ Lyons (1963), 139–228.

The overarching aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Plato's thinking about craft is *central* to his views on virtue, including how he develops particular virtues like wisdom and justice as the basis for political rule. In the first half of this thesis (Chapters 1 and 2), I present the ways in which Plato's understanding of craft (and the diverse and wide set of examples that come to embody the idea for him) serves as a fruitful model of knowledge for developing the nature and structure of virtue, as well as illuminates key psychological features of the virtuous person. In Chapter 1, I survey a number of representative passages across the early dialogues in order to showcase the flexibility with which Plato relied on examples from ordinary crafts to serve different philosophical goals in the context virtue. Here, I highlight three main goals. First, appeals to craft, particularly by Socrates, are used to persuade the interlocutor and to advocate for claims in favour of moral expertise. Second, craft examples provide the conceptual basis for Plato to posit a unified model of knowledge. Lastly, the structure of ordinary crafts plays a heuristic role: it is an aid for inquiring into the structure of virtue and for uncovering the guises of putative crafts like oratory.

Chapter 2 focuses on an interpretation of *Republic I* in order to examine the important ways in which Plato envisions the just person, especially the just ruler, as an ideal craftsman. As we will see, *Republic I* is a key battleground for the overarching aim of this thesis. Many scholars see the text as providing the strongest evidence for supporting the view that Plato is dissatisfied with the craft model of knowledge. In response, I argue that Socrates' arguments from craft in *Republic I* have not been well-understood. I develop what I call the *origins view* in order to put forth what I view as the correct understanding of craft. This view shows us that Plato intends us to understand the crafts as benefit-oriented and as something discovered for meeting the various needs of human life. On this view, crafts are intellectually demanding and come to shape the craftsmen's attitudes and behaviours. The *origins view* of craft also answers the common objections raised against the craft-analogy that I outlined earlier in the dominant narrative. Together, these two chapters show us that Plato's understanding of craft is richer and more contextually varied than it is generally believed to be.

In the second half of this thesis (Chapters 3 and 4), I focus on another important way in which Plato relies on the idea of craft to think about virtue. This is in the context of his

account of political rule. Here, I focus not on the idea of craft as a model of knowledge, but on how the sort of knowledge fit for political rule (e.g. wisdom, justice) relates to ordinary crafts, the latter represent the existing branches of expertise in various areas of human pursuits for Plato. Both chapters make the case that Plato understands the nature of political rule as an architectonic form of knowledge—a master knowledge fit to preside over ordinary crafts for the sake of promoting human welfare. In Chapter 3, I argue (drawing from the *Laches*) that the idea of architectonic conception of political rule grows out Plato’s concern with the question of how virtue can remain authoritative in the face of expertise. This question concerning the scope of virtue and ordinary expertise motivates Plato to see that any knowledge fit for promoting human welfare must be fit to reign over ordinary expertise in the appropriate way. I explore what this architectonic conception of political rule looks like in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*. In Chapter 4, I argue that we also find an architectonic form of knowledge as the basis for political rule in the *Gorgias*. In particular, I show that the dialogue’s critique of oratory is motivated by the threat the practice poses to Plato’s conception of politics as architectonic. Rather than preserving ordinary expertise and orienting them towards the good (as an architectonic conception of rule would do), oratory undermines the authority of ordinary experts and rules them in order to advance the orators’ own interests. In this way, oratory threatens Plato’s vision of an orderly society committed to the rule of knowledge.

Chapter 1

1. Revisiting the Craft-Analogy: the Nature and Structure of Virtue

This is the first of two chapters devoted to the idea of craft as a model of knowledge for virtue. In this chapter, my focus is on the various roles that craft examples play in elucidating the nature and structure of virtue. In the next chapter, I consider the ways craft practitioners serve as a model for Plato's conception of the virtuous person. In order to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of the relationship between craft and virtue, we must grasp the role analogies to crafts play in discussions of virtue and virtue-related topics. What purpose(s) do appeals to ordinary crafts like housebuilding and carpentry serve? What is gained when Socrates and other characters bring in a host of craft-related examples? How does Plato use examples drawn from ordinary crafts in these discussions?

In what follows, I survey a number of representative passages across the early dialogues in order to draw attention to some common themes that emerge from the texts. The central claim of this chapter is that the craft analogy serves three broad functions in relation to virtue: (1) to persuade the interlocutor and recommend claims in favour of moral expertise; (2) as the conceptual basis for positing a unified model of knowledge; (3) to aid the inquiry into virtue-related topics based on the structure of established crafts.¹¹ The main contribution of this chapter is to highlight the diversity in which analogies to crafts are used in discussions of virtue. It is my hope that the following discussion can provide the resources in helping us read analogies to crafts, especially as they appear in the early dialogues. These passages, I believe, highlight the extensive degree to which Plato relied on crafts as a model of knowledge for developing his views on virtue.

Before proceeding, I wish to make a clarificatory note on the language of analogy. The Greek word "*analogia*" is used in Plato to refer to mathematical proportion and did not take on a wider application until Aristotle.¹² Thus what we mean by analogy is not the same as what

¹¹ I do not mean to suggest that these three functions are exhaustive, but they do pick out the most important roles analogies to crafts play in the early dialogues.

¹² Robinson (1941), 241–242.

Plato means by “*analogia*”. Furthermore, it is well known that analogies are common to both ordinary language and philosophical inquiry. While they may be useful in the ordinary context, their use in philosophical arguments have long been controversial. For the purposes of this chapter, I adopt a pragmatic and broad understanding of analogy—one that encompasses both analogical arguments in the form “*a is to b as c is to d*” and general analogies used for purposes of explanation and illustration.¹³ I am not so much interested in whether Plato was justified in using analogies to crafts, but what these references and comparisons are doing in discussions of virtue. Given that appeals to ordinary crafts are ubiquitous, we can gain a great deal by paying attention to the ways in which they are featured. Finally, by craft analogy, I mean any examples drawn from crafts in discussions of virtue and any references to the similarities between aspects of craft and virtue.

1.1. Moral Expertise

One prevailing class of analogies to crafts follows a pattern of reasoning characteristically associated with Plato’s depiction of Socrates in the early dialogues. Analogies of this sort rely on the idea of craft as expertise—specialized knowledge in a particular field—in order to advocate for the necessity of moral expertise. The unifying idea motivating these passages is this: in most of our undertakings, we seek expertise in some capacity, whether to teach and council us or to do the work of which we lack understanding. If we organize all other aspects of our lives according to expertise, why should we, in the most important pursuit of becoming virtuous and happy, be any different?¹⁴ Examples that employ this kind of analogical reasoning have the following features: (i) they are of a persuasive and pedagogical character; (ii) they typically move from obvious relationships in the realm of ordinary crafts to highly generalized conclusions in moral matters; (iii) they draw their conclusions without

¹³ For my understanding of analogies in antiquity, I follow closely G.E.R. Lloyd’s *Polarity and Analogy* (1966). For a general introduction to the role of analogies in science and logic, I am indebted to Mary B. Hesse’s *Models and Analogies in Science* (1963), especially her discussion of classical examples.

¹⁴ Of course, there will be important differences to consider, some of which I discuss immediately in section 1.2. But for understanding analogies of the type I highlight here, it is important to note that Socrates relies on the common sense intuition that we seem to demand the rigour of expertise in every aspect of our lives, but when it comes to matters of virtue and happiness, we are inattentive and easily influenced.

opposition from the interlocutors, and (iv) they do not advance the central inquiry in any real way, but serve to advocate the importance of adhering to moral expertise.

An example of this sort can be seen from the *Apology* (20a7–b5). In a discussion on the value of sophists, Socrates asks Callias:

If your sons were colts or calves, we could find and engage a supervisor for them who would make them excel in their proper excellence (*prosêkousa aretê*), some horse breeder or farmer. Now since they are men, whom do you have in mind to supervise them? Who is an expert (*epistêmôn*) in this kind of excellence (*aretê*), the human and social kind? (20a7-b5)¹⁵

In this passage, Socrates makes an analogical argument in the form of “*a* is to *b* as *c* is to *d*”: *breeders* are to *young domesticated animals* as *experts in virtue* are to *young Athenian males*.¹⁶ The passage clearly carries some rhetorical flourish as it compares young Athenian males to young male horses. However, the central idea is one we encounter frequently. Socrates asserts the relations already recognized or agreed upon between breeders and young livestock in order to persuade Callias of the same relations between teachers of virtue and young men.¹⁷ For instance, breeders are recognized as experts in rearing domesticated animals, they possess some knowledge of their subjects, and they improve them through their knowledge. These characteristics are presented as uncontroversial and Socrates’ strategy is to draw on our reasoning in the realm of crafts to persuade hearers of the same reasoning in the education of young men.

More controversial is Socrates’ claim of “proper excellence or virtue”. The central idea of the passage is that breeders are responsible for bringing about the respective excellences of young domesticated animals. The implicit suggestion is that a breeder has the privileged knowledge of what makes a horse an *excellent* horse, and therefore raises colts in light of

¹⁵ εἰ μὲν σου τῶν εἰ πῶλῳ ἢ μόσχῳ ἐγενέσθην, εἴχομεν ἂν αὐτοῖν ἐπιστάτην λαβεῖν καὶ μισθώσασθαι ὃς ἔμελλεν αὐτῶν καλῶ τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν ποιῆσειν τὴν προσήκουσαν ἀρετὴν, ἣν δ’ ἂν οὗτος ἢ τῶν ἰππικῶν τις ἢ τῶν γεωργικῶν· νῦν δ’ ἐπειδὴ ἄνθρωπῳ ἐστὸν, τίνα αὐτοῖν ἐν νύξαις ἐπιστάτην λαβεῖν; τίς τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρετῆς, τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ πολιτικῆς, ἐπιστήμων ἐστίν;

¹⁶ We may compare this to the city-soul analogy in the *Republic*. *Justice in the city is to justice in the soul*.

¹⁷ My analysis of this example follows closely Hesse’s analysis of the classical example as “children to father is citizens to state”. Hesse (1963), 69–70.

that knowledge. Accordingly, in the case of raising Athenian men, the teacher of virtue must have the expert knowledge of what makes a human an *excellent* human. Whatever the teacher of virtue purports to teach, whoever he turns out to be, he must do so in light of his knowledge of this “human and social” excellence. This constraint on the teacher of virtue is controversial as it assumes other relations that will need to be defended. For instance, that breeders seek the interest of colts rather than themselves; that experts have privileged knowledge in comparison to most people; and that the acquisition of human excellence is sufficiently similar to the acquisition of animal excellence.

Indeed, we will encounter challenges of this sort to the craft analogy in the next section. For now however, we can note that analogies of the type I highlight in this section intend to persuade and instruct the interlocutor based on facts already agreed upon, rather than function as arguments for the conclusions they draw. The following include other notable examples that follow this formula. We will see that these cases tend to leap to universal ethical conclusions (“in all matters”, “Greek and barbarians, men or women”) on account of few craft examples that Socrates gives:

- (a) *Crito* (47a2–48b). Socrates tells Crito that one ought to disregard the opinions of the majority in matters of justice and injustice, and instead only pay attention to the opinions of those with knowledge. In making this claim, Socrates draws a parallel to our attitude with regard to the craft of physical training. In matters concerning exercise and proper diets, we only care about the opinions of physical trainers. Their praise and blame alone benefits us whereas valuing the opinions of those without knowledge harms us. Therefore, Socrates concludes “so with other matters, not to enumerate them all, and certainly with actions just and unjust” we should follow the opinion of those with knowledge over the majority (47c8–d6).
- (b) *Laches* (184e11–186e12). Socrates questions the best methodology for finding an expert in virtue. He does so by drawing a parallel to the ways in which we judge experts in physical training. In looking for physical trainers, we only trust those who have sufficiently practiced their craft, studied with good teachers, and in cases without teachers, we demand them to show us instances where they were successful

in their craft. By this reasoning, Socrates concludes, we should look for the same qualifications in those who purport to make young men virtuous.

(c) *Lysis* (207d6–210c5). Socrates advocates for the thesis that happiness does not consist in the freedom to do whatever one wishes. Socrates gets the young Lysis to see that the reason he, a free man, is only entrusted to make some decisions for himself (in the craft of lyre-playing and writing), and not others (driving the chariot, being in charge of his education) is because he lacks the relevant understanding. But when he has acquired sufficient understanding, he will not only be in charge of his own life but also entrusted with managing the matters of the household and the affairs of the city. Therefore, Socrates concludes, in the case of “Greek and barbarians, men or women”, we will be free and in control of others only in areas where we have understanding. Where we lack such understanding, we will be subject to others (210a9–c5). This use of the craft analogy is pedagogical in tone given the young impressionable Lysis. Socrates relies on those crafts the boy has experience with in order to instruct him on the relationship between freedom and practical wisdom.

(d) *Protagoras* (313c6–314b4). Socrates cautions the young Hippocrates against the harmful risks of consuming the teachings of sophists without being an expert (*epistêmôn*) in the subject matter (313e2). In support of this claim, Socrates draws a parallel to the merchants of the market who peddle provisions without considering their benefits or harms to the body. Unless one is a doctor or a physical trainer, and therefore knowledgeable in what is good and bad for the body, one will greatly risk their bodily health in buying the provisions. Likewise, Socrates reasons, a sophist is a kind of merchant who peddles teachings upon the soul (313c4-7). Unless we become physicians of the soul, we risk accruing the most important harm in listening to their teachings: harm to the health of our soul.

All these examples possess a certain pedagogical character. They persuade the interlocutor and the readers by appealing to our general adherence to expertise in ordinary life as a means to recommend the same behaviour in our moral conduct. This move usually goes unchallenged by the interlocutor because the former claim is implicitly agreed upon, taken

as obvious, or uncontroversial. In this respect, the craft analogy is used to recommend and advocate for moral expertise based on assumptions already taken as true.

1.2. Craft and Knowledge

In this section I turn my attention to two noteworthy examples where the relationship between craft and virtue is challenged. In contrast to the examples I cite in the last section, we see that Socrates' appeals to crafts are met with critical objections from his interlocutors. They do so by offering counter examples and a defence of the crucial differences between ordinary crafts and virtue. A common way to read passages of this sort is to take Plato to be pointing out the limitations of the craft analogy. That is, the objections raised by Socrates' interlocutors are expressing, in some way, Plato's dissatisfaction with the idea of craft as a model of knowledge for virtue. We are thus invited to see the flaws in applying the analogy between craft and virtue too liberally.

In what follows, I caution us against this trend of reading the texts. A more subtle lesson, I contend, should be drawn. In places where Socrates' appeals to crafts are met with objections, we will see that the account of virtue presented *hinges* on an account of craft in non-trivial ways. In other words, whatever views one has about virtue, it must be contested on the conceptual grounds of craft, or more aptly the concept of *technê*. This claim is best explained by the fact that ordinary examples of crafts are recognized as instances of established knowledge broadly understood. While they may be recognized as such, there is no agreement about their nature and structure, methods of acquisition, relation to each other, or practical implications for society. Thus analogies to crafts in this context function as a broad debate on the nature of knowledge, and subsequently virtue. Hence, the frequency and ease with which Plato used terms like "*technê*" and "*epistêmê*" interchangeably. If virtue is to be a kind of knowledge, as Plato seems to suggest, then it must be articulated within a well-defined theory of knowledge. But since such theory is lacking and many competing views are available, Plato uses disagreements between Socrates and his interlocutors on the issue of craft as a way to work out and eventually posit a unified model of knowledge. In this context, analogies to crafts serve as the conceptual basis for working out a unified theory of knowledge within which virtue can be expressed.

1.2.1. *Charmides*

The first example of our interest occurs in the *Charmides*' account of temperance (*sophrosunê*) (165c4–166c6). Socrates' main interlocutor Critias proposes that temperance, like the Delphic dictum instructs, is to “know oneself” (*to gignôskein heauton*) (164d4). Socrates draws an inference from knowing in the sense of *gignôskein* to knowing in the sense of *epistêmê*: “if knowing (*gignôskein*) is what temperance is, then it clearly must be some sort of knowledge (*epistêmê tis*) and must be of something (*tinon*), isn't that so?” (165c4–6).¹⁸ Critias answers that temperance is the knowledge of the personal self (*epistêmê heautou*). In examining this definition, Socrates repeatedly presses the inquiry as if temperance is a craft like medicine or housebuilding. In these examples, Socrates argues, we can clearly point to the specific product or result (*ergon*) they provide for us, namely health and house. If temperance is the knowledge of self, what *ergon* does it furnish? (165d8–e2).

This method of investigation is resisted by Critias on the grounds that there is no shared nature (*pephuken*) between kinds of knowledge in general (165e4). Some crafts like weaving and housebuilding produce identifiable products, but in crafts like calculation and geometry, we do not find the same parallel (165e5–8). Interestingly, Critias does not say that temperance is a theoretical activity like calculation and geometry, rather than the more productively oriented crafts. He insists only that knowledge (*epistêmê*) is varied and there are no essential features shared between any crafts. This claim is the real contentious point as evidenced by Socrates' response:

You are right. But I can point out in case of each of these knowledges what it is a knowledge of, this being distinct from the knowledge itself. For instance, the craft of calculation, of course, is of the odd and even...now aren't the odd and even distinct from the craft of calculation itself? And again, the craft of weighing is a craft concerned with the heavier and lighter, and the heavy and light are distinct from the craft of weighing (166a3–7).

¹⁸ εἰ γὰρ δὴ γινώσκειν γέ τί ἐστιν ἡ σωφροσύνη, δῆλον ὅτι ἐπιστήμη τις ἂν εἴη καὶ τινός: ἢ οὐ;

Commenting on this exchange, John Gould writes: “it is the first hint, the first of many, that we are at last brought up against the inherent limitations of a specific professional skill, and therefore of the analogy between moral skill and such techniques”.¹⁹ Reflecting on the dialogue as a whole he notes, “the main purpose of the work is to mark off those respects in which the *technê* analogy cannot be literally applied to the field of moral decisions”.²⁰

Gould’s analysis is typical of those who warn us against taking the craft model of knowledge too seriously. However, what is at really at issue seems to be the standardization of knowledge. Socrates’ response indicates that he accepts Critias’ objection but moves to another criterion of knowledge. He employs crafts like calculation and weighing, those more acceptable to Critias, to show that knowledge always has a specified and non-reflexive subject matter. As I read the *Charmides*, the real purpose of the argument, and to some degree the dialogue, is to work out the viability of a superordinate knowledge — one whose task involves the governance of all knowledge, rather than some specified subject matter. As Socrates presents things in the *Charmides*, he is committed to the belief that knowledge is unified. Although he acknowledges some crucial differences, he is not prepared to accept the view that crafts, in virtue of being a kind of knowledge, lack any essential features. Critias’ follow up objection brings to the foreground their contrasting views of knowledge:

This is just what I mean, Socrates. You arrive at the point of investigating the respect in which temperance differs from all the other knowledges, then you start looking for some way in which it resembles all the others. It is not like this; but rather all the others are knowledges of something else, not of themselves, whereas this is the only knowledge which is both of other knowledges and of itself (166b5–c3).

Critias implicitly concedes his earlier claim that all branches of knowledge are unique, and settles on defending the uniqueness of temperance. That virtue is a special kind of knowledge distinct from ordinary crafts is a central idea we will encounter in various formulations, most immediately in the next example from the *Protagoras*. Plato is interested in the uniqueness of virtue, but will present the idea on his own terms. In the second half

¹⁹ Gould (1955), 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

of this dissertation, I argue that in certain key places (including the conclusion of the *Charmides*), Plato presents virtue, understood as knowledge of what is good and bad for a human being, as an architectonic form of knowledge situated at the top of the hierarchy of crafts. This architectonic knowledge possesses special features such ruling, issuing norms, providing correct use, etc. At the same time, insofar as it is a kind of knowledge, virtue possesses features common to all crafts (e.g. having a unique *ergon*, being rational, reliable).

In the present context, Plato is interested in working out a standard account of craft, within which his views of virtue can be articulated. That is to say, he is outlining a unified theory of knowledge wherein virtue can eventually be put forth as the highest kind. This view helps us understand Socrates' initial inference from knowing in the sense of *gignôskein* to *epistêmê*, and why he immediately follows this with the mentions of medicine and housebuilding as examples (165c4–d6). What he is doing is subsuming varying instances of knowledge broadly understood under one well-defined view of knowledge, in the sense of “*epistêmê*”. He does so by articulating certain features common to all these cases, such as having an *ergon* that is unique, beneficial, and a distinct and definite subject matter. When Critias accuses Socrates of investigating temperance as if it resembles others, he is right. Temperance, in virtue of being a kind of knowledge, should resemble other instances of knowledge. This view motivates Socrates to press Critias' definition repeatedly as it should have certain features present in medicine, housebuilding, and calculation.

In this respect, analogies to crafts should not be read as expressing Plato's dissatisfaction with the idea of craft as a model for virtue. Rather, ordinary crafts constitute the existing pool of knowledge one draws from in order to articulate a view of knowledge and the place of virtue within it. Socrates and Critias reflect this point clearly when they appeal to different craft examples as supporting evidence for their contrasting conceptions of knowledge, and accordingly virtue. That Socrates meets Critias on his grounds by appealing to more theoretical examples should speak in favour of the view that for Plato, crafts (while different from each other in important ways) are a unified class of knowledge. If virtue turns out to be a kind of knowledge, then it must be expressed against the backdrop of crafts, understood as instances of a unified model of knowledge.

Critias, as an intellectual opponent, is ultimately found wanting. He is unable to offer a fully developed view of virtue as a unique class of knowledge, one that can be substantially differentiated from ordinary crafts. Without a well-defined theory of knowledge, Critias has to subject his definition of temperance to those criteria put forth by Socrates. In the next example however, we will see Protagoras offer an elaborate view on the origin and uniqueness of virtue, one that he differentiates from ordinary crafts.

1.2.2. *Protagoras*

The *Protagoras* (318b1–328d2) depicts a dramatic confrontation between Socrates and the elder sophist on the issue of moral education. The setting provides us with one of the most memorable discussions on the nature of craft and virtue in the Platonic corpus. The dialogue’s central question—whether virtue is teachable—is contested on the conceptual grounds of craft, particularly how one interprets those ordinary models and their implication for virtue.

In contrast to other sophists who teach traditional crafts (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music, and poetry), Protagoras claims he teaches what students come to him for, “the art of citizenship or political expertise” (*politikê technê*). This art is about sound deliberation for managing both household and public affairs —“how to realize one’s maximum potential for success in political debate and action” (319a-2). In a role reversal distinctive to the dramatic setting of the dialogue, Socrates believes that virtue cannot be taught (320b4–5).²¹ This is evidenced by the way Athenians conduct their politics and the observation that prominent fathers fail to pass on wisdom to their sons. In what is surely a veiled criticism of Athenian politics, Socrates observes that when Athenians come together in the Assembly and the city has to make decisions regarding building projects or the construction of ships, they seek builders and shipwrights (319b5–c1). Anyone who is not a craftsman, no matter how influential or well-to-do, has no say in the matter (319c1–7). This way of proceeding must stem from the belief that these matters are technical (*en technê*), and therefore teachable

²¹ Protagoras appears to offer a functional view of virtue—the sorts of skills that enable one to fulfill their social role, which for young and privileged Athenian men was in the realm of politics (Barney, 80).

and learnable (319c7-8). But in deliberations concerning city management, anyone has the right to stand up in the Assembly and give counsel. They can come from any profession, social class, and have no prior training with teachers (319d1-6). The reason for this stark contrast, Socrates concludes, must be because Athenians think virtue cannot be taught (310d6-7).

Socrates' argument is a deliberate reversal of the sort of reasoning we looked at in section 1.1. In the *Apology* and other parallel examples, Socrates appeals to our confidence in ordinary expertise in favour of adopting the same practice in moral deliberations. Here, he identifies the lack of adherence to expertise in Athenian public life as evidence for the view that virtue is not teachable. Yet, the commitment to the unity of crafts remains, in this case pertaining to their teachability. Socrates sees a natural continuity between those skills displayed in ordinary crafts and the would-be ones required for living virtuously. If we confidently treat matters of virtue differently, his argument goes, then we must think that virtue is not technical (*en technê*), and therefore cannot be taught.

Protagoras, picking up where Critias left off, accounts for the uniqueness of virtue. Despite its dissemblance to ordinary crafts, he argues, it is still a *technê*, and therefore teachable and learnable. Following the Myth on the origin of human societies (320c8ff), Protagoras explains why moral and political life is of a different kind:

When the Athenians are debating architectural excellence, or the virtue proper to any other professional specialty (*aretê demiourgikê*), they think that only a few individuals have the right to advise them, and they do not accept advice from anyone outside these select few. You've made this point yourself, and with good reason, I might add. But when the debate involves political virtue (*politikê aretê*), which must proceed entirely from justice and temperance, they accept advice from anyone, and with good reason, for they think that this particular virtue, is shared (*metechein*) by all, or there wouldn't be any cities. This must be the explanation for it, Socrates (322d5-323a4).

According to Protagoras, in ordinary crafts, one practitioner is sufficient to meet the needs of many people. For instance, a few practicing doctors suffices for the medical needs of an entire community (3226-7). It is therefore expected that only a select few are experts, while

the majority are laymen. Political virtue, in contrast, is a requisite for both the birth and maintenance of cities, and thus requires the collective participation of all citizens. Therefore, everyone is entitled to be adviser on matters of virtue, just as everyone can advise each other on speaking Greek (328a1).

In Protagoras' Myth, the story goes that the human race, despite being equipped with language and all the crafts for survival, was on the brink of destruction because they lacked the art of politics to work together for their common interests (322a3–b8). Zeus, fearing for the human race, sent Hermes to bring justice and a sense of shame to all, so that “there would be order within cities and bonds of friendship to unite them” (322c2–3). Accordingly, everyone must have some share of justice to begin with, otherwise cities could not exist as they do now. In addition to possessing a share of justice, everyone has a vested interest in continuing to act justly and virtuously, and ensuring others do the same. Without this mutual cooperation, humans could not live amongst each other peacefully nor depend on each other for survival. Therefore, Protagoras concludes:

For it is to our collective advantage that we each possess justice and virtue, and so we all gladly tell and teach each other what is just and lawful. Well, if we all had the same eagerness and generosity in teaching each other flute-playing, do you think, Socrates, that the sons of good flute-players would be more likely to be good flute-players than the sons of poor flute-players? I don't think so at all (327b1–b7).

These passages pave the way for Protagoras to defend both a democratic and competitive view of virtue. Given that everyone has a vested interest in teaching and learning virtue, and has some share of it, everyone begins on equal footing. Those who are able to teach virtue the best will, in turn, be cherished (328b1). He notes, “I consider myself to be such a person, uniquely qualified to assist others in becoming noble and good, and worth the fee I charge” (328b1–5).

Perhaps more than any other example, this exchange between Socrates and Protagoras illustrates that any serious attempt to define virtue must begin by addressing its relationship to those established and traditional models of crafts. This starting point is an invitation to posit a theory of *technê*, which in turn is an invitation to posit a theory of knowledge. In

promoting this “art of citizenship”, Protagoras favours a competitive view of *technê* and virtue characteristic of the sophistical profession. Helping others become virtuous is something that he “uniquely” does better than any other sophists. Socrates, throughout his various positions, favours a standard and unified account. The question of virtue’s teachability, as Socrates see it, depends entirely on whether it is a *technê*, in ways that are shared by ordinary models. Protagoras does not deny that becoming virtuous requires a “*technê*”, but it is no ordinary one since it must be practiced by all, with “no layman” (327a1).

On my interpretation, the examination of virtue and its relation to ordinary crafts functions as a broad debate on the nature and structure of knowledge. In particular, I read the appeals to crafts as part of Plato’s larger project to standardize craft as a class of knowledge, of which virtue is a member, albeit it has the status of being the most special member. We know from latter parts of the dialogue that Socrates will attribute the “art of measurement”, “nothing other than arithmetic” as the knowledge that gives us salvation in life—a kind of hedonic calculus for measuring the magnitudes of pleasure and pain (356e5–357b3). As Charles Kahn notes, “by introducing the model of a hedonistic calculus, the *Protagoras* comes closer than any other dialogue to assimilating virtue and the “political art” to an ordinary *technê*”.²² This is not to say that for Plato, virtue is acquired by *just* studying arithmetic or any ordinary crafts. But that there is a natural continuity and unity between crafts insofar as they are a kind of knowledge is thesis that I take Plato to be repeatedly advocating. This view is further supported by the inference a few lines later: “and since it is measurement, it must definitely be a craft, and knowledge” (357b4).²³ With this inference, Socrates reemphasizes the unified model of knowledge he is working with.

As we will see in the second half of this dissertation, Plato has special motivations to posit virtue as a unique craft, a view I flesh out along the lines of interpreting virtue as an architectonic form knowledge—understood as the highest and most sovereign governing craft. In the present context, we see that comparing virtue to ordinary crafts leads us to a much broader and deeper debate on the nature of knowledge. In particular, established crafts like medicine and architecture represent the existing branches of knowledge one

²² Kahn (1996), 216.

²³ ἔπει δὲ μετρητική, ἀνάγκη δὴ πού τῶν τέχνη καὶ ἐπιστήμη.

needs to make sense of in order to articulate virtue as knowledge. Given that there is no agreed standard or many competing views of *technê*, Plato uses disagreements between his principle speakers on the question of craft (particularly their contrasting interpretations of ordinary models) as a proxy battle for larger questions on unity of knowledge. The overall lesson, I suggest, is to subsume various instances of craft under one standard model of knowledge, against which virtue is to be articulated.

These examples, however, do not fully address those who warn against the limitations of the craft analogy. In the next chapter, I focus on *Republic* I, where Plato appears to be the most critical towards modeling virtue after ordinary crafts. I leave those discussions for the next chapter as they pertain to issues related to the moral psychology of the craft practitioner and in turn, the virtuous agent.

1.3. The Structure of Craft and Inquiry

In this final section, I highlight one additional role analogies to crafts play, one that has not been substantially appreciated. This is the role ordinary examples of crafts play in the inquiry into virtue and virtue-related topics. In this section, we see that crafts are a complex enterprise with structural features that Plato exploits in order to aid his inquiry. In this respect, I wish to highlight the heuristic value of crafts as a model of knowledge.

The overall lesson I draw from the texts is this: because the objects of inquiry are unknown and difficult (e.g. virtue) or deliberately obscured (e.g. oratory), investigating after them *in terms of* something more familiar and observable (ordinary and established examples of crafts) is of assistance to our inquiry. The choice of crafts as a model to guide the inquiry into virtue, can be attributed in part the historical development of *technê* in the fifth century, aspects of which I have touched on in the introduction. However, internal to the works of Plato, crafts are a useful and favoured model to guide the inquiry into virtue because the crafts exhibit a certain logical structure that, when made use of, allow the

inquiry to proceed in a way that is *revealing*.²⁴ Shinro Kato, commenting on the role *technê* in the *Politicus*, notices this use as well. He reflects on this issue from the perspective of the late dialogues:

It is also noteworthy that ‘art’ (*technê*), which always plays a prominent role in Socrates’ argument in the earlier dialogues, appears again as the fundamental basis on which the art of the sophist as well as that of the statesman is to be determined. In the first case, it functions as the factor which uncovers one after another the various disguises of the sophist’s pseudo-art and finally discloses its essence as the pseudo-art, i.e. imitative art. In the second case, it is the solid base on which the genuine art of the statesman is to be elaborated by several successive arguments. We can say in general that ‘art’ always remains both the starting point and the final end throughout Plato’s reflection on ‘philosophy’. The reason for that seems to lie in the circumstance that ‘art’ represents the rule of reason in the closest confines in our life; in other words, ‘art’ was so to speak a ‘fact of reason’ for Plato...This observation seems to reveal an important continuity in Plato’s philosophy from the first beginning in the earlier dialogues to the late dialogues, such as these twin dialogues, the *Sophist* and *Politicus*.²⁵

Just as Kato describes the crafts as representing “the rule of reason”, I argue that the crafts exhibit a certain logical structure, in particular, they have the following six structural components:

- (1) *Craftsman*. He is the rightful practitioner of his craft who has knowledge in his field of expertise. Plato uses various language to describe him, some of the most common include “*technikos*”, “*dêmiourgos*”, “*epistêmôn*”.
- (2) *Subject Matter*. A craft typically has a unique and specified subject matter. This is what craft, as a body of knowledge, is about in the sense of “*tinou*” or “*peri*”. For instance, medicine is the study of the causes of health and disease.
- (3) *Goal*. This feature is often picked out by “*ergon*”. Crafts are goal-oriented. They furnish us with a product (“house”) or a result (“safety”, “victory”). Some crafts may

²⁴ We may compare this use of the appeal to crafts to Plato’s reflection on the nature of Model or Example (*paradeigma*) in the *Politicus* 277a3–278e11. There, the Visitor notes the difficulty of doing inquiry without the use of models. One of their functions is to serve as a simple basis for discovering similarities with more complex and remote objects of inquiry. See especially 278b1–c1 and 278e4–11.

²⁵ Kato (1995), 165.

not have products or results such as geometry, but it is still described in Plato as possessing a characteristic function such as making the discoveries of diagrams (*Euthyd.* 290b7-c6).

- (4) *Material* or *Tool*. A craftsman relies on some means to accomplish the goal of his craft. The material or tool he uses may be material (“wood”, “food and drinks”) or immaterial (“speech”).
- (5) *Manner*. Crafts are accomplished in some characteristic manner, such as making, using, distinguishing, measuring, caring/tending, ruling.
- (6) *Object*. Crafts can have designated objects upon which they operate. This is *where* their goals are produced. For instance medicine aims to bring about health in bodies and horse training brings out the excellent condition of horses. This feature is most common in therapeutic crafts which aim to produce their intended results in living things.

To be clear, the above list is not intended to serve as the “necessary or sufficient” conditions of craft *qua* craft. Rather, they pick out its distinctive logical structure (especially uncontroversial cases), as Plato understands it. This logical structure, I suggest, serves as a guide for elucidating and defining virtue or virtue-related topics such as oratory. In what follows, I discuss two cases that demonstrate how Socrates employs these structural components to guide his inquiry into piety and oratory.

1.3.1. *Euthyphro*

I begin with a straightforward and isolated case from the *Euthyphro* (*Eutphr.* 12c10–14b6). This example illustrates how appeals to crafts can help the inquirer, Socrates, clarify an obscure feature of virtue, isolate the error of the definition under examination, and point the inquiry towards the right direction. Socrates and Euthyphro are looking for the definition of piety, arriving at the view that piety is a part of justice. Euthyphro claims justice has two parts, one concerned with the care (*therapeia*) of gods and the other concerned with the care of men. Piety is the part of justice concerned with the care of gods. This

definition, by Socrates' account, is promising and he proceeds by using the craft analogy twice.

The first use relies on examples from rearing crafts in order to rule out the sort of care that constitutes piety. In response to Euthyphro's definition that piety is concerned with the care of gods, Socrates begins by indicating his intentions in the inquiry: that he does not know what is meant by "care" and needs more information (12e10–13a). Socrates proceeds to give an example (*hoion*) from horse breeding intending to rule out one idea of care. He poses the question expecting a negative answer: surely care for the gods is not the same *manner* of care horse breeders have for horses.²⁶ We have seen, from the *Apology* example, that Socrates often relies on crafts that tend to (*therapei*) living things as a model to illustrate the relationship between teachers of virtue and young men. But here, the intended result of the appeal to rearing crafts is a negative one.

A keener interlocutor would have observed that, if piety is the rearing sort of care, then it would imply that the gods are subordinately related to men. Euthyphro does not pick up on this point and instead agrees that caring for the gods is the same kind of caring for horses. So Socrates must proceed by giving more illustrative examples to bring out the implication of this error.

What follows are examples from dog breeding and cattle raising. The general point is familiar enough. In rearing crafts, caring requires expertise which aims at the good. These crafts care for their subjects by benefiting and improving them.²⁷ Piety, if it is this sort of care, would be the expertise of benefitting and improving upon the conditions of gods. Here, the craft analogy works like a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is ridiculous and outright implausible to think piety is the same as caring for horses. Supposing the definition is true leads us to an unacceptable conclusion, namely pious men improve the gods, an evidently false claim

²⁶ "οὐ γὰρ που λέγεις γέ" at 13a2. For a helpful and detailed analysis of the examination of piety in the *Euthyphro*, see Benson (2000), 58–65.

²⁷ The idea that rearing or therapeutic crafts improve the recipients of their crafts goes unchallenged until Thrasymachus in *Republic* I, who objects that shepherds are self-interested rather than seek the welfare of sheep. Therefore, the best rulers are those who seek the advantage of themselves, rather than their subjects. see 343b. I discuss *Republic* I in detail in the next chapter.

even Euthyphro recognizes. In this respect, the analogy clarifies to Euthyphro and to us, that a better model of care is needed, particularly one that captures the way men are subservient to the gods. This is what Euthyphro proceeds to do, suggesting piety is caring for the gods the way that slaves care for their masters (13d6–7).

The second use of the craft analogy relies on a wider set of examples to pick out the *characteristic function* (*ergon*)²⁸ of piety. Socrates rephrases the definition of piety as a sort of servicing craft (*huperetikê*) to the gods (13ad8), better reflecting the newly gained understanding piety. Rather than relying on rearing crafts, Socrates gives an assortment of examples (medicine, shipbuilding, housebuilding, generalship, farming) in order to pick out the function of piety. Here, the analogy works like a teleological argument from crafts.

In each craft, we plainly observe an identifiable end, as medicine provides health and shipbuilding is for the sake of building ships. Generalship may produce many fine results, but victory at war is its chief purpose (14a-2). So what purpose does piety, understood as service to the gods, achieve? This argument is quickly abandoned as Euthyphro is unable to provide a definitive answer. But Socrates' disappointment at 14b indicates that this is a fruitful line of reasoning: "Had you not turned away, you would have taught me, it is clear. If you had answered it, I should already have acquired from you sufficient instruction about piety" (14bc-2).²⁹ Socrates thus suggests inquiring into the function of piety would have given us sufficient information about the nature of piety, or at the very least pointed us towards a more productive way of inquiring into piety.

Both uses of the craft analogy appear to come up short when Euthyphro fails to answer these, admittedly difficult, questions. However, it should be noted that they lead us to more positive avenues in the inquiry into piety. In particular they help us clarify the *manner* in which piety is exercised towards the gods by ruling out what it is not. They also point to a genuine difficulty with interpreting piety as a kind of knowledge possessed by those who

²⁸ I give "*ergon*" a stronger translation in this passage as "characteristic function" rather than mere "result or product". As the subsequent questions indicate, Socrates is looking for what each craft does chiefly (*to kephalaion*) (14a2). Therefore, "characteristic function" seems appropriate here.

²⁹ ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ πρόθυμός με εἶ διδάξαι—δῆλος εἶ. καὶ γὰρ νῦν ἐπειδὴ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἦσθα ἀπετράπου, ὃ εἰ ἀπεκρίνω, ἰ κανὼς ἂν ἦδη παρὰ σοῦ τὴν ὁσιότητα ἐμεμαθήκη.

are in a subordinate position. Piety cannot be the sort of knowledge about what is *good* for the gods. Thus we must search for an account of piety in other ways of relating to the gods. Furthermore, appeal to crafts leads us to see the importance of inquiring about the function of piety. The reasoning goes, if most of our actions in the realm of crafts achieve some definite goal, can it really be that our actions toward the gods serve no purpose? Although this argument is abandoned, I suggest, we are still left with suggestions that the inquiry has been on the right track.

1.3.2. *Gorgias*

Having looked at an isolated example, I now turn my attention to a sustained use of the structure of craft for the inquiry into oratory in the *Gorgias*. I consider the refutation of Gorgias (449c9–461b2)—an introductory discussion that sets the stage for the central arguments of the dialogue. In this example, we learn that hypothesizing the target of inquiry as a craft allows Socrates to ask certain *kinds* of questions that are instructive. In particular, the questions are instructive for disclosing putative crafts whose goals (in various ways) threaten Plato’s own views of philosophy and the good life.³⁰

The *Gorgias* takes oratory as its target of inquiry but we quickly learn by the end of the dialogue that the disagreement amounts to different conceptions of the good life. We begin early on with the supposition that oratory is a craft. Setting the stage for the rest of discussion, Socrates asks: “I’d like to find out from the man what his craft can accomplish and what it is that he both makes claims about and teaches” (447c1–4). This supposition allows Socrates to proceed in a way that appeals to the structure of ordinary crafts as a means to unveil the various disguises of oratory. In particular, it allows Socrates to disclose oratory as what it *really* is — a pseudo craft concerned with matters of justice and injustice. Although the craft status of oratory is not explicitly questioned in the refutation of Gorgias,

³⁰ The putative crafts we frequently encounter in the Platonic corpus are sophistry, oratory, poetry, and rhapsodic performance. The former three are a mainstay in Greek culture and education, and thus stand in direct opposition to Plato’s own philosophical worldview. Rhapsodic performance, which Plato examines in detail in the *Ion*, appears banal in comparison. However, it is interesting to note that at end of the dialogue, Ion reveals the political bend of his profession, noting that anyone who happens to a good rhapsode is also a good general (541ff).

the examination paves the way for Socrates' own views of oratory as a knack (*empeiria*) belonging to the class of flattery (*kolakeia*) in the subsequent discussion with Polus. The stages of inquiry can be summarized as follows:

Stage I:

1. Supposition that oratory is a craft (447c1-4).
2. What is the subject matter (*peri ti*) of oratory? (449d1-4).
e.g. Weaving: production of clothes; music: composition of tunes.
3. Oratory is concerned with speeches (*peri logous*) (449e1).

Stage II:

1. What sort of speeches does oratory make? (449e1).
e.g. Medicine: diseases; physical training: conditions of the body.
2. Distinction between crafts that rely on hands and crafts that rely on speech (450b6-d1).
3. Making speeches is not the subject matter of oratory but the *tool* orators employ to accomplish their aims (450d4-451a2).
4. Oratory is concerned with the greatest of human concerns (451d7-8).

Stage III:

1. What is the greatest human concern? (451d9-452d4)
e.g. Health to doctors; strength to physicians; wealth to financial experts.
2. The greatest of human concerns is freedom and the source rule over others; The ability to persuade by means of speech in law courts, council meeting, and the assembly (452d-e8).
3. Oratory is the producer of persuasion (*peithous demiourgos*) (453a2).

Stage IV:

1. Persuasion about subject matter? (454b8-9).
e.g. Arithmetic instills persuasion about number by teaching.
2. Oratory produces the kind of persuasion that take place in law courts and large gatherings. About matters of justice and injustice (454b5-7).

To begin with, as is well-known, it is Gorgias' admission of dealing with matters of justice and injustice that leads to his eventual downfall.³¹ His argument collapses when he is forced to admit that, in addition to teaching oratory, he must also teach justice to his students. But this admission is troublesome because Gorgias has now admitted to being responsible for teaching a skill that is used to harm, despite his own admissions of teaching oratory to be used justly (456e2–457a2). In order to arrive at this admission, Socrates needs to dismantle what oratory really is from what it purports to be.

The main feature that Socrates is interested in disclosing is oratory's subject matter (*peri ti*). We can observe that at each stage of the inquiry, Socrates relies on various craft examples to press Gorgias to be more specific in his answers. That oratory is taken to be a craft allows Socrates to subject Gorgias to certain rules of engagement—ways of inquiring that are grounded in the structure and transparency of ordinary crafts. What is doing most of the work in pressing the inquiry forward is the criterion of uniqueness. Gorgias is deliberately evasive and vague in his answers. But as Socrates points out, the claims made by Gorgias are not unique to oratory. For instance, all craftsmen intend to persuade others of the knowledge gained by their expertise. Implicit in this line of reasoning is the view that crafts are uniquely individuated (*Ion*, 537c–538a).³² What is accomplished by means of one craft is not shared by another. Therefore, Gorgias ought to define oratory according to its unique subject matter.

However, the important point is not *just* that Socrates thinks oratory must adhere to this criterion of uniqueness in crafts. Rather, his central aim is to disclose the masquerading nature of oratory, a feature already implicit in Gorgias' own characterization of his profession. Oratory, taken at face value, is about the mastery of making speeches, either for display or in the political and judicial contexts. This skill is presumably useful in a refined and litigious society such as that of Athens. But Gorgias' description amounts to a much

³¹ There is some disagreement over the exact moment Gorgias' defence becomes fatal. Kahn (1983), for instance, claims that Gorgias enters the trap at 460a3–4. Cooper (1999) puts it much earlier at 454b5–7. For my purposes, nothing hangs on this issue. It is clear that once questions of justice and injustice are brought in, Gorgias' defence is threatened.

³² I discuss this feature of crafts in Chapter 2, section 2.5 and Chapter 3, section 3.2.

more ambitious claim. He notes, oratory is the “source of freedom” and “rule over others in one’s own city” (452d5–8).³³ Gorgias goes on to claim that the sort of speeches oratory makes are intended to persuade judges, councillors, and assemblymen in political gatherings, where you will have the “doctor for your slave, the physical trainers too. As for the financial expert of yours, he’ll turn out to be making more money for somebody else instead of himself” (452e4–8).

Oratory thus is not merely about developing those oratory skills vital for living in a democratic city. It is concerned with the aggressive attainment and exercise of political power. It does this by competing and winning over the professional expertise of craftsmen.³⁴ A little later in the argument, Gorgias elaborates that in decisions concerning the affairs of the city, it is always the orators’ advice and views that triumph over any appointed craftsmen (456a1–3). In fact, oratory “encompasses and subordinates to itself just about everything that can be accomplished” (456a7–8).³⁵ This declaration emphatically reveals that oratory is really concerned with ruling over and above all else.

Gorgias immediately walks back on this appraisal of oratory’s power in his defence speech (456a7–457c3). He explains carefully that although an orator can easily rob the doctors of their reputation, he should not do so (457b1–5). He should use oratory like any agonistic skill, in defence against enemies and wrongdoers rather than friends (456e4). Rachel Barney helpfully points out that Gorgias in fact oscillates between two conceptions of oratory — the manipulative and the cooperative:

Gorgias finds himself pulled in two different directions. At some points, he emphasizes oratory’s universality or subject-neutrality: oratory differs from the specialized crafts precisely in that the rhetorician can be more persuasive about anything than anybody else (455d–56c, 459a–c). And this subject-neutrality is consistently associated with what I have termed the manipulative conception of oratory, on which it is essentially a tool of enslavement. But at other times, Gorgias proposes that oratory too is a specialized craft with a distinctive subject-matter, namely, the questions of justice debated in the law courts and political gatherings (452e, 454b). And

³³ I explore oratory’s connections to freedom, power, and ruling in more detail in Chapter 4.

³⁴ I return to this idea that oratory poses a threat to ordinary crafts in Chapter 4.

³⁵ ὅτι ὡς ἔπος εἰ πεί ν ἀπάσας τὰς δυνάμεις συλλαβοῦσα ὑφ’ αὐτῆ ἔχει.

this specialized conception fits better with a cooperative conception of oratory, on which it involves a genuine expertise in questions of justice—an expertise deployed on behalf of the community, as the doctor deploys his expertise in medicine.³⁶

Barney’s distinction helps us see the deceptive way that oratory operates. As Plato presents things in the *Gorgias*, oratory is *really* about the attainment of power for personal gain. In this respect, it is essentially concerned with manipulation as a tool for power and enslavement. It has no special subject matter and can be exercised in any arena if it benefits the orator. However, oratory masquerades in society as the kind of persuasion that takes place in political gatherings. It is concerned with what is just and unjust for the benefit of a political community. Socrates, as we know, will go on to classify oratory as a pseudo craft masking itself as justice, “taking notice” of what’s best by “guessing” rather than “knowing” (464c5–6). This dichotomy between what oratory purports to be and what it really is helps us understand why, in the same breath, Gorgias is eager to boast the intoxicating power of oratory and cautions pre-emptively against its unjust use. He willingly points to the success of orators’ influence in the courts over any professional expert (456a1–3), but advises against using oratory to undermine their reputation just a few lines later. (457b1–5). Gorgias thus reveals the discrepancy between oratory as it is practiced in the world and the guise it must uphold in public.

The various craft examples employed, as summarized above in four stages, serve to put pressure on Gorgias’ account of oratory. Given that the logical structure of crafts is clearly demarcated and easy to identify, Socrates relies on them to corral the number of disguises available to Gorgias. That other crafts also possess features Gorgias attributes to oratory tells us we have yet to reveal oratory’s true nature. That is, we have yet to elucidate the “what it is” of oratory. For instance, Socrates points out that speech is merely the tool oratory employs (like other crafts of similar sort) rather than the subject matter. He is able to establish this only by giving concrete and uncontroversial parallels (e.g. arithmetic, geometry).

³⁶ Barney (2010), 103.

Gorgias, unlike Polus or Callicles, cannot shamelessly admit to using oratory as a means to power in whatever domain it is necessary (cf.461b5). Therefore, he cannot wholeheartedly maintain that orators have no regard for “what is just and unjust, what’s shameful and admirable, what’s good and bad” (460d1–2). It is in this attempt to uphold the guise of nobility that Gorgias’ defence begins to fall apart. In this way, Socrates relies on the simplicity and transparency of ordinary crafts’ structure to limit the range of answers Gorgias can offer, until he has arrived at what he takes to be oratory’s true disguise—a craft concerned with matters of justice and injustice.

Some commentators have noted that Gorgias characterizes oratory as taking place in the lawcourts, assembly, and council meetings and in these contexts, questions of justice and injustice cannot constitute the entirety or even the expected subject under discussion.³⁷ We may then object that Gorgias is pressured to name a specialized subject matter when the scope of his profession is much wider. However, it is important to note that, as much as Gorgias boasts oratory’s ability to win over other craftsmen, he is not interested in masquerading as a doctor or a wall-builder. Rather, the power of oratory gives one the ability to *rule* them (452e4–8). This is evident when he argues that it is on the advice of Themistocles and Pericles that walls are built rather than any individual wall-builder (455e2–3). The advice of orators thus prevail because they present themselves as statesmen, giving council with regard to what is best for the city. So while orators may discuss various technical matters, they do so under the guise of justice and injustice. This is the true nature of oratory that Socrates reveals.³⁸

1.4. Conclusion

³⁷ Cooper, 34.

³⁸ For an interesting parallel to this pattern of inquiry, see the refutation of Polemarchus in *Republic* I (331d—336a10). There, the structure of crafts serves not to unveil the guises of putative crafts, but to present Plato’s own views of ruling elaborated under the topic of justice. The discussion begins, like the *Gorgias*, with the supposition that justice is a craft (332d1–2). Socrates then proceeds to ask a series of “who, where, when, what” questions informed by the structure of ordinary crafts. The general purpose of the inquiry appears to be highlighting the faults in conceiving justice merely as a duty such as “give each what is owed” (332a7–8). I discuss this refutation in detail in the Chapter 2, section 2.1.

I began this chapter with the aim of investigating the ways in which crafts served as a model for understanding the nature and structure of virtue. I have argued that appeals to crafts in the context of virtue and virtue-related topics play three main roles: to recommend moral expertise, as the basis for positing a unified model of knowledge, and to aid inquiry into virtue and putative crafts. My survey of these passages, I believe, gives us the resources for appreciating the diverse roles crafts play in the explanation of virtue. Analogies to crafts scarcely amount to a run-of-mill compare and contrast between features of virtue and crafts. Rather, given their flexibility, accessibility, and logical structure, examples drawn from crafts are *central* for serving a variety of philosophical aims in Plato's account of virtue and knowledge.

Chapter 2

2. *Republic* I: Justice, Ruling, and the Ideal Craftsman

In Chapter 1, I examined the roles that craft examples play in Plato's account of virtue, specifically for elucidating its nature and structure. In this chapter, I continue to focus on the idea of craft as a model of knowledge, turning my attention to the kinship Plato draws between the craftsman and the virtuous person. I shift my focus from surveying key passages across a number of dialogues to a sustained interpretation of *Republic* I.

Republic I is home to some of the most direct and controversial arguments for conceiving virtue as a craft. The text takes up the topic of justice and the investigation mostly proceeds from the hypothesis that justice is a craft. Throughout the discussions with Polemarchus and Thrasymachus, a large number of Socrates' arguments rest on the similarities between the just person and the craftsman. It is commonly thought that a central lesson of Book I is to indicate the flaws of postulating virtue as a craft. Socrates' arguments from craft create "discomfort";³⁹ they are "difficult to take seriously" and "almost embarrassingly bad".⁴⁰ They seem "so misguided" that "Socrates will speak much less frequently about *technê*" in the remainder books of the *Republic*;⁴¹ "Once Book I is concluded, Plato will never employ the craft analogy again".⁴²

My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate that this common picture of Book I is incorrect. I argue that mainstream criticisms of Socrates' arguments from craft are not well-founded and often rest on a narrow and superficial understanding of Plato's account of craft. When correctly understood, craft illuminates important aspects of the nature of justice and political rule. Moreover, Socrates' arguments are more favourable to the idea of craft than often supposed. In supporting this interpretation, I first (Section 2.1) outline putative textual evidence for supporting the mainstream reading, focusing especially on Socrates' initial

³⁹ Annas (1981), 43.

⁴⁰ Cross & Woodzley, (1964), 50–52.

⁴¹ Pappas (2003), 55–56.

⁴² Reeve (1988), 19.

objections against Polemarchus, that viewing justice as a craft renders it trivial (333d11–e2) and makes it vulnerable to misuse (334a10–b5). I show that there are good reasons to doubt that Plato intends to highlight the weakness of the craft analogy with these claims. I suggest that Socrates' objections are better read as pointing to the flaws with a certain ordinary and unreflective attitude towards justice as the one put forth by Polemarchus.

I then (Sections 2.2–2.6) move on to the next major place in the text that supports the mainstream reading, the refutation of Thrasymachus. Socrates' arguments on the nature of craft (341c–342e), the craft of wage-earning (345e–347a), and the non-pleonetic argument (349b–350c) are often criticized for relying on weak similarities between craft and justice. In response to this, I begin (Section 2.2) by developing what I view as the correct understanding of Plato's conception of craft, which I call the *origins view*. The upshot of this view is that Plato intends us to understand craft as benefit-oriented, discovered as a service for meeting the various needs of human life. This view of craft is intellectually demanding. For reasons related to their understanding and training, true craftsmen are understood as the personifications of their crafts. With this view in place, I offer (Sections 2.3–2.6) a reconstruction of Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus, showing that Socrates' arguments are mostly well-founded and sensible. While they are insufficient for overhauling the general sentiment behind Thrasymachus' conception of human nature and attitude towards justice (tasks for the remainder of the *Republic*), Plato does intend us to understand the arguments as illuminating the important ways in which the just ruler can be understood as a kind of ideal craftsman.

2.1. Challenges for Understanding Justice as a Craft in *Republic I*

The hypothesis that justice is a craft is first introduced by Socrates at the beginning of his refutation of Polemarchus (332c5–8). From that point on, the discussion of justice and the knowledge involved in bringing it about are closely tied to the idea of craft. That Socrates would draw heavily on a host of craft-related examples to argue about virtue is not surprising. But what is surprising is that no one seems to be very satisfied with these arguments. They fail to persuade Thrasymachus and strike most modern readers as either

implausible or bad arguments. Perhaps most surprisingly, Plato portrays Socrates as being dissatisfied at the end of Book I, admitting to himself: “I seem to have behaved like a glutton”, “snatching at every dish that passes and tasting it before properly savouring its predecessor” (354b1–3). Given Socrates’ overall dissatisfaction and the craft analogy’s central role in Book I, most interpreters feel warranted to conclude that one of Plato’s main aims in Book I is to draw our attention to the flaws of treating justice as a craft. By deliberately highlighting these flaws, it is argued, Book II can begin anew, equipped with a markedly different philosophical method and alternative models of knowledge. But what *precisely* is supposed to be wrong with understanding justice as a kind of craft, as it is depicted in Book I? In ways is the just person different from a practitioner of a craft? Which arguments did Plato have in mind as pointing to the flaws of the craft analogy?

Interpreters who hold the mainstream view identify two places in the text that support their reading. First, there is Socrates’ initial objections against Polemarchus, that viewing justice as a craft renders it trivial (333d11–e2) and makes it vulnerable to misuse (334a10–b5), are taken as direct grounds for rejecting the crafts as a model for justice. Second, there is Socrates’ response to Thrasymachus on the nature of craft (341c–342e), the wage-earning argument (345e–347e) and non-pleonetic argument (349b1–350c), all of which are deemed to be either implausible or deeply unsatisfactory. And on the mainstream view, we are invited by Plato to read the arguments as such.

I consider Socrates’ response to Thrasymachus below in sections 2.3–2.6. In this section, I focus on some common criticisms of the idea of justice as a craft highlighted by Socrates’ refutation of Polemarchus. Against the mainstream reading, I argue that there are good reasons to doubt that Plato intends to highlight the weakness of the craft analogy with the charges of triviality and misuse. I suggest that Socrates’ objections are better read as pointing to the flaws with a certain ordinary and unreflective attitude towards justice, such as the one put forth by Polemarchus.

Drawing on the poet Simonides, Polemarchus proposes that justice is to give each what is due (331e3–4). He interprets this to mean that it is just to give benefits to friends and harms to enemies (332a9–10). Against this, Socrates raises two salient objections that appear to

undermine the idea of justice as a craft. First, Socrates wonders what sort of distinctive benefit does the craft of justice confer? And for whom? (332d2–3). For instance, medicine provides health to bodies, cooking provides seasonings to food, navigation seeks safety at sea, and so on. Whatever justice might seem useful for (e.g. getting contracts, using money), it is too general to be revealing (333a–c). What can we say about the benefit of the craft of justice that has not already been appropriated by the ordinary crafts? This line of inquiry soon reveals that justice is trivial, “only useful for useless things” (333e2). Second, what prevents the just person from using his expertise for bad ends? Socrates points out that the person who is most capable in some skill or craft is also the person who is most capable of misusing it. A doctor has the expertise for healing but in virtue of this expertise, he also knows how to kill. If justice is a craft thus conceived, then, Socrates concludes, “justice seems to be some sort of craft of stealing, one that benefits friends and harms enemies” (334b3–5).

According to the mainstream interpretation, Plato indicates the flaws of treating justice as a craft by having Socrates raise these two objections. To some interpreters, the major flaw (highlighted especially by Socrates’ first objection) is that craft and justice are fundamentally different kinds of things. Crafts aim at unique goals in some specialized area of human conduct (e.g. bodily health, housebuilding, sailing at sea). Justice, on the other hand, is not concerned with some distinct goal or special field, but rather with general questions of how one should live. The just person thus differs importantly from a craftsman because he exercises his knowledge to direct the overall structure of his life as opposed to relegating it to some limited area. If we pursue justice as if it is a craft with its own special field and goal, we will end up with the awkward view that it is about safekeeping money. And thus, it is argued, Plato shows us that pursuing justice as a craft renders it trivial.⁴³

One problem with such views is that interpreters tend to base their arguments on a narrow conception of craft. Nickolas Pappas captures several of the main criticisms when he writes:

⁴³ See Pappas, (2003), 55–56; Cross & Woosley (1964) who interprets craft along the lines of occupational skill (11–12). White (1979), 63.

One wants to object to Socrates that justice, unlike horse-trading, does not exist as a means to some other end, but as a characteristic of all human activities...In the remainder of the *Republic* Socrates will speak much less frequently about *technê* (The word occurs about .2 times per page in Book 2–10, once per page in Book 1). When he does propose a model for moral knowledge (Book 5–7), that model is not technical skill but the theoretical knowledge of the mathematician. The assumption behind *technê*, that every activity works toward a goal, prevents the concept from illuminating justice, of which we might say that it is its own goal, or that it has for a goal not some distinct product, but an entire human life.⁴⁴

This way of understanding the crafts presents a false dichotomy between crafts as “technical” or “productive” skills and the more theoretical oriented sorts of knowledge like mathematics. In my view, the basis for this misunderstanding is influenced by Aristotle’s characterization of the crafts as production (*poêsis*). And production, Aristotle argues, is different from action (*praxis*) (*NE*. 1140a1–24). In a passage from *Magna Moralia* I.34, Aristotle (or some Aristotelian) offers a similar explanation to the mainstream reading: “the crafts of making have some other end beyond the making; for instance, beyond housebuilding, since that is the craft of making a house, there is a house as its end beyond the making” (*MM*, 1197a4–5). By contrast, practical wisdom (*phronêsis*), Aristotle argues, has no other end beyond the activity. So we might say that the end *is* the activity. Therefore, he concludes, “practical wisdom is concerned with acting and things acted, but craft (*technê*) is with making and things made” (1197a12–13).

In contrast to Aristotle, the idea of craft correlates to a much wider and diverse collection of examples in Plato. They encompass a variety of skills, disciplines, and bodies of knowledge. These include productive examples (e.g. housebuilding, carpentry), theoretical examples (e.g. geometry, arithmetic), and other more practical oriented fields of expertise (e.g. navigation, medicine). While we do find Socrates relying on productive examples to explicate virtue, he is equally disposed to using more theoretical examples. Most notably, in the *Protagoras*, Socrates calls the sort of knowledge that would give us salvation in life as “craft or art of measurement” (356e3–4), comparing it to a kind of arithmetic (357a3). Emphasising the close connection between knowledge and craft, Socrates adds: “and since

⁴⁴ Pappas, (2003), 55–56.

it is measurement, it must definitely be a craft (*technê*) and knowledge (*epistêmê*) (357b4).⁴⁵ Additionally, Plato does not draw or seem interested in the distinction between production and action. And thus he does not set up craft in opposition to virtue on account of this difference. While Plato recognizes that *some* crafts involve making a product distinct from the craft itself (*Chrm.* 165e5–8), and that crafts are generally goal-oriented, these features do not tell the whole story.

On the whole, what interests Plato about the idea of craft is broader and more complex. He is especially interested in its intellectual features: for instance, precision, teachability, reliability, and the ability to give causal explanations. These sorts of features constitute a certain level of understanding that Plato finds attractive for thinking about virtue generally. For Plato, the crafts are more modest and observable illustrations of the idea that human beings can impose their rational agency onto some previously indeterminate and unordered area. By mastering a craft, we can bring order to that area for the sake of improving human life in some way, whether this is to minister to our basic needs or to facilitate our social and civic life.

As we shall see in sections 2.2–2.6, this is precisely the view that Socrates advocates to Thrasymachus. The claims that crafts are discovered to meet some human need (341e), that they are as complete or perfect as possible (341e–342b), and a nest of other claims about the craftsmen’s psychological motivation, all proceed from this basic world view. Putting aside the merits of these arguments for the moment, even a cursory reading of them shows that Socrates has in a mind a fuller notion of craft: one that intends to capture both the nature of craft and its role in society, as well as certain kinds of attitude that come with practicing a craft. And this fuller notion explains the fact that Socrates continues to pursue the idea of justice as a craft in the remainder of Book I, despite purported evidence that he thinks the idea is flawed in the refutation of Polemarchus.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ἐπεὶ δὲ μετρητική, ἀνάγκη δήπου τέχνη καὶ ἐπιστήμη.

⁴⁶ This explanation of course does not answer those who see the entirety of Book I as a deliberate exercise in failure. Thus, the burden of my reading is to show that the refutation of Thrasymachus is more successful than it is purported.

Accordingly, the accusation that craft and justice are different because the former is productive, concerned with a distinct goal apart from the craft itself, *cannot* be regarded as wholly representative of Socrates' views on craft in Book I. In fact, very little is said about the nature of craft in the refutation of Polemarchus. Rather, I suggest that what Socrates is doing is relying on commonplace facts about crafts as a means to reveal the flaw of Polemarchus' view of justice. Polemarchus' definition renders justice trivial, *not* because we are pursuing it as if it were a craft. Rather, it is trivial because Polemarchus views it as trivial. As it is well noted, the general problem with Polemarchean justice—benefitting friends and harming enemies—is that he sees it merely as a property of actions rather than something that structures life as whole. Polemarchus reflects the everyday attitude of ordinary people towards justice. To act justly is akin to following an old adage or a maxim. It requires neither deep reflection nor serious consequence for one's way of life. And so the point of Socrates' objection is to highlight the triviality of viewing justice in this way. What can such a superficial view of justice really tell us about what justice is useful for? When placed next to ordinary crafts—with their clearly demarcated areas of expertise and designated role in society—this everyday attitude towards justice comes up short. Polemarchus struggles to answer Socrates' questions because his understanding of justice is trivial.

This reading helps us explain why Socrates is the first to bring up the idea that justice is a craft of sorts when Polemarchus clearly does not hold such a view. Socrates' intention is to use the basic structure of crafts to put pressure on Polemarchus. Inquiring after justice as a craft allows Socrates to ask certain kinds of questions that are revealing (e.g. who are the benefactors of justice? What is the aim of justice? What means does justice use to accomplish its aims?).⁴⁷ The idea of benefitting friends and harming enemies turns out to have very little to say in response to these important questions. And this is precisely the conclusion highlighted by Socrates' line of inquiry.

Now I come to the another major criticism of the idea of justice as a craft, which shifts attention from craft's more productive features to its potential to be misused. For many

⁴⁷ This is a strategy we have already encountered in Chapter 1. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates begins with the hypothesis that rhetoric is a craft as a means to ask a series of questions that are informed by the structure of ordinary crafts. These questions ultimately help Socrates reveal the various disguises of rhetoric (447c–454b) and that rhetoric falls short of being a craft.

interpreters, Socrates' second objection against Polemarchus—that the person who is most capable in a craft is also the one who is most capable of abusing it (334a10–b5)—is Plato's most transparent effort to highlight the flaw of treating justice as a craft.⁴⁸ C.D.C. Reeve accurately captures this view when he writes:

All of Socrates' arguments against Polemarchus, with the exception of one (334c1–335a10), make use of the craft analogy (332d2–3). And Plato indicates this by making one of Socrates' arguments (331e1–334b6) point us to its most glaring flaw. A craft is a capacity for opposites. It enables its possessor to do both good and bad things. The doctor knows how to cure, but *ipso facto* he knows how to kill as well. A virtue on the other hand, can result only in good things. A virtuous person cannot perform vicious acts. Precisely on this ground Aristotle will later reject the idea that virtues are crafts (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1129a11–17). Once again, we are being given a subtle clue to what is really going on.⁴⁹

Reeve cites this feature as one of the central reasons that Plato will go on to reject the craft analogy after Book I. The deeper worry behind Reeve's criticism (and others), I take it, is that crafts have the wrong kind of relationship to their ends for thinking about justice. One way to express this worry is to say that although a craft has some intended end (usually closely tied to its function), it cannot ensure that craftsmen are always motivated to bring it about. Ideally doctors aim to heal patients and to do no harm. But in actuality, doctors are motivated by all sorts of things (honour, wealth, revenge, etc.), with healing being only one among them. There will inevitably be bad doctors. Nothing about acquiring medical expertise guarantees that doctors use it for its intended purpose. In fact, medical expertise makes them especially equipped to use it to harm.

If we treat justice as a craft thus conceived, not only does this view contradict repeated claims in Plato that virtue is fine, beneficial, and good, but it also makes justice a kind of value-neutral skill for accomplishing whatever end the just person desires. This is what Julia

⁴⁸ Socrates makes a similar point in the *Hippias Minor*. By relying mostly on an analogy between medicine and justice, Socrates concludes that the just person is one whose soul is in the condition where it can voluntarily accomplish both fine and shameful actions (375b–376c). Questions of how to precisely interpret this conclusion for Plato is controversial. For an influential interpretation and general remarks on the problem of misuse with crafts and its implication for virtue, see Irwin (1977), 77; (1995), 69–77. For recent resolution of this issue, see Jones and Sharma (2017).

⁴⁹ Reeve (1988), 8.

Annas has in mind when she observes that the idea of craft essentially involves means-end reasoning. It is a kind of value-neutral skill for achieving a variety of ends that are antecedently determined. Thus, according to her, the flaw of treating justice as a craft highlighted by Socrates' objections against Polemarchus is that the crafts lack a built-in notion of the good towards which they must aim.⁵⁰

Rooted in the criticisms of Reeve and Annas is the general feeling that there is something deeply unattractive about treating justice (and virtue generally) as a kind of craft or skill. On this picture, justice looks like the sort thing that has little effect over who we are, the condition of our soul, and our character. It appears to be a detached body of knowledge that tells us how to pursue ends, rather than set those ends for us. Conceiving justice as a craft may give us the technical proficiency for deliberation but leaves out important questions about our values and how we shall live. Justice, the thought goes, ought to shape who we are and the kind of life we lead. And once again, we find ourselves with the worry that craft and justice are radically dissimilar.

I do not think that this picture is correct. One of my aims in this chapter is to show why. Briefly put, Plato's response to the problem of misuse is not to abandon the idea of craft, but to present us with a more demanding and complex conception of craft. This is what I have called the *origins view* of craft, which is put forth by Socrates in the refutation of Thrasymachus. In contrast to Thrasymachus, the *origins view* of craft understands the nature of craft as essentially a service, and requires a complete and deep mastery of the whole of its field. For reasons related to the craftsman's understanding and training, he is not prone to abuse his craft. While Socrates' views are certainly controversial, they are not implausible and as I shall argue in the next sections, his arguments are more promising than they are often supposed. Once we understand the basic worldview that informs Socrates' arguments, we will be in a better position to see how the idea of craft can abate the worry about misuse.

⁵⁰ Annas (1981), 28.

For now however, I wish to draw our attention to a tension in the text highlighted by Socrates' second objection to Polemarchus. Socrates claims that a craftsman is someone who is most capable of doing good and bad things in his craft (333e6–334a8). If the mainstream reading of this claim is right—if Plato is intending us to see the fatal flaw of applying this feature to the just person—then it is puzzling why Socrates would go on to advocate for a view that directly belies this lesson. As he goes on to tell Thrasymachus later, a craftsman, in the precise sense, is someone who seeks to benefit the recipients of his craft and never himself (342d3–8). In the same vein, the ruler, in virtue of being a craftsman in the precise sense, always promotes the interests of his subjects and never himself (342d10–e11). This matter comes out even more sharply when we find Socrates relying on the same medical example to make both claims.⁵¹ On the face it, these two claims are not obviously inconsistent. For it is certainly possible for a doctor to possess the ability to heal and harm as part of his expertise, but for various psychologically complex reasons, he always acts with a view to benefit his patients. Indeed, this is what I take to be the view that Plato presents to us in Book I. But if the mainstream reading is correct, then we would apparently find Socrates pointing to crafts' potential to be misused as a major weakness in the analogy to justice, only to show us later that the commitment to ruling being a craft should lead us to think that true rulers never act unjustly. This reading then would have Socrates argue explicitly for a view which he has intended to refute earlier.

The crucial difference between the two claims is clearly in the language of craftsmen in the “precise sense”. Following in the footsteps of Thrasymachus, Socrates is articulating the conditions that would constitute an ideal craftsman, whereas with Polemarchus he is relying on a certain ordinary sense of the word. My remarks with regard to Socrates' previous objection apply here in much the same way. The idea of using justice to do both good and bad things is already embedded in Polemarchus' view of justice, namely to give benefits to friends and harms to enemies. Polemarchus is appalled by the suggestion that the just person is the most clever (*deinos*) thief (334a10), but his version of the just person would have to be one if he is to perform good actions to some and bad ones to others. Hence,

⁵¹ Compare: “the one who is most able to guard against disease is also most able to produce it unnoticed” (333e5–7) with “no doctor, insofar as he is a doctor, seeks or orders what is advantageous to himself, but what is advantageous to his patient” (342d4–6).

the propensity for seeing justice in terms of doing opposites is first present in Polemarchus' account, rather than it being a consequence of pursuing justice as a craft. Socrates' use of the language of "*deinos*" (333e6, 334a5-7) throughout this argument should also invite us to be more cautious of his characterization of the craftsman. It is likely that he is not considering the craftsman with respect to his knowledge and expertise as a precise account would involve (e.g. *epistmêmôn*, *technikos*), but rather with respect to someone who exhibits a certain kind of shrewd "skill"-like ability for serving a variety of ends. In this respect, the mainstream reading is right about the faults with justice in this argument, but it is wrong to attribute it to the idea of craft *simpliciter*. As I noted previously, we are given little information about how Socrates or Polemarchus might view the nature of craft besides some commonplace facts which are taken for granted. For these considerations, it seems best to read Socrates' objection, not as evidence for highlighting the weakness of treating justice as a craft, but rather as an exercise that intends to draw out the flaws of a certain ordinary and unreflective attitude towards justice, as exemplified by Polemarchus. This strategy relies on ordinary perceptions of craftsmen, in contrast to what Socrates will go on to do later at the insistence of Thrasymachus, who prefers to speak about craftsmen and rulers in the "precise sense".

2.2. The *Origins View* of Craft

We are now ready to move on to the second major place in the text that is commonly taken to support the mainstream reading. Thrasymachus roars into the midst of discussion, loudly pronouncing that "justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger" (338c2-3). Over the course of trying to refute Thrasymachus' view, Socrates offers three arguments that rely on the idea of craft: the nature of craft argument (341c-342e), the wage-earning argument (345e-347e), and non-pleonetic argument (349b1-350c). All of which are generally taken to be deeply flawed and highly implausible.

Before proceeding to the details of these arguments and addressing their most common criticisms, I shall begin by developing what I take to be the larger view of crafts motivating Socrates' arguments in Book I. Given that a major claim of my interpretation is that the idea of craft has not been well-understood in the mainstream interpretation, it is important to

first establish what I view as the correct understanding. Once we have this view in place, we will be in a better position to see that Socrates' arguments from craft are mostly sensible and well-founded. In what follows, I develop what I have called the *origins view* of craft, paying close attention to issues that arise in the interpretation of *Republic I*.

At the heart of this *origins view* is Socrates' proclamation in Book I that crafts were first discovered to meet human needs:

If you asked me whether our bodies are sufficient in themselves or whether they need something else, I'd answer: they certainly have needs. And because of this, because our bodies are deficient rather than self-sufficient, the craft of medicine has now been discovered. The craft of medicine was developed to provide what is advantageous for a body. Do you think that I'm right in saying this or not? (341e2-7).⁵²

The importance of this 'star' passage has not been fully appreciated but careful consideration reveals that it is fundamental to the picture of crafts that Plato presents to us in Book I. According to the passage, a deficiency arises in some area, such as our bodily function. This deficiency, Socrates points out, is the product of a lack or an incomplete nature in the thing in question. Bodies are not self-sufficient and have nutritive and remedial needs. Because of this deficiency (*dia tauta*, 341e4), and out of necessity, medicine was first discovered. This original purpose, so to speak, is important for shaping Plato's understanding of the nature of crafts as essentially a *service*. In providing and seeking what is advantageous to that which each craft is naturally set over (341d8-9), crafts contribute something beneficial to human beings. A little later in the refutation, Socrates elaborates that each craft is individuated on the basis of providing or performing something unique (346a1-9, 346d5-6). In doing so, each craft benefits us in a peculiar way, not common with the others (346a6-7).⁵³

These claims indicate to us that Plato does not perceive the nature of crafts to be value-neutral nor completely lacking in any built-in notion of the good, as the mainstream

⁵² "Ὡσπερ, ἔφην ἐγώ, εἴ με ἔροιο εἰ ἐξαρκεῖ σῶματι εἶναι σῶματι ἢ προσδεῖται τινος, εἴπομ' ἄν ὅτι "Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν προσδεῖται. διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡ τέχνη ἐστὶν ἡ ἰατρικὴ νῦν ἠύρημένη, ὅτι σῶμά ἐστιν πονηρὸν καὶ οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖ αὐτῷ τοιούτῳ εἶναι. τούτῳ οὖν ὅπως ἐκπορίζῃ τὰ συμφέροντα, ἐπὶ τοῦτο παρεσκευάσθη ἡ τέχνη." ἢ ὀρθῶς σοι δοκῶ, ἔφην, ἂν εἰπεῖν οὕτω λέγων, ἢ οὐ;

⁵³ I address objections to this origins argument directly in section 2.3.

interpretation would have us believe. Clearly, the crafts *do* lack a notion of the good in the full sense as we do not come to have knowledge of it through any ordinary craft. But this does not mean that the ordinary crafts are value-neutral.⁵⁴ On the contrary, we have good reasons to believe that Plato envisages them to be minimally benefit-oriented because their nature is to meet the various areas of human need. And in *some* sense, this view is even agreeable to Thrasymachus.

Whether he is thinking about the craft of ruling or shepherding, Thrasymachus certainly believes that crafts are beneficial in some way. But what is so fundamentally disagreeable to him—and this is the controversial part of Socrates' view—is that crafts are means of benefitting anyone else besides their practitioners. Thrasymachus might agree with Socrates about why crafts originated (342a1), but there is no good reason to think that practitioners ought to act for the sake of this original purpose or that it is realistic to expect them to do so. In fact, given that human nature is ultimately defined by self-interest, Thrasymachus thinks that craftsmen and rulers will always act with the aim of seeking their own interests. And in the eyes of Thrasymachus, this culminates with the large scale act of appropriating all the material resources and enslaving others (344a7–b1, 344b5–6). For Socrates, this is to misuse the crafts but for Thrasymachus, this is a realistic and even a desirable state of affairs. I shall have more to say about Thrasymachus' position later. But for now I focus on the question of how we get from the original purpose of crafts described in our 'star' passage to Socrates' repeated claim in Book I that a craftsman, insofar as he is a craftsman, seeks or orders what is advantageous to the object of his craft and never himself (342d3–8). In other words, what reasons might Socrates have for thinking that craftsmen, especially rulers, will seek to honour the original aims of their crafts?

Several clues internal and external to Book I help us answer this question. Let us begin with the internal textual evidence. As Plato presents things in Book I, Socrates' preferred stance throughout the refutation of Thrasymachus is to establish the craftsman as someone who is functionally defined in reference to his craft. The doctor, he notes, in the precise sense, is defined as someone who treats the sick rather than a money maker (341c5–9), since the

⁵⁴ In the next two chapters, I explore the normative limitations of the nature of ordinary crafts.

former is the function of medicine. Similarly, the ship's captain is defined according to his craft (*kata tēn technē*, 341d4) and his rule over his sailors (341c10–d4). The relationship between the craftsman and his craft is presented as being so close that we often find Socrates preferring to speak impersonally about what the craft does (e.g. “craft seeks”, “craft provides”, “craft orders”). And only when he has established some claim about the nature of craft does Socrates then move on to apply the same conclusion to the craftsman. This preference is not accidental, but reflects the emphasis in Socrates' arguments.

For Socrates, the craftsman is in some sense *secondary* to the craft he practices. What I mean is this. The identity of the craftsman is determined exclusively by the nature of what he knows. In the same manner that we use the language of “man of science” or “man of faith”, the doctor is a “man of medicine”. These expressions reflect the idea that one's commitment to and mastery of a body of knowledge become the defining features of the sort of person he is. The clearest expression of this claim is found in the *Gorgias*. There, Socrates claims:

A man who has learned carpentry is a carpenter, isn't he? And isn't a man who has learned music a musician? And a man who has learned medicine is a doctor? And isn't this so too, by the same reasoning, with the other crafts? Isn't a man who has learned a particular subject the sort of man his expertise makes him? (ὁ μεμαθηκὼς ἕκαστα τοιοῦτός ἐστιν οἷον ἢ ἐπιστήμη ἕκαστον ἀπεργάζεται;) (*Grg.* 460b1–5).

To ask who is the craftsman amounts to asking what is the nature of his craft. And here lies *part* of the reason why Socrates would claim that craftsmen seek what is advantageous to the objects of their crafts. Ideal craftsmen, in Socrates' view, are the *personifications* of their expertise. What is important for him is to establish the nature of crafts understood in a particular way: providing an assortment of services and aids that benefit human beings. The identity of the craftsman is only then understood in reference to this nature. At the invitation of Thrasymachus who introduces the language of precisely speaking, Socrates is not looking to describe the various ways in which craftsmen might fall short in the world,

but what it means to be craftsmen in the “precise sense”.⁵⁵ And this means personifying bodies of knowledge which by their nature is to be of service to human life.

To sum up, ordinary crafts are not value-neutral in the ways that they might initially appear. Rather, they are benefit-oriented and have their origins and nature in serving various areas of human need. Moreover, Socrates understands the role of the craftsmen as exclusively determined by the nature of their expertise. In this respect, ideal craftsmen are viewed as the personifications of their crafts. However, this description is not only an abstract ideal or merely a theoretical claim. There are good reasons for thinking that craftsmen would be motivated to use their crafts in the ways that they were intended. Here I consider two broader points about Plato’s account of crafts in order to illuminate the craftsmen’s motivations, especially the worry about misuse.

First, what suffices for possessing a craft for Plato is not merely the ability to bring about a product or result. It also involves the ability to perform various intellectually complex tasks on the basis of possessing understanding of a particular field. In a well-known passage from the *Gorgias*, Socrates contrasts craft with knack (or experience: *empeiria*) and routine (*tribê*). (463a6–466a3), on the grounds that those who possess a knack are unable to provide causal explanations and lack accounts of the nature of the objects of their crafts (4652a2–5). They merely proceed by guessing (464c6) on the basis of memorizing what customarily happens (501a7–1). In contrast, a craft proceeds rationally having “investigated both the nature of the object it serves and the cause of the thing it does, and is able to give an account of each of these” (501a–6).⁵⁶ The suggestion is that possessing a craft is not a mechanical and rote activity, accumulated through the sheer collection of facts. Rather, it involves the ability to critically reflect on one’s actions in a way that enables the practitioner to offer

⁵⁵ This is evidenced by several occasions where Socrates confirms that Thrasymachus is talking about craftsmen in the precise sense: 341b5–6; 342b6–7; 342d7–8.

⁵⁶ I return to this passage in Chapter 4.

explanations on the basis of those principles that define his craft.⁵⁷ This knowledge extends beyond mere know-how; it involves a *deeper* and complete grasp that we might nowadays characterize as understanding.⁵⁸

We also find support for this idea outside of the *Gorgias*. In the *Ion*, Socrates argues that those who are able speak on the basis of craft and knowledge (*epistêmê*) are able to do so about the whole (*to holon*) of the craft (532c5–9). He reasons that there is a common manner of inquiry⁵⁹ that defines each craft (532d2–3) and possessing it means mastering the whole of the subject, rather than a part of it (532e1–4). Socrates' comments suggest that those who possess a craft rely on their knowledge of the principles of their craft (e.g. the specific manner of inquiry) to guide their actions and judgements of the various parts that constitute the whole field. For instance, Socrates claims that those who are able to judge and speak well about painters can do so not just about Polygnotus but about every painter as long as he is one (532e7–533b4). The reasoning here is presumably that the craftsman can answer questions about what makes a painting a good one, what sort of techniques can bring about a good painting, how to judge if a particular painting is an instance of these techniques, etc. These kinds of abilities suggest a complex intellectual process, one that results in the ability to explain and relate particular parts in terms of some larger cohesive whole.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ In making this point, I am in large agreement with Annas (1995) and (2011) who has argued over the years for a non-rote and rich conception of craft/skill in Plato and Aristotle. Her focus generally has been on the aspects of skill that are fit for thinking about the intellectual structure of virtue, especially the acquisition and exercise of virtue. My aim here is to explain how this richer (and what I consider the correct) notion of craft helps us address the worry about misuse—a common objection against the craft analogy—and to develop a conception of craft with an eye towards illuminating the psychological motivations of the virtuous person in order to address the issues of *Republic* I. For the same reason, my account of the craftsman's knowledge here is not intended to be exhaustive here.

⁵⁸ There is a rich history of interpreting Plato's conception of knowledge (*epistêmê*) as understanding. See Schwab (2020), which includes a detailed survey of the literature and its relationship to contemporary epistemologists' discussion of understanding. See Zagzebski (2001) for a discussion that connects understanding with Plato's account of *technê*, especially 238–242. See Moss (2020) for a detailed study on whether Plato's epistemology is about knowledge. For my purposes, I use the idea of understanding in order to emphasize that craft is intellectually demanding and a stable disposition, not to be mistaken as mere know-how or knowledge as a collection of propositions.

⁵⁹ ὁ αὐτὸς τρόπος τῆς σκέψεως ἔσται περὶ ἀπασῶν τῶν τεχνῶν.

⁶⁰ Other intellectual abilities attributed to the craftsmen include the ability to give council concerning decisions in their respective crafts (*La.* 184e11–185a7, *Grg.* 514a5–515e10, *Prt.* 314a3–b4)

All these remarks give us good evidence for thinking that what suffices for possessing a craft for Plato is highly demanding—amounting to complete mastery. As such, it is inaccurate to characterize it as essentially involving only means-end reasoning or as a state that arises through the routine memorization of a set of instructions. Rather, for Plato, possessing a craft involves a more complete and deep understanding of the whole of its subject matter. The craftsman does not merely calculate the means of successfully bringing about a certain end, but reflects and evaluates his actions in terms of the principles governing the whole of his craft. Thus what distinguishes the craftsman from the layman is not how well one knows how to perform a set of isolated actions, but the disposition to act in a unified way on the basis of a deep and complete understanding.

Here I submit that the motivation to honour the original aims of crafts grows out of this understanding. A doctor may know how to kill as part of what he knows about medicine, but he would not kill in order to promote his own self-interests (e.g. money, revenge) because he understands that this action cannot be explained or justified in terms of the principles that constitute medicine, for instance, that it should seek and provide what is advantageous for the human body (*Resp.* 341e2–7). A doctor who *does* kill for his own self-interest is only a doctor in the putative sense, and not, as we will see later, in the precise sense. This is because he lacks the unified disposition to act on reasons that cohere well with the whole of medicine. In fact, I suggest that this action is not actually an instance of the “doctor” misusing his medical expertise, but an instance of some medical fact on how to kill. Arguably, this medical fact can be obtained by any layman with sufficient research and effort. A “doctor” who performs actions that violate the principles of medicine does not possess the craft of medicine, but merely the collection of a set of medical facts. In contrast, a true doctor is one whose actions proceed from a unified and complete understanding of the craft of medicine.

I do not think that this idea is counter-intuitive to our own contemporary thought about various sorts of professional skills and expertise. Often when we witness doctors or

and the ability to make certain kinds of evaluative judgements with respect to other practitioners in their particular fields (*Ion* 531d12–532b7).

firefighters who perform actions that appear to involve extraordinary moral virtue (e.g. jumping in a burning building to save a child, risking the potential for contracting infectious disease), they cite the reason for their actions as simply doing their job. What this idea expresses is that, precisely speaking, a good craftsman is not a good person who *happens* to be a firefighter or a doctor, but someone who is good at those crafts conceived in the *right* way (e.g. save lives and protect property, alleviate pain and promote health).⁶¹ The craftsman's understanding of the nature of his craft motivates him to perform those actions which his craft demands of him.

A second and related aspect of Plato's account of crafts to consider is the idea that the craftsman's understanding results from learning and training. That crafts are teachable and therefore learnable is well-recognized. While it is possible that one can become competent in a craft without a teacher (*La.* 185e4–6), on the whole, he has acquired his craft by being taught (*La.* 185b1–4; *Prt.* 319b5–c1). We have some idea of the kind of training a craftsman would undergo. In another passage from the *Gorgias* (514a5–e9), Socrates draws a parallel between those experts who are called upon in the Assembly to make building and medical decisions and those who are called to manage the affairs of the city. Socrates notes that a craftsman must begin by learning how to execute a craft successfully under the guidance of a teacher (514b7–c2). Then, over time, he must learn to do so independently (514c2–3). This learning process involves trial and error. Socrates observes that before a trusted doctor is called upon to state-level services, he would need to have sufficiently exercised his craft in private practice—with many indifferent⁶² and successful outcomes (514e3–6). The suggestion is of course that the doctor's experience in private practice gives him the opportunity to improve at his craft by learning from both his successes and failures.

It bears emphasizing that the point of Socrates' analogy in the *Gorgias* is to highlight the similarities between those who would take on political rule and those who are expert enough to perform at the city-wide level, rather than any craftsman who is in private practice. These passages highlight for us again that the kind of expertise Plato is interested in the context of virtue and political rule is highly demanding. More importantly, the

⁶¹ Barney (2006) makes this point as well (50).

⁶² ὅπως ἐτύχομεν ποιῆσαι: literally whatever we happen to bring about.

passages reveal to us that acquiring a craft is developmental. How to precisely flesh out the stages of this development rewards further examination. However, for the purpose of the present discussion, the details of this development can be set aside. What is important is that these passages help us see that the craftsman's expertise proceeds from a stable disposition developed through a gradual process of learning and training. This development requires an extended period of time, characterized by increasing intellectual effort, some of which includes developing the abilities to independently execute a craft successfully and to detect the causes of failures so that they lead to improvement and future success.

In this way, I suggest that we have another reason for thinking that craftsmen would be motivated to honour the original aims of their crafts. The significant intellectual effort, time, training required for achieving the level of expertise Plato had in mind come to form the learner's identity in a way that is characteristic of an expert in that craft. In other words, we might say that mastering a craft is *transformative*. The process of acquiring a craft involves a growing assimilation to one's body of knowledge. The learner is taught characteristic ways of inquiring problems in his field, of demonstrating his knowledge, and of giving explanations. Simultaneously, he must actively contribute to his own learning in a way that enables him to advance from a beginner to an expert in a way that is peculiar to his craft.

Moreover, this period of education is conducted by other experts who are members of the same community of which the learner will eventually become a member himself. In this respect, the learner is shaped by the practices and interests of those that make up his discipline. As we shall see, this aspect of community will play a crucial role when we look at Socrates' argument on why craftsmen do not try to outdo each other. For my present point, all of this indicates an educational process that yields a stable disposition in the craftsman. This disposition is stable because the craftsman's reasoning and environment has been shaped by his prolonged training in various aspects of his craft—its principles, norms, methodology, and aim. The craftsman is motivated to do as his craft demands of him because he has been trained to do so, in a manner that is intelligent rather than mechanical, immersive rather than detached. It is in this way that a craftsman can be understood to personify his craft. As Socrates puts it in the *Gorgias*: "a man who has learned a particular subject is the sort of man his expertise (*epistêmê*) makes him" (*Grg.* 460b4–5).

The above considerations form the central pillars that makeup what I have called the *origins view* of craft. Let us take stock. I argued that the *origins view* of craft is founded on the idea that crafts were first discovered to meet human needs, an argument that Socrates makes explicit in his refutation of Thrasymachus. This view helps us see that the crafts are not value-neutral but are services that aims to provide benefits to human life. Socrates believes that craftsmen would be motivated to abide by the original aims of their crafts in part because he envisages them to be the personifications of their expertise. That is, their identity is determined by the nature of what they know. This claim is not only made explicitly in the *Gorgias*; it is also evidenced in *Republic I* by the emphasis and language in Socrates' arguments against Thrasymachus, which suppose any claims about the craftsmen follows directly once the nature of craft has been established.

Moreover, I suggested that viewing craftsmen as the personifications of their expertise is not merely an abstract idea. We have good reasons to believe that craftsmen would be motivated to use their crafts to serve others in the ways that they were intended, and not, (as mainstream interpreters object), prone to abuse their crafts for selfish interests. Here I considered two general points about Plato's account of craft. First, what suffices for possessing a craft is highly demanding as it involves a complete and deep understanding of the whole of its subject matter. This understanding is measured by the disposition to reliably act in ways that cohere well with the principles of one's craft, rather than how well one performs a set of isolated actions. Second, crafts are acquired through an extensive period of training and learning. I argued that given the significant time, practice, and effort required for mastering a craft, the process is transformative and ends up shaping the learner in ways that are characteristic of an expert in his craft. This is the basic worldview that governs Socrates' arguments from craft in the refutation of Thrasymachus. I now turn to the specifics of these arguments, showing how, given the *origins view* of craft, they are stronger than they are often supposed to be.

2.3. Rulers and Craftsmen in the Precise Sense

One of the most striking things about how the refutation of Thrasymachus gets underway is that it is *Thrasymachus* who introduces the idea of craft in the course of articulating his own account of justice. Much has been written on the exact position Thrasymachus means to advance about justice and to what degree his position can be rendered coherent.⁶³ These difficulties however do not preclude us from seeing that one central disagreement between Thrasymachus and Socrates is the question of what it means to be a ruler in the precise sense. Is it someone who seeks and orders what is advantageous for himself or for his subjects? To varying degrees, both ground their answers to this question by appealing to principles of craft. And so the question of what constitutes a real ruler is largely pursued along the lines of what it means to practice the craft of ruling.

The discussion gets underway with Thrasymachus' claim that "justice is nothing but the advantage of the stronger" (338c2-3). By "stronger", he initially explains, he means the "established rule" (339a1-2). Those who are in positions of rule make laws to serve their own interests and in turn declare to their subjects that following these laws is just (338e1-6). Thus, to do what is just is really to do what is advantageous for the stronger. With this account, Thrasymachus introduces the crucial idea that justice is the product of a kind of political arrangement between rulers and those who are ruled. Henceforth, the focus of the discussion turns towards what constitutes an ideal ruler. Does ruling involve a commitment to complete injustice and possessing the power to attain those ends of injustice? Or does it involve a commitment to justice and acting as the craft of ruling prescribes, to seek and order what is advantageous for its subjects?

In response to Thrasymachus, Socrates gets him first to agree that rulers are not infallible but are liable to make mistakes about their own their interests (339c1-6). In turn, whenever the established rulers undertake to make laws, they will sometimes prescribe laws that are in their interests and sometimes prescribe laws that work against them (339c7-9). By

⁶³ There is a longstanding scholarly debate on how to interpret Thrasymachus' position, especially whether he espouses a coherent position on justice. For an introduction to this issue, see Annas (1981), especially 36-37 and Chappell (1993). For arguments that Thrasymachus does not hold a coherent position, see Maguire (1997) and Everson (1998). For arguments that he does, see Kerford (1947), Reeve (2008), and Wedgewood (2017). For my purposes, I set aside these issues and focus on the differences between Socrates and Thrasymachus on the nature of craft and its relationship to ruling.

demanding their subjects follow those laws in the name of justice (339c10–11), the established rulers sometimes unwittingly order their subjects to do things that work against the rulers' interests. If this is true, Socrates concludes, then in some cases justice is doing what is disadvantageous to the rulers (339d1–3).

Thrasymachus' strategy for escaping this contradiction is to distinguish rulers in the precise sense (*ton akribei logoi*) from rulers in the ordinary sense (*ton hos epos eipein*) (341b5–6). To our surprise, he does so by appealing to ordinary craftsmen. He claims that we express ourselves in a loose sort of way when we say that rulers and experts make errors: “but each of these, insofar as he is what we call him, never errs, so that, according to the precise account (and you are stickler for precise accounts), no craftsman ever errs” (340d8–e3). When a craftsman errs, Thrasymachus argues, his knowledge fails him and “in regard to that error he is no craftsman” (340e3–4). Similarly, “a ruler, insofar as he is a ruler, never makes errors and unerringly decrees what is best for himself, and this his subject must do” (340e8–a3, cf. *Grg.* 460b4–5).

Thrasymachus' account of rulers is interesting for a number of reasons. First, he could have taken Cleitophon's solution that justice is what the stronger *believes* to be advantageous (340b6–8). This is a philosophically interesting view. Rulers need not be bound by the factual outcomes of their laws. What matters is that they are in such a powerful position that they can command others to serve their interests, whatever they happen to believe those are at the time. But Thrasymachus rejects this solution. From his explanation, we can see that he is not interested in the mere power to enact laws, but rather is committed to the real world success of those laws to effectively serve the rulers' interests. And what brings about this success, according to Thrasymachus, is a ruler's possession of a kind of expertise (like the kind other craftsmen exercise in their respective crafts) to skillfully rule by committing complete injustice. As Thrasymachus makes clear later, he has in mind a tyrant who appropriates property, kidnaps and enslaves citizens (344a–c). What seems attractive to Thrasymachus about crafts is that they represent a kind of power for successfully attaining ends. The tyrant is successful at ruling the same way that the doctor is successfully able to bring about health or the way that a ship's captain can navigate the ship to safety.

This is the tyrant's craft. He is expertly capable of attaining for himself all the available wealth, power, and material resources through laws, "stealth or force" (344a8).⁶⁴

Second, we may assume that Socrates and Thrasymachus share the same conception of craft, but disagree only with respect to its proper aim. However, there are further subtle but important differences. As I outlined earlier in my account of the *origins view* of craft, Socrates views the craftsman as secondary to his craft, that is, his identity as a craftsman is determined exclusively in reference to the nature of the craft he practices. In contrast, Thrasymachus' argument clearly puts the emphasis on the practitioner. In his cynical worldview, crafts are seen as a competitive asset in a zero-sum game, where my getting more is done at the expense of you getting less. In order to survive and thrive under such circumstances, one must develop the ability to attain more than one's share. Deep down, being a doctor is just another way to gain power and money or any of the other conventionally recognized goods. The doctor's skill for bringing about health or disease is ultimately subordinate to what Thrasymachus sees as the universal desire governing all human beings: *pleonexia*⁶⁵, the desire to outdo others in pursuing what is in one's self-interest.⁶⁶ Crafts, especially the kind practiced by the tyrant, are seen as an asset in pursuing our pleonetic desires, rather than a service for meeting the various areas of human need. They serve the practitioner as opposed to prescribing standards which the practitioner will aim to personify. These two radically different perspectives on the nature of craft provide the context for Thrasymachus and Socrates to investigate the ruler and ruling in the "precise sense".

⁶⁴ It has sometimes been suggested that Thrasymachus only appeals to the idea of craft under pressure from Socrates. However, that Thrasymachus would appeal to *technê* in order to explicate his view of ruling would not be unlikely given that we know he was a famous sophist and orator. The Sophists notoriously enriched the idea of *technê* from referring to "handicraft" to more intellectually and ethically oriented disciplines. See Zhumid (2006), especially 46-47. See Nawar (2018) for an interpretation of Book I that situates Thrasymachus' view of craft within the broader intellectual culture's understanding of craft.

⁶⁵ I discuss the precise meaning of *pleonexia* in section 2.6.

⁶⁶ Compare Glaucon's comments in Book II: "We can see most clearly that those who practice justice do it unwillingly and because they lack the power to do injustice, if in our thoughts we grant to a just and an unjust person the freedom to do whatever they like...we'll catch the just person red-handed travelling the same road as the unjust. The reason for this is the desire to outdo others and get more and more. This is what anyone's nature naturally pursues as good, but nature is forced by law into perversion of treating fairness with respect" (359b7-c6).

Finally, the passage above marks an important methodological shift for the discussion to follow. It deserves greater attention that Thrasymachus' distinction between rulers in the precise sense and in the ordinary sense is primarily concerned with the grounds for their correct appellation: "insofar as what we call him"(340d8–e1)⁶⁷. Thrasymachus' point is that in ordinary language we refer to craftsmen in reference to their professional standings. But this is merely a loose way of speaking. The precise grounds for someone being called a doctor or a grammarian is determined on the basis of him possessing the relevant expertise, in particular for Thrasymachus, the infallible exercise of that expertise. In the same way, a ruler is not someone who happens to occupy the position of ruling but someone who possesses the ability to rule.⁶⁸ By introducing the ruler in the precise sense, Thrasymachus is attempting to clarify the grounds for distinguishing true rulers from putative rulers. And with it, he outlines the kinds of traits that are rational for us to aspire, given the kind of world in which we live.

2.4. Socrates' First Argument: The Nature of Craft (341c–342e)

By framing the true ruler as a tyrant who is skilled at accomplishing injustice, Thrasymachus has in effect refocused the problem of misuse. Recall that on the mainstream interpretation, a fatal flaw with crafts is that they can be used to promote ends for which they are unintended. This feature points to the crafts' value-neutrality and reveals that they possess the wrong kind of relationship to their ends for thinking about justice and ruling. Thrasymachus has taken this problem one step further by subverting the value of crafts altogether. He shows that crafts are designed to serve the interests of their practitioners. And a true ruler is at the top of this enterprise, "happy and blessed" (344b7–c1).

Socrates' first argument aims to undermine this picture, showing that crafts are designed to serve the interests of that which they are naturally set over (341d8–9). And if Thrasymachus

⁶⁷ καθ' ὅσον τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὁ προσαγορεύομεν αὐτόν

⁶⁸ The Eleatic Stranger makes a similar point in the *Politicus*: that a private citizen is worthy to be called a doctor and king only if he possesses the relevant expertise (*Plt.* 259a1–b5).

is committed to ruling as a craft, then he must accept that a true ruler seeks and provides what is advantageous to his subjects, rather than himself.

Socrates' first argument can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Each craft seeks and provides what is advantageous to that which it is by nature set over.
- (2) Ruling is the craft that seeks and provides what is advantageous to its subjects, that which ruling is naturally set over.
- (3) Thrasymachus' ruler rules by seeking and providing what is advantageous to himself, not to his subjects.
- (4) Therefore, Thrasymachus' ruler is not practicing the craft of ruling.

Thrasymachus objects:

You think that shepherds and cowherds seek the good of their sheep and cattle, and fatten them and take care of them, looking to something other than their master's good and their own. Moreover, you believe that rulers in cities—true rulers, that is—think about their subjects differently than one does about sheep, and that night and day they think of something besides their own advantage (343b1–c1).

Commentators react to this argument in much of the same way as Thrasymachus, viewing Socrates' claim that craftsmen are somehow altruistic people who would voluntarily choose to promote others' interests to the detriment of their own to be very naïve and overly optimistic.⁶⁹ Thrasymachus (and mainstream interpreters) may be right to claim that there are rulers and shepherds who behave in this abusive way, but the challenge is to show that they are, as Thrasymachus claims, *true* rulers and shepherds. That is, it remains to be shown that this abusive behaviour is the way that crafts ought to be practiced. My reading is that while Socrates presents a demanding conception of craft and ruling, it is neither naïve nor overly optimistic. Rather it offers an effective answer to the Thrasymachean worldview.

The most controversial premise in Socrates' argument is (1) and he recognizes as much by offering two supporting points. The first supporting point comes from our 'star' passage in the *origins view* of craft: the claim that crafts are discovered and developed to meet some specific areas of human need. This claim secures from Thrasymachus the agreement that

⁶⁹ Cross & Woozely (1964): "it is difficult to take seriously his claim that every skilled activity is altruistic" (50). Annas (1981): "He overstates his case: he claims that all skills are practised for the benefit of their objects and not of their practitioners, and this seems absurdly optimistic (49).

crafts, as bodies of knowledge, are naturally oriented (*pephuken*) towards some specific area (341e8–9). Thrasymachus may be eager to point out that shepherds are more likely to seek their own good than the good of the sheep. But even he must admit that shepherding, as a body of knowledge, would not exist unless there were shepherding needs which made the discovery and development of such a craft necessary.⁷⁰ It would be empirically false for Thrasymachus to claim that the craft of shepherding is naturally oriented towards procuring wealth for the practitioner. Hence, Socrates is well-reasoned to object that Thrasymachus is treating the shepherd “like a money-maker rather than a shepherd” (345d1). Thrasymachus is vulnerable to this objection because he has insisted on discussing the craftsmen in the precise sense and has previously agreed that craftsmen, precisely speaking, are not money-makers, but defined in reference to the function of their respective crafts (341c5–d10).

After establishing that each craft is naturally oriented towards that which it is set over, Socrates offers a second point in support of premise (1), the idea that crafts are complete or perfect (*teleios*) areas of expertise. The purpose of this argument is to eliminate the possibility that crafts are, in some way, naturally aimed toward providing what is advantageous for themselves. Socrates presents this argument as an exclusive disjunction: either crafts provide something advantageous for themselves or they provide something advantageous for their proper objects. Since crafts have no deficiencies and are complete or perfect, there is no need for them to seek what is advantageous for themselves but only that which they are naturally set over. This argument strikes most readers as dubious. It seems blatantly false to suggest that crafts have no further needs for improvement. This is especially true if we consider Socrates’ leading example of medicine, which is always in need of further discoveries to meet its goal. Thus, the idea that “there is no deficiency or error” (342b2–3) in medicine or any other craft seems plainly false.

To this, we can answer that by characterizing crafts as complete or perfect, Socrates means that they are self-sufficient. Socrates first contrasts medicine with the human body by

⁷⁰ Book II describes the purposes of cowherds, shepherds, and other herdsman as providing cows to farmers for ploughing, oxen for builders to haul their materials, and fleece for weavers and cobblers (370d9–e3).

describing the latter as “deficient, rather than self-sufficient” (341e5–6).⁷¹ The body has needs which it is unable to provide for itself in order for it to perform its characteristic activity. Then Socrates compares medicine to the sensory organs. He asks: “does a craft need some further virtue, as the eyes are in need of sight, and the ears of hearing, so that another craft is needed to seek and provide what is advantageous to them?” (342a2–5). The reasoning here is that in order for the eyes to perform their characteristic activity of seeing, they require an additional thing, namely sight—the capacity for seeing. This indicates to us that Socrates is only committed to the claim that medicine does not need something else—another body of knowledge—to supply what it lacks in order for it to perform the work for which it is naturally suited. This is true even if we grant that medicine, as we know it now, may not be capable of treating every kind of disease. But as a body of knowledge, medicine is complete or perfect in the sense that it is self-sufficient. It contains within itself the exhaustive means necessary for bringing about health. There may be new discoveries to make, but it would be on account of medicine and its principles for making such discoveries, rather than another craft. Again, Socrates’ aim is to establish the nature of medicine as a self-sufficient body of knowledge, rather than the state as it is currently possessed by some particular group of practitioners at some point in time. So, if the crafts are complete or perfect in the sense of being self-sufficient, then it is not appropriate for them to seek what is advantageous for themselves. And hence, we are left with the second option of our exclusive disjunction, that crafts do not seek what is advantageous for themselves, but “only that of which” they are the crafts.

Both of Socrates’ claims in support of premise (1) work together to show that crafts are designed, by nature, to seek and provide what is advantageous for that which they are naturally set over. And if Thrasymachus is committed to ruling as a craft, then we can see that the argument works effectively to undermine his account. The foundation of any political institution exists for serving some necessary need for our social and civic life (e.g. the need to live together harmoniously, protection from wild life and natural disasters, a social agreement for sharing benefits and burdens, etc.). The discovery and development of the craft of ruling occurs for meeting such specific need. In addition, ruling is a self-

⁷¹ ὅτι σῶμά ἐστιν πονηρὸν καὶ οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖ αὐτῷ τοιοῦτω

sufficient body of knowledge. Its exercise does not depend on some additional governing body of knowledge to supplement what it lacks in order for it to perform its work. Socrates' first argument sets out to show the *right* way for rulers to rule on the basis of a particular understanding of the nature of craft. His argument is *not*, as is often supposed, intended to establish the altruism of rulers and craftsmen. Now as I pointed out in my account of the *origins view* of craft, we have independent reasons for thinking that craftsmen would be motivated to practice their crafts in the ways that they were intended, given the right training and that they meet the sufficient level of expertise.

However, the strength of Socrates' first argument is that it points to the most salient flaw in Thrasymachus' account of ruling. Thrasymachus is in effect claiming that the *right* way to practice the crafts is to use them as a means for personal gain. Sure his view might have a certain realist appeal by capturing the ways some rulers and experts behave. But his argument fails to work as a normative claim about why we should think that this behaviour is a good one or one that qualifies them as true rulers and shepherds, as Thrasymachus puts it. We have more reasons to side with Socrates by thinking that Thrasymachean rulers and craftsmen are really just "money-makers" disguised as doctors, shepherds, and rulers.

As I noted earlier, what appeals to Thrasymachus about the idea of craft is that it enables practitioners to successfully and infallibly bring about a certain result. This is the way that most mainstream scholar interprets the idea of craft in Book I. Yet, it is clear that we are given a more fleshed out view of why Socrates thinks that ordinary crafts illuminate ruling more than they detract from it. And if rulers are practicing the craft of ruling, they would be just. On the other hand, Thrasymachus lacks a fully developed view of the nature of craft. He could very well respond that although crafts were originally discovered for meeting specific needs, they have since evolved to take on new or multiple aims. One of these aims is to satisfy the interests of their practitioners, given facts about human nature and our society. But Thrasymachus does not pursue this line of reasoning and this ultimately limits his account of ruling as he is forced by Socrates to accept a host of other claims about the nature of craft. The ideal tyrant may be a ruler in the putative sense, but he is not engaged in the craft of ruling but the only procuring material wealth and power for himself. So Socrates is justified to conclude that "no one in any position of rule, insofar as he is a ruler,

seeks or orders what is advantageous to himself, but what is advantageous to his subjects; the ones of whom he is himself the craftsman” (342e7–10).

Still we might think that Thrasymachus has a point, that the argument fails to distinguish between a craft aiming at its own advantage and it aiming at the advantage of its craftsman.⁷² We might grant that crafts are self-sufficient, but their practitioners are clearly not. And a craft that aims at the advantage of its practitioner does not clearly indicate that it is deficient in some way. So Thrasymachus is still able to claim that ruling provides what is advantageous for its practitioners, even though there is no need for ruling to seek what is advantageous for the craft itself. Socrates’ next argument aims to address this worry.

2.5. Socrates’ Second Argument: The Craft of Wage-Earning (345e–347e)

If the point of crafts (including ruling) is to benefit their practitioners, then why are craftsmen provided wages for their services? This is the crucial question posed to Thrasymachus in Socrates’ second argument on wage-earning. The argument begins by introducing another important principle in Plato’s understanding of craft—the idea that each craft is uniquely individuated. Socrates begins by stating that every craft differs from another on the basis of possessing a unique power (*dunamis*) for supplying us a product or result that benefits us “in its own peculiar way, not common with the others” (346a6–7). For instance, medicine provides us with health, and sailing provides us with safety at sea (346a7–8). It is on account of each of their respective powers for providing such results that we recognize medicine and navigation as the distinct crafts that they are. Given that doctors, navigators, and all craftsmen for that matter receive wages for their practices (346c5), and that wages are not the distinct result of any of their respective crafts, wages must result from their collective practice of some additional craft, namely wage-earning (346c9–11). If we take away their wages, Socrates notes, craftsmen would still provide some kind of benefit in virtue of being doctors and housebuilders (346d1–e2). The point of the argument is to show that practitioners are materially benefitted from a separate craft, rather than their own respective crafts. In doing so, Socrates is again challenging the

⁷² White (1979), 67.

Thrasymachean conception of craft by maintaining that crafts (when considered apart from wage-earning) benefit that which they are naturally set over, rather than their practitioners.

Many interpreters are quick to point out that the argument tends to pose more problems than it solves them.⁷³ For one, it appears to undermine the view that Socrates has just painstakingly tried to establish previously on the nature of craft, that no craft benefits its practitioners. But now we are told that the craft of wage-earning in this regard. This makes the argument appear *ad hoc*. What are we to make of the craft of wage-earning? Moreover, does the argument provide a satisfying answer to Thrasymachus?

In response to these questions, it must first be conceded that it is possible that Socrates may never have arrived at a fully developed view on the craft of wage-earning in the *Republic*, though the topic of wages does feature in Book II's construction of the city (371e), and the education of the Guardians in Book IV. However, the argument as it stands is not as artificial as it might initially appear. Here it is important to consider again our 'star' passage from the *origins view* of craft (341e2-7). Socrates' core claim is that each craft, as a body of knowledge, is discovered out of necessity in order to fulfill some specific area of deficiency. In doing so, each craft offers a unique benefit to us, not shared with others (346a6-8). Socrates' argument here on wage-earning fits consistently with this picture that he has been presenting. The existence of a body of knowledge that provides wages clearly serves a necessary function in any society. It provides incentives for people to take up specialized professions which are themselves vital. Craftsmen are also not self-sufficient. They cannot provide for themselves all their material needs while simultaneously pursuing and practicing their own crafts (Cf. Book II 369e-370c). And so they must also practice the craft of wage-earning, which "accompanies" (346d4) their own crafts by benefitting them. So while wage-earning is put forth as an anomalous craft, it is done so on the basis of claims that are consistently at the core of Socrates' views on craft in Book I.

The argument would fare better if craftsmen were not characterized as the practitioners of wage-earning, but rather as the object upon which the craft is exercised. Wage-earning

⁷³ Barney (2006), 52.

provides what is advantageous to craftsmen by giving them wages in much the same way that medicine provides health for bodies. This would avoid the problem of characterizing wage-earning as an anomalous craft and would maintain Socrates' central point, that crafts seek to promote the advantage of that which they are naturally set over. In any case, as it stands, the point of the argument is clear. The fact that wage-earning exists as a collective practice indicates to us that crafts are not intended to promote the practitioners' interests. Wage-earning provides wages to craftsmen and this is how they are in fact materially benefitted.

The wage-earning argument provides an effective answer to Thrasymachus *if* we read it as supplementing Socrates' preceding argument on the nature of craft. This is clearly how Socrates intends his argument to be read, as evidenced by his speech to Thrasymachus at 345b8–d1. He insists that they adhere to the discussion of *true* craftsmen as they had agreed before. And this means defining them in reference to the function of their respective crafts and not, as Thrasymachus has done, examining them as they behave in the world.

By putting forth the craft of wage-earning, Socrates is implicitly conceding that the practitioners' own interests must be taken into consideration. The preceding argument has focused on the nature of craft over practitioners—an important point of difference between Socrates and Thrasymachus. But Thrasymachus' description of the self-serving shepherd raises an important issue for Socrates' view: what benefits will craftsmen receive if their own crafts are designed to serve others? And if no benefits are in place, then what would motivate anyone to take up crafts in the first place? Wage-earning provides an answer to this issue by showing that craftsmen are in fact benefitted through the exercise of a separate craft.

The argument also offers a direct objection to Thrasymachus' characterization of the shepherd and ruler. Socrates asserts that while it is possible for crafts to produce results which they are *not* naturally oriented towards, such as becoming healthy while sailing, we would not call sailing the craft of medicine on account that it happens to make us healthy (346b1–6). Though the claim is not made explicit here, Socrates elaborates a little later that the “function or proper work (*ergon*) of each thing is what it alone can do or what it does

better than anything else” (353b2–4). This claim explains why health, though it can be brought about through sailing, is not its natural end since medicine can effect health better than sailing (presumably because medicine is discovered with an eye towards health). Similarly, we can infer that though ruling can provide rulers with material benefits which Thrasymachus has been describing (e.g. power to control property, wealth, and citizens), it is a categorical mistake to ascribe these benefits to ruling. Thrasymachus has mistaken the incidental features of ruling for that which ruling is naturally oriented towards accomplishing. Taken together with Socrates’ first argument, the wage-earning argument aims to undermine Thrasymachus’ view of ruling based on the nature of craft, with the small concession that craftsmen’s own interests must be considered.

2.6. Socrates’ Third Argument: Craftsmen and Non-Pleonexia (349b1–350c)

Now we come to Socrates’ final argument in Book I that relies on the idea of craft. By this point of the discussion, it has become clear that a significant claim in Thrasymachus’ view on justice is that it is less profitable than injustice. The just person, he points out, always gets less than the unjust person as evidenced by how they each fare in contracts and in their own public and private affairs (343d2–e7). In fact, Thrasymachus boldly claims, justice is really just a kind of “high-minded simplicity” (348c12) and it is injustice that should be identified with virtue and wisdom (348e1–4). This radical rejection of conventional beliefs (348e8) is in part based on Thrasymachus’ view that the unjust person, embodied by his ideal tyrant, has the “great power to outdo everyone else” (344a1–2)⁷⁴. And this power to “outdo” or “overreach” (*pleonektein*; *pleon echein*) is a true indication of one’s superior intelligence and represents the qualities that make one good and praiseworthy.

Socrates’ counter-argument once again proceeds by drawing a comparison between the just person and the expert craftsman. The argument runs (roughly) as follows:

⁷⁴ τὸν μέγιστα δυνάμενον πλεονεκτεῖν

- (1) A just person only wishes (and believes that he deserves) to outdo his opposite, an unjust person (349b1–c3), while the unjust person wishes (and believes that he deserves) to outdo everyone, both those who are like and unlike him (349c4–d2).
- (2) The expert craftsman does not seek to outdo or believes that he deserves to outdo other experts in his craft, only non-experts (349e1–350a5), while the non-expert seeks to outdo and believes that he deserves to outdo everyone (350a11–b2).
- (3) Therefore, the just person resembles the expert craftsman while the unjust person resembles the non-expert.
- (4) The expert craftsman is intelligent (*phronimos*, 349e4) and knowledgeable (*epistemôn*, 350a7) in his craft, which makes him wise (*sophos*, 350b3) and good (*agathos*, 349e6)⁷⁵, while the non-expert is *un*-knowledgeable (350a11–b1), which makes him ignorant (*amathês*) and bad (350b10).
- (5) The just and unjust person is the kind of person they each resemble (349d11–12; 350c7–8). Hence, the just person is wise and good while the unjust person is ignorant and bad (350b7–11).
- (6) Therefore, justice is virtue and wisdom, while injustice is vice and ignorance (350d4–5).

This argument is perhaps the most poorly received of the series. It is criticized for being obscure, obviously fallacious, and generally unsatisfying as it relies on a weak analogy between the just person and the craftsman. One major objection levelled against the argument is that Socrates relies on two senses of “outdoing”. In one sense, the unjust person outdoes others by being able to get more of a share of good things, while everyone else gets less. This is what Thrasymachus means when he points to the tyrant’s ability to bring whole cities under his power (348d5–6). However, when the idea of “outdoing” is applied to the crafts, Socrates takes it to mean performing the craft well or badly, in an objectively determined way. By exploiting these two senses of “outdoing”, it is argued, Socrates has not

⁷⁵ As we have already seen in Chapter 1, Plato is notoriously flexible with knowledge-denoting terms, especially between “*technê*”, “*epistêmê*”, and “*sophia*”. In this argument, Socrates seems to be using “*technê*” as a species of “*epistêmê*”, hence the more generalized conclusion at 350a6–9. Socrates’ use of the term “good” here might also be troubling. We might accuse him of confusing different sense of goodness: being “good at” a craft is not the same as being morally “good” the way that a just person is. See White (1979) for an influential defence of the claim that Plato is not open to this kind of objection about goodness because his commitment to a single Form of the Good “does not allow for any irreducible differences between notions of goodness” (46–48). For the purposes of this chapter, I set aside the larger issues with regard to Plato’s account of the Good in the *Republic*. However, with respect to this argument, I believe that Socrates ascribes the term good here to the craftsmen in virtue of their possession of knowledge. And with respect to the just person, this is also the source of his goodness. The just person is good in virtue of his possession of the relevant knowledge.

successfully shown that injustice is not a virtue on the basis that the craftsman does not outdo those who are like him.⁷⁶

In what follows, I argue that Socrates' argument has not been well understood. Socrates' position is best understood when we see that his argument is a direct response to Thrasymachus' claim that the unjust person has good judgment (*euboulia*) and displays intelligence and goodness by acting unjustly (348d1–4). His argument works by drawing a comparison between the attitudes and behaviour of the craftsman—who is identified here by Socrates as possessing the qualities of an intelligent and knowledgeable person in virtue of his craft—to the attitudes and behaviour of the just person. The upshot of the argument is that, due to the nature and structure of knowledge, those who are truly intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, and good are *not* motivated by *pleonexia* to outdo everyone. Contrary to what Thrasymachus claims, it is the just person who displays the attitude and behaviour of those who are intelligent, rather than the unjust person. Moreover, I suggest that the idea of “outdoing” for Socrates refers to the desire to possess the power attached to being an epistemic authority. The notions of power and authority help us clarify the kinship between outdoing in the context crafts and outdoing in the context of justice and injustice.⁷⁷

To make my case, it is useful to begin with an important remark from Socrates in the middle of the argument:

In any branch of knowledge or ignorance, do you think that a knowledgeable person would intentionally try to outdo other knowledgeable people or say something better or different than they do, rather than doing or saying the very same thing as those like him? (350a6–9).⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Santas (2010), 28–29; Cross & Woosley (1964), 52; Annas (1981), 51–52; Reeve (1988), 20;

⁷⁷ We should also add that Socrates' argument is a continuation of the effort to examine the shared view that ruling is a craft. Thus far, we have not given any indication that Thrasymachus has abandoned his view that his ideal ruler practices a craft by accomplishing injustice on a large scale. Thrasymachus may hold a different view of the nature of craft and what constitutes a true craftsman, but Socrates is justified to draw from craft experts to support his argument.

⁷⁸ Περὶ πάσης δὴ ὄρα ἐπιστήμης τε καὶ ἀνεπιστημοσύνης εἴ τίς σοι δοκεῖ ἐπιστήμων ὀστισοῦν πλείω ἂν ἐθέλῃν αἰρεῖσθαι ἢ ὅσα ἄλλος ἐπιστήμων ἢ πράττειν ἢ λέγειν, καὶ οὐ ταῦτὰ τῷ ὁμοίῳ ἑαυτῷ εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν πράξιν.

There are several important things to note about this passage. To begin with, Socrates takes himself to be making a *general* claim about knowledge and a knowledgeable person on account of the examples drawn from crafts. Socrates began the argument by noting that a craftsman (musician, doctor) is intelligent (*phronimon*) and good (*agathon*) in the subject matter of his respective craft (349e4, e8). This is what distinguishes him from the one who is ignorant in a craft, the non-expert. And in being a craftsman, he does not engage in pleonexia towards his fellow craftsmen, but only towards those who are non-experts. We may object that Socrates is not warranted to make this generalization on account of a few examples. But Socrates' point is that the actions and beliefs of a knowledgeable person (in whatever subject matter he happens to be an expert) are prescribed by his knowledge. Whether this is in the way that the musician tunes his lyre or the way that the doctor treats the sick, the craftsman always does what is dictated by the particular branch of knowledge of which he is an expert. I have already drawn our attention to the close relationship between the craftsman and his craft in the *origins view*. I have argued that in Socrates' view, ideal craftsmen are the *personifications* of their crafts. I have also pointed out that the process of a mastering a craft is *transformative*. Here, we can see these ideas at work. Socrates is drawing our attention to the way that knowledge affects us, not just in what we know but in our attitude and our behaviour. One of the effects of being a knowledgeable person, according to Socrates, is that one does not aim to outdo his fellow expert, but only those who are ignorant.

Of course the important question is: why? There is a kind of curious vagueness in the way that Socrates discusses the notion of outdoing in the crafts. We are never explicitly told just how precisely the craftsman outdoes the non-craftsmen, with the exception of the brief comment in above passage, that he might intentionally try to say something better or different than they do. Scholars generally understand the idea of "outdoing" as involving some combination of acquisitiveness and competitiveness. It is the desire to have more at the expense of others having less.⁷⁹ But what precisely does the craftsman want more of over the non-craftsman? And why does he not desire to have more of it when it comes to his

⁷⁹ Barney (2006), 53.

fellow craftsman? And why does outdoing a non-craftsman involve saying something better or different?

We might initially be tempted to answer that the craftsman obviously desires to outdo others by competing for more money or some other form of material good. But this does not explain why he might only choose to compete for such things with those who are non-experts, and not his fellow craftsmen. If the goods in question are in fact material, then one might think that the craftsman would be especially keen to have more of them over his fellow craftsmen, whom he might view as direct competitors.

Instead, I answer that “outdoing” in this argument refers to something like the desire to possess the power attached to being an epistemic authority. Several times throughout the refutation of Thrasymachus, Socrates characterizes the crafts as *ruling* over that which they are naturally set over. These claims suggest that he views all crafts as engaging in a kind of rule.⁸⁰ Commentators have typically dismissed these claims or found them puzzling.⁸¹ But Socrates has good grounds for thinking so. Crafts rule in virtue of possessing the power to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience in their respective areas of expertise. Medicine is a ruler of bodies (342d7–8), for Socrates, because he sees it as the authoritative branch of knowledge for deciding what is best for the human body. A doctor who acts in accordance with the dictates of medicine is then in a position of authority with respect to the health of the body.⁸² This authority is an epistemic one, as opposed to, say, one based on force.

⁸⁰ See for example: “Now, surely, Thrasymachus, the crafts rule over and are stronger than the things of which they are the crafts” (342c7–8); “We agreed that a doctor in the precise sense is a ruler of bodies” (342d7–8); “a ship’s captain in the precise sense is a ruler of sailors” (342d10–e1; cf. 341d2–4); “But, Thrasymachus, don’t you realize that in other kinds of rule (τὰς ἄλλας ἀρχάς) no one wants to rule for its own sake, but they ask for pay, thinking their ruling will benefit not themselves but their subjects” (345e5–346a1). Socrates then follows up this claim by pointing to medicine and navigation, suggesting that these crafts are the examples of the “other kinds of rule” he is referring to (346a6–8).

⁸¹ For example, Parry (1996) calls the claim that all crafts rule in Book I “a little puzzling” and “such an odd statement” (16–17).

⁸² We will see Plato qualify this claim from another perspective in the next two chapters.

The idea of epistemic authority helps us explain why Socrates maintains that craftsmen do not wish or believe that they deserve to outdo their fellow craftsmen. Socrates attributes this non-pleonetic feature to both the motivation and the attitude of the craftsmen. I shall show that the idea of epistemic authority can account for both. To begin with, on Socrates' view, true craftsmen are in some sense fungible. There is no distinguishing feature that separates one craftsman's manner of exercising his authority from another. This is because their power to issue commands is prescribed by their crafts (347a1–3, 350a1–2). Their authority is grounded in the objectivity of their craft and therefore their actions and instructions are always unanimous. On this view, craft is not a private but a communal endeavour. To practice a craft is to participate in the collective efforts of a community of people who have studied and trained in the same branch of knowledge. In this way, craft is unifying rather than competitive.⁸³

Let us take the craft of music, Socrates' other leading example in this argument. If a musician attempted to outdo another musician by competing for the authority on how to tune a lyre, it would turn out to be a fruitless task since he would be competing to issue the *same* set of commands (e.g. what constitutes harmony) as his fellow musician. This is fruitless because it is not possible for him to have more power on account of other musicians having less by saying or doing the same thing as them. Outdoing his fellow musicians requires him to distinguish himself in some way as being better and more capable. For the same reason, Socrates maintains that a craftsman does not *believe* that he deserves to outdo his fellow craftsman either. In the craftsman's mind, both of them are acting as their craft prescribes. If a musician did believe that he deserves to outdo another musician, he would either have to believe that his fellow musician is mistaken about some fact in music and therefore not acting from the craft of music or that he himself is motivated to have more power by deviating from the dictates of music. In both of these cases, the outdoing occurs as the result of one person not acting from his craft and therefore not acting as a true craftsman. As Socrates makes it clear in this argument, outdoing does not occur between two craftsmen.

⁸³ *Pace* Barney (2006), 53. It is true that crafts are typically characterized as competitive in the ancient world. However, I do not believe that we have evidence for thinking that Plato viewed them that way. More often, Plato tended to attribute the competitive feature of crafts to practitioners in other disciplines, such as orators, sophists, and rhapsodes.

We can now see why a craftsman wishes to and believes that he deserves to outdo a non-craftsman, and why this outdoing involves saying something better or different (350a8–9). A non-craftsman is by definition someone who is ignorant in some craft. As such, he lacks the epistemic authority to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience in that area of expertise. If he attempted to exercise his authority (as Socrates seems to assume in this argument), then he would rule on the basis of ignorance. A craftsman wishes to and believes that he deserves to outdo a non-craftsman on the basis that he is the one who possesses the real expertise. And he precisely wants the power to do so on account of the non-craftsman having less. This outdoing involves saying something better or different because the dictates that originate from knowledge and expertise are clearly different and better than the dictates that originate from ignorance.

On the other hand, we can also see why a non-craftsman wishes to and believes that he deserves to outdo everyone. The non-craftsman's attempts to gain and exercise his authority are not grounded in knowledge-related reasons. Most likely, his attempts are grounded in the desire to satisfy his own interests. As such, he is not unified with others in the same way that a craftsman is unified with his fellow practitioners in virtue of their shared expertise. So, to the non-craftsman, everyone poses a threat to his efforts to satisfy his own interests. The upshot of Socrates' argument is that authority is not a zero-sum good between those who possess the relevant expertise, but only in cases that involve the ignorant.

This reading not only makes good sense of the text but also provides us with the resources to bridge the gap between outdoing in the context of crafts and outdoing in the context of justice and injustice. We have already seen that there is an important sense in which Socrates understands all crafts as engaging in a kind of rule. I have argued that this ruling is to be understood as possessing the epistemic authority over some area of expertise. This point naturally lends itself to the discussion of political rule. Political rulers, we might say, possess the ultimate authority—the power to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience—over the city and its citizens. The Thrasymachean tyrant is motivated to possess this authority because it puts him in a position to have access to material goods and, tacitly, the freedom of self-governance. The tyrant is not subject to the constraints of conventional

morality and the laws of others. He is in a position to dictate and achieve what he judges to be in his best interest. And this ability to be completely unjust is to Thrasymachus, “stronger, freer, and more masterly than justice” (344c5–6). So while the tyrant is interested in accumulating all the material resources at the expense of others having less, the more accurate claim is that he desires to be in a *position* that enables him have access to these material goods. And it is this power or authority attached to political rule that is the object of the tyrant’s pleonexia. He wishes to possess this power (and believes that he deserves it) on account of everyone having less.

The just ruler is also interested in the power of political authority but for more complex reasons. Socrates famously claims in Book I that good people do not seek to rule for money or honour, but for fear of being ruled by someone worse than themselves (347c2–5). They approach ruling as something necessary since it cannot be turned over to those better than or even as good as themselves (347c6–d2). In an ideal city of good people, the citizens would compete in order not to rule, because it would be clear to them that true rulers by nature seek the advantage of their subjects rather than themselves (347d2–6). And knowing this, the citizens would rather be benefited than to take on the burden of benefiting others (347d6–8). While Socrates does not present this passage about the just rulers’ motivations as part of his argument on pleonexia, we can see that this description is consistent with what he goes on to claim about outdoing in the context of justice.

The just person does not wish to nor believe that he deserves to outdo those who are like him, that is, those who possess the relevant qualifications of being an epistemic authority. True rulers are in this sense fungible. It matters less *who* rules as long as the ruler understands the nature of political rule and acts and orders as ruling prescribes. However, the just person is motivated to outdo those who are unlike him—those who are unjust and seeking ruling for their own gain. He wishes and believes that he deserves to possess the power of political authority at the expense of the unjust person having less. On this interpretation, then, the desire to possess the power of authority is what connects outdoing in the crafts and outdoing in the context of justice and injustice. For Socrates, the basis of this outdoing is an epistemic one—the desire to see the person in charge rule according to the relevant expertise, whereas for Thrasymachus, this outdoing is motivated by self-

interest. I now turn to consider why Socrates' argument from non-pleonexia offers a compelling response to Thrasymachus.

It is clear that for Thrasymachus, the tyrant's ability to outdo everyone does not come exclusively from brute force but rather from intelligence. This is evidenced by Thrasymachus' claim that the unjust person displays good judgement (*euboulia*, 348d1–2) by acting unjustly, and that those who are able to be completely unjust are intelligent (*phronimoi*) and good (*agathoi*) (348d3–9). In Thrasymachus' eyes, the tyrant is someone who sees through conventional morality and understands that injustice profits. This insight and his ability to realize complete justice—subjecting entire cities and communities under his power—are worthy to be called wisdom and virtue (348e1–4).

The merit of Socrates' argument is that it shows that the kind of attitude and behaviour Thrasymachus attributes to the tyrant are not actually indicative of intelligence, wisdom, or good judgement. Those who are truly intelligent and knowledgeable (however humble their respective subject matter might be) are not engaged in power disputes, always attempting to best each other. Instead, the effects of the nature and structure of knowledge is as such that one is motivated to act as knowledge prescribes. Those who are truly knowledgeable understand that the rule of knowledge is what ultimately profits and they care to see that this is the case. To rule on the basis knowledge would produce a unifying relationship with other rulers in virtue of their shared expertise, rather than a pleonetic one. It is only from the stance of ignorance that one wishes and believes that he deserves to outdo everyone. At best, we can say that the tyrant's abilities indicate that he is cunning and skilled at deception.⁸⁴ But his attitude and behaviour are plainly at odds with those who are knowledgeable. Thrasymachus sees himself as offering moral insight by pointing to how an intelligent person would behave. But in fact, there is a glaring disparity between the tyrant's so-called intelligence and those who are intelligent in virtue of their possession of a craft in some area of expertise. And Socrates' argument works by drawing our attention to this disparity. The tyrant thinks and behaves in a way that is contrary to intelligent and knowledgeable people.

⁸⁴ At 344a8, Thrasymachus describes the tyrant as operating "through stealth or force" (λάθρα καὶ βίη). The connotation is that the tyrant rules by force and under-handed tactics.

This conclusion may seem small relative to the grand conclusion that Socrates ultimately draws, that justice is virtue and wisdom and injustice is vice and ignorance (350d4–5). And this is the limitation of Socrates' argument. He does not sufficiently address the depth of Thrasymachus' rejection of conventional morality, that one might be deeply committed to the belief that injustice is a virtue and understand justice as genuinely harmful. However, the harsh reception of Socrates' argument has minimized its merits. When correctly understood, the argument is internally coherent and the appeal to crafts illuminates key features of the just ruler's motivations as an epistemic authority—themes that remain important in the remainder of the *Republic*.

2.7. Closing Remarks

It is often protested that Socrates' non-pleonetic argument fails to recognize that the unjust man has fundamentally different priorities and aims than the just man.⁸⁵ Thrasymachus clearly would not recognize the terms of comparison between his tyrant and other craftsmen. In fact, he might not even to mind that the tyrant's attitude and behaviour stand in opposition to conventional indicators of knowledge and intelligence. Thrasymachus sees the attainment of power and wealth as the ultimate measure of happiness and this commitment shapes all his other views, including the nature of craft and ruling, and ultimately how an intelligent person should live. In disarming this general worldview, the refutation of Thrasymachus and the arguments of Book I are *insufficient*. Hence, we are invited by Socrates at the end of Book I to see that the arguments have been unsatisfying in some way. These arguments fail to persuade Thrasymachus and leave Socrates wanting because Thrasymachus' rejection of conventional morality is so profound and deeply entrenched in a certain view of human nature and society—a view that begins at a radically different starting point than Socrates. And this is in some way a consequence of the kind of society and political current in which Thrasymachus lived, one that is responsible for breeding such a brutal and self-interested outlook.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Annas (1981), 51–52; Barney (2006), 53.

⁸⁶ Though it extends beyond the scope of this thesis to give a thorough defence of the important role craft continues to play in the remainder of the *Republic* (and elsewhere), it is useful to note

However, for the purpose of this chapter, I have shown that Socrates' arguments from craft against both Polemarchus and Thrasymachus are not as deeply flawed as they are commonly supposed to be. Rather, Socrates' arguments proceed from a specific understanding of craft—what I called the *origins view*. This view of craft is strongly supported by the textual evidence of *Republic* I and is consistent with Plato's broader commitments to the idea of craft elsewhere. When correctly understood, Socrates' appeal to crafts in Book I is *sufficient* in the sense that they demonstrate to Polemarchus the flaws of conceiving justice in an ordinary and unreflective manner. They are also *sufficient* in showing that Thrasymachus' commitment to ruling as a craft should lead him to think that the ideal ruler is committed to justice, rather than injustice. Finally, Socrates' arguments from craft highlight for us the important ways in which Plato understood the just ruler as an expert of ruling, some of these ways include his attitude and behaviour towards other rulers, his relationship to ruling, and the nature of ruling and its proper role within a city. This interpretation thus helps us make better sense of the text and yields a new appreciation of the strength and seriousness of Socrates' arguments. In the larger context of this thesis, I hope to have shown that *Republic* I is not a viable piece of evidence for ascribing to Plato the view that he was critical towards the idea of craft as model of knowledge for virtue and ruling.

that we continue to find Socrates' relying on the idea of craft to illuminate crucial theses in the *Republic*. Some notable examples include the comparison of ruling to the doctor's treatment of disease in Book IV (444d3–10); Book VI's famous ship of state passage (487e–489a) where the relationship between the philosophers and the city are presented mainly through analogy to the navigator and his ship; Book X's discussion of mimetic poetry (601b–602c) is put forth via the distinction of three crafts, using/making/intimating. What is especially interesting about Book X's discussion is that the three kinds of craftsmen are presented as possessing knowledge (*epistêmê*), correct belief, and ignorance respectively (601d8–602a10). Briefly, my own view is that the idea of craft continues to serve as a viable model of knowledge in the remainder of *Republic*, useful for articulating the *structure* of the expertise of the just ruler. However, in absence of the right context, psychological investigations of the nature of the person, and an account of what precisely is the object of the ruler's expertise (i.e. Form of the Good), appeal to crafts cannot sufficiently answer Thrasymachus' challenge. In my view, this is what contributes to the less frequent discussions of crafts in comparison to Book I: Socrates has to go beyond the structure of expertise and provide the right context for which the expertise of the ruler can be understood. See Schwab (2016) and Harte (2017) for interesting interpretations that rely substantively on the idea of craft/expertise to make sense of Book V's crucial account of knowledge and belief.

Chapter 3

3. Architectonic Knowledge in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*

In Chapters 1 and 2, I examined the ways in which ordinary crafts serve as a model of knowledge for Plato's conception of virtue. This is just *one* important aspect of the relationship between craft and virtue. In the second half of this thesis (Chapters 3 and 4), I turn my attention to another important aspect of the relationship. In several key texts, we find Plato presenting virtue (especially wisdom and justice) not as analogous to the crafts, but rather as the sort of political knowledge or expertise (*politikê*) fit to preside over them in an architectonic role. The overarching goal of Chapters 3 and 4 is to demonstrate the important ways in which Plato's account of political rule is shaped by his understanding of the crafts. In contrast to the first two chapters, Plato's goal in the texts I survey in this chapter and next is to articulate how virtue relates to the crafts understood as fields of expertise. In serving this goal, Plato focuses less on the crafts' idealized features (though this focus is still present) but more on their limitations. In the conclusion of this thesis, I will discuss how I see these two distinct focuses fitting together.

The idea that the nature of political rule should be understood as an architectonic form of knowledge, directed at the good and tasked with the management of ordinary crafts, is a prominent theme in Plato's mature political works. According to the *Politicus*, a ruler is akin to an "*architecôn*", a master builder who is not a worker himself but manages subordinate workers by providing understanding rather than manual labour (*Plt.* 259e8, 305c10–d5).⁸⁷ Similarly in the *Republic*, a central task of the philosopher-king is to arrange the practice and products of all other crafts in light of his knowledge of the Good (*Resp.* 505a–b3).⁸⁸

In this chapter, I examine this theme in the context of some of Plato's early dialogues—*Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Euthydemus*. Drawing from the *Laches*, I show that the idea of an architectonic form of knowledge as the basis for political rule grows out Plato's concern

⁸⁷ For a detailed analysis of the architectonic feature of *politikê* in the *Politicus*, see Lane (1998), 139–146. For a general survey of this theme in the Platonic corpus, see Schofield (2006), 136–185 and Sprague (1976).

⁸⁸ For a detailed analysis of architectonic knowledge in the *Republic* and its relationship to Aristotle's own conception of *politikê*, see Barney (2007).

with the question of how virtue can remain authoritative in guiding our actions in the face of specialization. This question concerning the appropriate scope of virtue and the nature of ordinary expertise sets in motion the idea for Plato that any knowledge fit for promoting human welfare must be fit to reign over the crafts in the appropriate way. Plato explores what this knowledge might look like and how precisely it shall preside over the crafts in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*.

In both works, there is a growing emphasis towards integrating the search for individual virtues with a larger investigation on the nature of political rule. In the *Charmides*, the search for temperance (*sôphrosunê*) leads to a larger discussion on what sort of knowledge would provide the greatest benefit for cities. Here, I argue that Plato develops two competing views of happiness—what I call *happiness as living knowledgeably* and *happiness as goodness*—in order to establish that the kind of knowledge fit for political rule must provide a normative target for all other knowledge undertakings. We learn that a happy society is not one merely constituted by a collection of genuine expertise (though this remains an important goal), but one in which different areas of expertise are oriented towards some larger goal of value provided by the knowledge of good and bad.

In the *Euthydemus*, Plato continues to demonstrate his interest in the political facets of virtue. The search for the content of wisdom and the producer of happiness is eventually revealed to be the search for the “cause of right action in the state” (291c10–11). Whereas the *Charmides* focuses on the right target that an architectonic conception of political rule should provide, the *Euthydemus* examines what the architectonic political ruler ought to know. In this context, Plato presents us with one of the most important ideas in architectonic thinking, the distinction between the user and the maker. I shall argue that what prompts the identification of the kingly craft with wisdom and knowledge of correct use is its standing as the most sovereign knowledge in the land. It becomes clear that, for Plato, the sort of knowledge fit to bring about happiness must be the sort that is teleologically superordinate to all bodies of knowledge. Thus conceived, the central task of the political ruler is to utilize his knowledge of correct use to guide the practice of craftsmen—the ‘makers’ of the materials of a good life—in order to bring about a happy city.

3.1. The Scope of Virtue in the *Laches*

The *Laches* dramatizes an investigation into the nature of courage between Socrates and two prominent generals, Nicias and Laches. In one crucial discussion (194d–195d), we learn that ordinary crafts pose a unique challenge to the scope of virtue. Nicias, with the help of Socrates, proposes that courage is some sort of wisdom (*sophia*) and knowledge (*epistêmê*) (194d1–e8).⁸⁹ In particular, he claims that it is the knowledge of what is to be feared and hoped for in war and in all other circumstances (194e11–195a1). This definition prompts the following objection from Laches:

In case of illness, aren't the doctors the ones who know what is to be feared? Or do you think the courageous are the people who know? Perhaps you call the doctor the courageous...and I don't imagine you mean the farmers either, even though I do suppose they are the ones who know what is to be feared in farming. And all the other craftsmen know what is to be feared and hoped for in their particular crafts. But these people are in no way courageous all the same (195b3–c2).

The underlying problem targeted by Laches' objection here concerns the relationship between virtue, understood as knowledge of good and bad,⁹⁰ and the knowledge possessed by ordinary craftsmen (e.g. medicine, farming, navigation, etc). At first glance, we might not see why this is an important concern and why we should conceive of virtue in relation to ordinary expertise. However, the above passage brings to light an important problem. On the one hand, virtue is something that structures our life as a whole. It is not merely about knowing what is good and bad in the abstract. Rather virtue enables us to put such knowledge into effective use in our daily life, whatever circumstance in which we happen to find ourselves. In this particular case, courage is knowing the appropriate grounds of

⁸⁹ Here again, we see the flexibility of Plato's use of knowledge-denoting terms. Socrates and his interlocutors claim that courage is some sort of "*sophia*" and "*epistêmê*", then immediately introduce examples from crafts without controversy.

⁹⁰ Knowledge of hope and fear is eventually revealed to be the knowledge of good and bad, in particular knowledge of bad things that produce fear and good things that produce hope. This claim is brought out explicitly when Socrates takes over the examination, and especially clear at 198b: "we regard as fearful things those that produce fear, and as hopeful things those that do not produce fear; and fear is the expectation of a future bad...and ones inspiring hope are either future non-bads or future goods." (198b5–c4).

hope and fear not just in war but in all other circumstances.⁹¹ On the other hand, the crafts already appropriate their respective areas of expertise and their craftsmen are presumed to know what constitutes good and bad in each of their crafts. So where does virtue fit in all of this? How does the knowledge of good and bad relate to other bodies of knowledge? And how can it remain authoritative in guiding our actions where other forms of expertise rule? As Laches presses in the above passage, the craftsmen know the basis of hope and fear in their respective crafts, but this does not seem to us like courage at all. Either virtue is just the craftsmen's knowledge (which seems wrong) or it is something besides the knowledge of good and bad.

Nicias meets this objection (and thereby preserving the claim that courage is knowledge of good and bad) by arguing that in fact, ordinary crafts do not possess full sovereignty in their respective crafts:

He [Laches] thinks a doctor's knowledge of the sick amounts to something more than being able to describe health and disease, whereas I think their knowledge is restricted to just this. Do you suppose, Laches, that when a man's recovery is more to be feared than his illness, the doctors know this? Or don't you think there are many cases in which it would be better not to get up from an illness? Tell me this: do you maintain that in all cases to live is preferable? In many cases, is it not better to die? (195c7–d2).⁹²

Though a doctor *qua* doctor possesses the medical expertise for giving an account of health and disease, there remains a gap in his knowledge for making end-of-life care decisions. How should we understand this gap in the craftsman's knowledge? One possible explanation is to return to the issue we encountered in the last chapter on the value of crafts. David Roochnik, for instance, argues that this passage confirms that crafts are value-neutral: “[t]he doctor *qua* doctor knows only what health and disease are, and can thereby intervene in order to produce one or the other. He does not, however, know whether he *should* apply

⁹¹ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασι, 195a1

⁹² We find a parallel passage, cast in a more light, in the *Gorgias* on the limits of helmsmanship (*Grg.* 511d3–512b4). There, Socrates explains that the reason why the helmsman is modest about his craft (even though he has saved lives at sea) is because he understands that what ultimately makes those lives worth living is the condition of their souls—something that he does not know. I return to this passage in the next chapter.

or withhold his knowledge”.⁹³ Roochnik’s explanation of the passage here is correct, however, he is wrong to infer that the reason why the craftsman is limited is because the nature of crafts are value-neutral. The matter is more complicated than Roochnik reveals. As I argued in the *origins view* of crafts in the last chapter, there is strong evidence for thinking that Plato envisions crafts to be services, which intend to provide benefits to human life in some way. And thus, it is inaccurate to say that they are value-neutral. Rather, crafts occupy a kind of normative “middle-ground”. They are benefit-oriented but clearly lack a full conception of the good.

Rachel Barney offers another possible explanation of the gap in the craftsman’s expertise that captures this complexity. According to Barney, ordinary crafts are “normatively insufficient” in two ways.⁹⁴ The first relates to the craftsman’s understanding: “[t]he shoemaker must grasp the end of his craft...So he needs to understand what is good for feet; ultimately, this requires understanding the good of the body, which means understanding the good of the soul, which means understanding the human good as such...”.⁹⁵ As we will see in the next chapter on architectonic knowledge in the *Gorgias*, Plato presents us with just this argument. There, Socrates argues that all crafts must be ultimately subordinated to political rule because the latter is properly concerned with the good condition of the soul (*Grg.* 465d5–7).⁹⁶ In this respect, we might say that the doctor lacks the capacity to make end-of-life care decisions because the goal of his craft is teleologically subordinate. That is, the health of the body is ultimately done for the sake of the health of the soul. And since the doctor lacks knowledge of the latter, he only possesses the partial understanding he needs in order to exercise his craft in a beneficial way.

⁹³ Roochnik (1996), 100–101. Emphasis is in the original. Annas (1981), in a discussion on the value of crafts in general, remarks similarly: “a good doctor can heal the sick, but it is not his business as a doctor to question whether the sick ought to be healed. Of course, in his private capacity he may be faced with the question whether to let a patient die; but that is a matter of medical ethics, not of medicine; and skill in medicine is no guarantee that he will answer it in the appropriate way” (26).

⁹⁴ Barney (2007), 298–299.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁹⁶ Aristotle presents a similar hierarchy of the ordering of the crafts in the opening lines of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There, he argues that all crafts aim at some end and where crafts fall under a single capacity (*dunamis*), they are organized under a master craft (*architektonikê*), given that subordinate crafts are pursued for the sake of the end (*telos*) of the master craft (*NE.* 1094a6–18). For instance, bridle making is subordinate to horsemanship and actions pertaining to warfare are subordinate to generalship.

The second way that ordinary crafts are insufficient, Barney suggests, relates to the incompleteness in their contexts.⁹⁷ Here, she writes, “[g]ood shoes are in themselves good, but the normativity of their goodness, in any particular situation, can be overridden by the demands of the context—that is, by rival goods and by the greater good of the whole”.⁹⁸ The craftsman can best consider the circumstances that inform how he brings about the goal of his craft. However, he lacks the panoramic perspective for knowing the larger contexts that would make his product or result ultimately beneficial. The *Gorgias*, for instance, presents the Athenians as possessing excessive appetites for pleasure with unjust and corrupt souls. There, Socrates emphasizes the goal of appetite correction and bringing their souls back to health, rather than the goal of maintaining the good condition of their souls (505a6–b9, 517b5–c1). In this political context then, we can imagine that the crafts will be practiced with a different emphasis, with less focus on luxury and more on austerity in order to serve the good of the whole. And this larger context, it is evident, eludes the ordinary craftsman.

Let us now return to our passage above from Nicias on the limits of the doctor’s expertise. There are several important points to note. To begin with, as the context of the passage makes clear, Plato does not conceal the fact that ordinary crafts can potentially make virtue, understood as knowledge of good and bad, redundant. If ordinary experts are presumed to know what is good and bad in their respective crafts, then where does virtue fit in? And if there is some special area of expertise for virtue, how can it remain authoritative in the face of other experts? The way that Plato addresses this worry, on this interpretation, is to show that ordinary crafts are in fact normatively limited. The way that this limitation is fleshed out paints a more complicated picture of the relationship between crafts and virtue. Nicias shows that medicine possesses the expertise for describing health and disease, but it is unable to judge whether recovery is more to be preferred than illness for patients. On my view, this is because ordinary crafts are normatively dependent on virtue, both in terms of their goals and contexts. By pointing to the limits of ordinary crafts, Nicias makes room for courage (and virtue generally) to remain as the knowledge of what is good and bad in all circumstances. In other words, we now see that in every area of life, there remains a need

⁹⁷ Barney (2007), 299.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 299.

for the guidance of virtue. At the same time, we see that the kinds of concerns we explored in this section pave the way for Plato to work out the right conception of virtue. What sort of knowledge is appropriate for providing the right context and goal for the crafts? Under what kind of rule will the crafts become normatively sufficient, and thus fulfill their status as services that contribute to human life in some way? What sort of the guidance will this ruling knowledge provide to the crafts? And how precisely shall this ruling knowledge promote human welfare? In this way, we see that both Plato's commitments to the nature of crafts (as both benefit-oriented and normatively insufficient) and his concern with the sovereignty and scope of virtue *drive* him towards architectonic thinking. In the next sections, we will see Plato explore the nature of an architectonic form of knowledge, its relationship to ordinary crafts, and happiness.

3.2. Architectonic Knowledge in the *Charmides*

The *Charmides* is an inquiry into temperance (*sôphrosunê*) and culminates in an obscure argument between Socrates and Critias that defines temperance as knowledge of self and its abstract formulation knowledge of knowledge (164c7ff). This definition is ultimately given up on the grounds that reflexive knowledge is epistemically impossible. Even if it is possible, it is of no use to our happiness and faring well. What will ultimately make us happy, Socrates concludes, is the knowledge of good and bad. And thus the search for temperance ends unsuccessfully. Before the dialogue ends in *aporia*, however, Socrates puts forth a series of arguments (171d–175a) designed to show the promise of knowledge of knowledge, to identify its failings, and to introduce the knowledge of good and bad.

In what follows, I propose the *Charmides* develops two competing views of happiness in order to highlight the right kind of knowledge required to oversee the performance of crafts. It is in this context that we find Plato investigating different candidates for architectonic knowledge. These two competing views, which I shall call *happiness as living knowledgeably* and *happiness as goodness*, are the products of two kinds of rule: ruling by knowledge of knowledge and ruling by the knowledge of good and bad, respectively. The former account of happiness is the result of an error-free society where each acts according his knowledge,

while the latter is the state where the knowledge of good and bad reigns. On my reading, the failure of *happiness as living knowledgeably* only points to the inadequacy of knowledge of knowledge as a candidate for rule. It does not demonstrate the strong position, sometimes suggested by commentators, that knowledge of good and bad is sufficient for happiness.⁹⁹ The *happiness as goodness* view, as I shall bring out, only establishes the necessity of the knowledge of good and bad for happiness, so that all knowledge undertakings, represented by ordinary crafts, can benefit us. I present this reading below.

Although the central argument treats knowledge of knowledge as the abstract formulation of the knowledge of self, the discussion unfolds in a way that emphasizes two distinct characteristics of temperance, self-knowledge (*epistêmê heautou*) and good governance (*eu oikeisthai*).¹⁰⁰ The dialogue introduces the idea of good governance early, at 161e, making it explicit at 162a that any satisfactory account of temperance must result in a well governed city: “if a city is going to be temperately governed, it must be governed well” (162a4–5). The idea of good governance is brought up again in discussing Critias’ definition of temperance as the ability to distinguish what one knows and does not know (170a6–8). Socrates imagines the sort of benefit temperance thus understood would provide for individuals, households, and cities. The following passage introduces what I have called the *happiness as living knowledgeably* view:

What benefit would we get from temperance if it is of this nature [sc. the ability to know what one knows and does not know]? Because if, as we assumed in the beginning, the temperate man knew what he knew and what

⁹⁹ Irwin (1995) is the most notable representation of this position. He outlines two possible interpretations of the failure of knowledge of knowledge: (1) either Socrates is expressing a moderate claim that if the products of other knowledges are to benefit us, they must be used by the knowledge of good and bad or (2) an extreme claim that only knowledge of good and bad produces a good. He concludes: “Socrates seems to accept the extreme claim, since he assumes that the superordinate science of good and evil is sufficient for happiness (174b11–c3)” (41). Irwin takes it for granted that the speech at 174bff endorses the sufficiency of the knowledge of good and bad for happiness. As I will bring out below, Socrates’ endorsement is an *amendment* in light of the failure of knowledge of knowledge, rather than an argument for its sufficiency for happiness. Socrates’ focus is on establishing an overarching goal of value towards which other branches of knowledge are directed.

¹⁰⁰ The transition from knowledge of self to knowledge of knowledge is notoriously vexing (165c7, 166c2). Critias proposes that temperance is knowledge of the personal self (*heautou*) but slips into the reflexive knowledge of *itself* (*heautês*) later. On this vexing relationship see Tuckey (1955), 30–37, 107–11, Annas (1985), and McCabe (2011).

he did not know (and that he knows the former but not the latter) and were able to investigate another man who was in the same situation, then it would be the greatest benefit to us to be temperate. Because those of us who had temperance would live lives free from error and so would all those who were under our rule. Neither would we ourselves be attempting to do things we did not understand, rather we would find those who did understand and turn the matter over to them—nor would we trust those over whom we ruled to do anything except what they would do correctly, and this would be that of which they possessed knowledge. And thus, by means of temperance, every household would be well-run, and every city well-governed, and so in every case where temperance reigned. And with error rooted out and rightness in control, men so circumstanced would necessarily fare admirable and well in all their doings and, faring well, they would be happy (171d1–172a3).

In evaluating temperance as a knowledge fit for rule, Socrates makes it clear that any candidate for ruling must be able to bring about the greatest benefit, happiness. The nature of this rule is presented as overseeing the way that other kinds of knowledges are practiced. Later, Socrates will reveal that the other kinds of knowledge he has in mind are crafts. For now, we are only told that temperance governs by overseeing all knowledge transactions in order to bring about an error-free society: one in which everyone acts according to knowledge and in which, when they lack knowledge, the matter is entrusted and handed over to those with knowledge. Acting in accordance with knowledge and therefore acting correctly (*orthôs prattein*) is what constitutes happiness.

While this view of happiness is presented as initially promising, some strange things have come to light (172c–173a). Socrates prompts further investigation by introducing a utopian dream (173a7–d5). In this passage, *happiness as living knowledgeably* is clarified as acting in accordance with the knowledge of true craftsmanship (*dia to alêthinois dêmiourgois*, 173c2). In particular, happiness consists in reaping the benefits and rewards of true craftsmanship. If temperance governs by the principle of picking out true craftsmen and making use of them, Socrates argues, then we would have all of our goods and services skilfully (*technikos*, 173c1) accomplished. This being the case, he asks: “wouldn’t we have greater bodily health than we do now, and safety when we are in danger at sea or in battle...and many other things as well, because we would be employing true craftsmen? (173b4–c2).

The thinking here is that the rule of knowledge of knowledge can benefit us by banning deceptive practices by those who lack knowledge. It functions as a kind of quality control by organizing cities around those who are competent experts in their respective crafts. In turn, the achievements of crafts will be the outcomes of true craftsmanship. While it was previously agreed that this kind of living constituted happiness, we are now told this is merely acting in accordance with knowledge (*kata tas epistêmas*) (173a9–b1). Whether this kind of living can make us happy, Socrates worries, has not been firmly established (173d1–5).

Socrates' reticence suggests that happiness extends beyond the mere possession of the goods furnished by ordinary crafts. True craftsmanship may give us health and safety at sea, but these goods, as Socrates claims below, do not add up to happiness. The reason why these goods fail to add up to happiness will need to be examined closely in a moment. At this point, Socrates merely expresses his scepticism. He reasons with Critias that it is not by means of calculation or even knowledge of health that we become happy, but by the kind of knowledge by which we come to know the good and bad (174b5–10). With this new information, Socrates introduces the *happiness as goodness* view:

Soc: All this time you've been leading me right around in a circle and concealing from me that it was not living knowledgeably that was making us fare well and be happy, not even if we possessed all the knowledges put together, but that we have to have this one knowledge of good and bad. Because, Critias, if you consent to take away this knowledge from the other knowledges, will medicine any the less produce health or cobbling produce shoes, or the craft of weaving produce clothes, or will the pilot's craft any less prevent us from dying at sea or the general's craft in war?

Cri: They will do it just the same.

Soc: But my dear Critias, our chance of getting any of these things well and beneficially done will have vanished if this is lacking.

Cri: You are right.

Soc: Then this knowledge, at any rate, is not temperance, but that one of which the function is to benefit us (*ergon estin to ôphelein hêmas*). And it is not the knowledge of knowledge and the absence of knowledge, but of good and bad. So that, if this latter one is beneficial, temperance would be something else for us. (174b11–d7).

The first thing to note about this view of happiness is that Socrates introduces it in the context of crafts. He questions the value of crafts, as a whole, without the knowledge of good and bad. Can medicine still give us health? Critias seems to think so, but Socrates warns that if we are lacking knowledge of good and bad, then we are leaving behind the possibility of attaining the outcomes of crafts in a way that is beneficial for us.¹⁰¹ This manner of proceeding suggests that one central task of the knowledge of good and bad is to ensure that crafts provide their products and results beneficially. In addition, by situating the knowledge of good and bad within the context of crafts, Socrates continues where the discussion of knowledge of knowledge left off. The knowledge of good and bad is presented as successfully accomplishing what knowledge of knowledge failed to do—oversee the practice of ordinary crafts in a way that brings about happiness.

This point is especially prominent when we compare the two competing views of rule. At first glance, knowledge of knowledge is an attractive candidate for bringing about happiness. It governs by ruling out the absence of knowledge in order to ensure that all crafts are performed by those with knowledge. This appears to be a desirable state of affairs, as it is better to have true craftsmen (as opposed to false or incompetent ones) provide us with their products. Under this rule, we are protected from the deceptions of charlatans and the malpractice of those who lack expertise altogether. However, this kind of governance ultimately fails to bring about happiness because—and this is the force of the argument—a flourishing society is not merely living according to correctness. Rather, it requires an overarching goal of value towards genuine expertise are directed.

Allow me to explain what I mean. Central to the passage presented above is the principle that each craft is individuated by its proper *ergon*: understood both in the strong sense of function, some characteristic activity proper to the craft, and in the minimal sense, the proper product or result of craft.¹⁰² Socrates claims that if the knowledge of good and bad

¹⁰¹ It is possible that craftsmen can accidentally produce results that are beneficial. However, without the knowledge of good and bad, we are leaving behind the possibility of attaining those benefits reliably.

¹⁰² See Baker (2005) for a defence of the view that in Aristotle and Plato the concept of '*ergon*' should be understood as a characteristic activity in some cases but a product in others depending on the sort of thing it is. I am sympathetic to this view as often in the early dialogues, Plato

aims at what is beneficial, then temperance must be something else (174d6–7). It must be “something else” because temperance and the knowledge of good and bad cannot aim at the same *ergon*. This way of individuating the crafts is endorsed by Plato in a number of places. The *Ion*, for instance, states that “to each craft, the ability to know a certain *ergon* has been assigned by the god and so what we know by means of navigation we will not know by means of medicine” (537c5–7). In Book 1 of the *Republic*, Socrates notes that “each craft benefits us in a peculiar way (*idian*), not common (*ou koinên*) with the others” (346a6–8). This principle is also a recurring obstacle to the viability of knowledge of knowledge in the *Charmides*. At least one of the issues plaguing knowledge of knowledge is its reflexive nature, as it does not aim at something unique except all knowledge in general. In turn, it cannot be distinguished from other types of knowledge (170b11–c4).

On this picture, if medicine aims at health, then it cannot *also* aim at what is beneficial (*to ôphelein*). We have encountered this divergence between technical kinds of expertise and their value previously in section 3.1. Here in the *Charmides*, Socrates presents this divergence by focusing on the way that crafts are individuated. He accepts that we might still have things like health and victory in war under the guidance of knowledge of knowledge, but without the knowledge of good and bad, these things cannot be provided with the higher goal of benefitting human welfare in view. This is precisely because crafts only aim at their respective goals, but the task of benefitting requires a distinct branch of knowledge whose function is to benefit us (174d3–4). Seen from this vantage point, we can now understand why knowledge of knowledge fails to bring about happiness. Under its rule, we can (at best) attain a collection of genuine products and services. However, knowledge of knowledge lacks this overarching goal of value, ‘the beneficial’, without which, Socrates points out, all the knowledges put together will not make us happy (174c1–2).

This is the tone, I submit, in which Socrates introduces the *happiness as goodness* view. He asks, if you take away this knowledge of good and bad *from* the rest of the knowledges¹⁰³,

describes each craft as “furnishing (*apergazethai*) us with its *ergon*” by giving examples of their products and results rather than their characteristic activity (e.g. *Chrm.* 165c10–d2; *Euthphr.* 13d10–14a3).

¹⁰³ εἰ ᾗ ἐλείπει ἐξελεῖν ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν, 174c3–4.

what would happen? His suggestion is that all knowledge undertakings—crafts—would exist in vain, providing their goals without contributing to our welfare. If this reading is correct, then the knowledge of good and bad cannot be sufficient for happiness. Rather, the dialogue only establishes its necessity as a ruling knowledge for bringing about happiness. Under the rule of the knowledge of good and bad, the argument indicates, everything can *then* be done towards the ultimate goal of benefitting human welfare. This is what I take to be Socrates' strategy in the latter portion of the *Charmides*. He presents the *happiness as living knowledgeably* view as a best-case scenario. In presenting the sort of utopian world ruled by knowledge of knowledge, Socrates demonstrates that this kind of knowledge, even if perfectly obtained, and governing all other crafts, would still not be sufficient for happiness. What does bring about happiness, he shows us, is the rule of the knowledge of good and bad. The search for the producer of happiness is, effectively, a search for the highest ruling knowledge, whose presence makes all other knowledge undertakings beneficial. In the next sections, we see Plato maintain this line of inquiry in the *Euthydemus*' account of happiness. Importantly, the dialogue introduces a central theme in architectonic thinking, the distinction between the craft of making and using.

3.3. Architectonic Knowledge in the *Euthydemus*

The *Euthydemus* presents two famous protreptics—speeches intended to exhort young men to study philosophy. Both of these passages, like the *Charmides*, are concerned with seeking the producer of happiness. In the first protreptic (278e–282d), Socrates gets Clinias to agree that all men wish to fare well (*eu prattein*)¹⁰⁴, and that we do so through the possession of good things (278e3–279a4). He proposes a list which includes traditional virtues (courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom), and a category of what we might call conventional goods (beauty, wealth, health, things to satisfy bodily needs, noble birth, power, and honour) (279a7–c2).¹⁰⁵ Through a series of arguments, we arrive at the conclusion that happiness

¹⁰⁴ Like the *Charmides*, doing well (*eu prattein*) and being happy (*eudaimonein*) are used synonymously and rather freely. See *Euthyd.* 280b6 and *Chrm.* 172a3.

¹⁰⁵ For the purposes of this chapter, I set aside the puzzling argument that good fortune (*eutuchia*) is superfluous if we possess wisdom (279c–280b).

must involve the correct use of good things if they should benefit us and make us happy. Wisdom, Socrates concludes in the first protreptic, is knowledge of correct use (282a1–6).

What exactly this correct use entails, and what sort of things actually constitute happiness for Socrates, are matters of controversy.¹⁰⁶ Adding to this difficulty is the surprising move Socrates makes in the second protreptic (288d–292e). After a brief interlude, Socrates resumes his discussion of wisdom and happiness. In seeking the content of wisdom, he begins to look for candidates in crafts like generalship, statesmanship, and the kingly craft. This move comes as unexpected and presents us with an interpretative difficulty. Julia Annas accurately captures this difficulty when she writes:

At this point there is a wrinkle: a wrinkle in the argument and not just in my interpretation. Everything in the first part of the argument leads us to expect that the happiness in question is *individual* happiness, that each person is asking what would benefit him individually. And so we expect the object of discussion to be individual virtue. But what we find in the second part of the passage is that the skill under discussion is *politikê*, ‘the cause of acting correctly in the city’ (291c10–d1). Further, this is identified with the skill exercised by a *king* (*basilikê technê*) (291c4–5). No argument is offered for this, and the argument proceeds as before, with analogies with skills like medicine and farming.¹⁰⁷

Socrates takes care to remind us in the second protreptic that he is picking up where the first protreptic left off (288d5, e4). In doing so, he is clear that the second protreptic is advancing parts of the same argument. Given this, how should we understand this apparent shift in focus from considering what each person needs in order to make himself happy to asking what a ruler needs in order to make an entire state happy? And how can we make sense of both protreptics’ account of wisdom and happiness?

¹⁰⁶ There is a longstanding scholarly dispute surrounding the first protreptic, where some scholars have looked to as establishing the strong claim that wisdom is sufficient for happiness and that it is the only good. Prominent examples include Irwin (1995), chapter 4, Annas (1993), (1999), chapter 2, Dimas (2002), and Russell (2005). For dissenting views see Vlastos (1991), Parry (1996), Brickhouse & Smith (2010), Jones (2013). My reading gives us independent reasons for rejecting the strong claim. I argue that the two protreptics are unified by an architectonic view of wisdom. A consequence of this view is that the two protreptics only establish wisdom as the highest ruling knowledge, and thus make room for other things to be beneficial under its direction. I focus on developing this view of wisdom below.

¹⁰⁷ Annas (1993), 61. Emphasis is in the original.

In what follows, I argue that we can make good sense of the *Euthydemus*' full account of wisdom and happiness and the connection between the two protreptics if we see that the nature of wisdom is presented as an architectonic form of knowledge. In searching for candidates for wisdom, Socrates is looking for the most authoritative sort of knowledge available and one that will serve as a good candidate to rule the crafts for the sake of benefitting us. And thus, the search naturally turns to statesmanship and the kingly craft given their positions in the hierarchy of crafts. Furthermore, as I will bring about in section 3.4, an architectonic conception of wisdom can account for both the nature of individual and political wisdom. On this view, there is no major difference between individual and political wisdom, except perhaps in areas of application. What matters is that the nature of wisdom is uniquely authoritative with respect to other crafts and that it stands in the correct relationship (being teleologically superordinate) to them so that happiness is rendered possible through its exercise.

In supporting this architectonic conception of wisdom, let me begin with an important remark from Socrates on the notion of benefit and its relation to happiness in the first protreptic. In considering things we might find conventionally good like health and wealth, Socrates asks:

And would the possession of good things make us happy if they benefitted us or did not benefit us?—if they benefitted us—And would they be beneficial to us if we simply had them and did not use them? For instance, if we had a great deal of food but didn't eat any, or plenty to drink but didn't drink any, would we derive any advantage from these things? (280b7-c3).

We previously saw the importance of the idea of benefit to the *Charmides*' account of happiness. Recall Socrates' warning to Critias: that without the knowledge of good and bad, we forgo the possibility of getting things done well and beneficially for us (174c9-d1). In the above passage, Socrates makes this connection between benefit and happiness explicit. Things contribute to our happiness by benefitting us. And they only benefit us, according to the *Euthydemus*, through use, specifically the sort of correct use provided by wisdom. The value of things like health and strength is ultimately dependent on wisdom alone. Having established wisdom's uniqueness, Socrates adds another layer to this picture by underscoring knowledge of correct use with the idea of ruling.

Socrates claims that, just as knowledge of carpentry alone produces right use with regard to wood, so wisdom “rules (*hegoumenê*) and directs (*katorthousa*) our conduct in relation to the right use of all such things” (e.g. health, beauty, wealth, etc.) (281b2). Here, the connotation of ruling is that of commanding or leading. Knowledge of correct use alone provides guidance and direction to actions with respect to the use of other things and their contribution to our happiness. Wisdom, clearly, is the most impactful factor in determining one’s overall happiness. As such, it is reasonable to take wisdom as the most authoritative kind of knowledge. From the perspective of the first protreptic, Socrates frames wisdom as ruling over those conventional goods initially enumerated back at 279a. However, when we turn to the second protreptic, the discussion begins to present wisdom as ruling over other kinds of crafts. This move, I suggest, is pointing us towards an architectonic view of wisdom.

When the discussion resumes in the second protreptic, Socrates begins to search for candidates that would provide us with correct use. Crafts like medicine, money-making, lyre-making, and speech-writing are ruled out on the basis that they separate the activities of making and using (289a4–290a6). Any candidate for wisdom, it turns out, must be able to do both. This criterion is surprising, since the first protreptic only demands that wisdom be knowledge of correct use. Nonetheless, Socrates makes it clear at the beginning of the second protreptic that wisdom must do both: “Then what we need, my fair friend, I said, is a kind of knowledge which combines making and knowing how to use the thing which it makes” (289b4–6). This claim is important because Socrates clearly specifies that they are looking for a kind of knowledge which makes and uses what it itself makes. This criterion is firmly observed in ruling out the other candidates. However, when we turn to the kingly craft, Socrates no longer adheres to the making and using what itself makes criterion.

We arrive at the kingly craft in an incredible turn of events. The mostly passive Clinias, in an ingenuous move, declares that generalship, their most promising candidate, is only capable of capturing cities and camps.¹⁰⁸ However, generals do not know how to use the things they capture and always hand over their products to the statesman (290d1–3), the

¹⁰⁸ The initial distinction between making and using now includes capturing (290b7–c6).

same way that fishermen hand over their preys to cooks or quail hunters to quail keepers. What generates this characterization of generalship is an understanding of knowledge that is characteristically architectonic. The analogy to mundane crafts reflects the sort of hierarchical thinking Clinias has in mind. Generalship, like fishing and quail hunting, provides its labour for the sake of a higher craft whose task is to put its result to use in promoting some higher goal. Clinias' diagnosis of generalship is subtly different from the way Socrates rules out the money-making and lyre-making sorts earlier (289a4–290a6). There, Socrates' point is that those crafts are of no use to us because they do not know how to use their own products. Whereas Clinias' proposal is that generalship *not only* separates the activity of making/capturing and using, but that it is practiced *for the sake* of statesmanship. In other words, we have now discovered that the goal of generalship, along with the goals of other crafts, all lead up to one overarching architectonic goal, aimed at by statesmanship. If happiness is indeed brought about by statesmanship (which Socrates has now identified with the kingly craft), then happiness emerges as this architectonic goal—the chief good for the sake of which all other crafts are practiced. Socrates puts this point in sharp focus when he concludes that they have arrived at wisdom:

It was due to this craft [sc. kingly craft] that generalship and the others handed over the management of the products of which they themselves were craftsmen, as if this craft alone knew how to use them. It seemed clear to us that this was the craft we were looking for, and that it was the cause of right action (*he aitia orthôs prattein*) in the state, and to use the language of Aeschylus, that this craft alone sits at the helm of the state, governing all things, ruling all things, and making all things useful (291c7–d3).¹⁰⁹

Had Socrates been examining the kingly craft in the same manner as the others, he would have asked: what does the kingly craft make? And does it know how to use it? However, Clinias' characterization of generalship leads Socrates to posit the kingly craft as the *only* user of the products of all other crafts, as opposed to the only one that knows how to use

¹⁰⁹ Ταύτη τῆ τέχνη ἢ τε στρατηγικὴ καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι παραδιδόναι ἄρχειν τῶν ἔργων ὧν αὐταὶ δημιουργοὶ εἰσιν, ὡς μόνῃ ἐπισταμένη χρῆσθαι. σαφῶς οὖν ἐδόκει ἡμῖν αὕτη εἶναι ἣν ἐζητοῦμεν, καὶ ἡ αἰτία τοῦ ὀρθῶς πράττειν ἐν τῇ πόλει, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κατὰ τὸ Αἰσχύλου ἰαμβεῖον μόνῃ ἐν τῇ πρύμνῃ καθῆσθαι τῆς πόλεως, πάντα κυβερνῶσα καὶ πάντων ἄρχουσα πάντα χρήσιμα ποιεῖν.

what it itself makes.¹¹⁰ And it is *this* account of the kingly craft that is now identified with wisdom. As Socrates describes things in the above passage, what he finds attractive about the kingly craft as a candidate for wisdom is its standing as the most sovereign knowledge in the land. It is uniquely authoritative and its end is superordinate to the crafts. It is for the sake of the kingly craft that all other crafts pursue their own ends.

These elements of wisdom's rule and uniqueness are anticipated in the first protreptic. Even within the context of considering individual happiness, Socrates maintains that wisdom is uniquely commanding with respect to other goods. So, when we turn to the second protreptic, Socrates' strategy is to look to the available bodies of knowledge to see which ranks the highest. Socrates finds the kingly craft, in essence, by asking: for the sake of which craft do all crafts make their products? The kingly craft, therefore, materializes as a fitting candidate given that it is the highest ruling knowledge available. In addition, the shift between the two protreptics from considering conventional goods to considering crafts is intuitive enough, since many of the goods enumerated are the products of crafts (e.g. health to medicine, wealth to moneymaking, strength to gymnastics, bodily necessities to farming, weaving, etc.). In positing wisdom as uniquely able to provide guidance in the first protreptic, Socrates does not deny the existence of other kinds of knowledge. So, whatever craft turns out to provide us with wisdom, it must do so on account of being more authoritative than those crafts that supply us with conventional goods. In this way, wisdom

¹¹⁰A little later in the argument, Socrates will demand that the kingly craft must also make something (291d5–293e7), but this still does not change the fact that the kingly craft is now presented as the user of all the products of other crafts.

The search for wisdom reaches *aporia* when Socrates demands that the kingly craft, now user of the products of all crafts, must also produce something beneficial (292a7–9). However, the kingly craft can only benefit others by perpetuating itself in them, since it cannot produce things that are neither good nor bad such as making citizens rich, free, and preventing faction (292b4–6). This claim leads to an infinite regress: if the kingly craft can only perpetuate itself in others, then in what respect will they be made good and useful? In the respect that they are useful for making others good. But in what respect will *they* be made good and useful? And so on *ad infinitum*. As I read the *Euthydemus*, the *aporia* does not in and of itself undermine the identification of wisdom with correct use or the viability of the kingly craft as a candidate for wisdom. What is at issue is that there must be a specifiable good independent of knowledge or virtue. For this reason, some have looked to the *Republic's* Form of the Good as providing solutions for breaking the infinite regress. See Kahn (1996), 208–209.

emerges as an architectonic craft whose position on the hierarchy of crafts gives it the privileged knowledge of correct use of all other goods.

3.4. Wisdom and the Kingly Craft in the *Euthydemus*

If what makes the kingly craft an ideal candidate for wisdom is its embodiment of architectonic knowledge, and if this fact explains the connection between the two protreptics, then this reading illuminates to us a crucial aspect of Plato's understanding of wisdom. The sort of knowledge that brings about happiness for Plato is concerned with thoughts and actions on an architectonic level. That is to say, wisdom engages in universal and foundational reasoning about what to do and how to live well in all circumstances and it does so by aiming at the goal of what is beneficial for human beings. This architectonic goal serves as the target towards which all other human pursuits aim—represented by the practice of ordinary craftsmen. In contrast to the sort of 'ground-level' activities that characterize other crafts—how to procure victory at war or how to bring about health—wisdom takes into consideration only what benefits human beings. By identifying wisdom with the kingly craft—the user of all the products of all other crafts—Plato establishes wisdom as the single overarching science of everything. It subordinates all other knowledge undertakings in order to use them to promote the successful realization of the ultimate goal, human welfare.

At this point, it is useful to examine the *Euthydemus*' distinction between a making craft and a using craft. What precisely does the knowledge of correct use entail? And how does wisdom, now identified with the kingly craft, benefit us by correctly using the products of all other making crafts (291c7–d3)? On these sorts of questions, the *Euthydemus* remains mostly silent. However, the idea that the crafts ought to be hierarchically arranged according to the “user-maker” distinction is a prominent theme that we find in many places in Plato.¹¹¹ And in these passages, Plato gives us more of an idea of the kind of understanding provided by the using craftsman. I highlight some common themes below.

¹¹¹ For passages that distinguish between a making craft and a using craft, see *Cra.* 388a–390d, *Rep.* 601d–602a; *Grg.* 517c7–518a5; *Phdr.* 274e7–9. Cf. Aristotle's comments in *Physics* 2.2 where he uses the architectonic language to distinguish between a making and a using craft (*Ph.* 194a34–b9). I examine the *Gorgias*' account of “use” in detail in the next chapter.

In places where we find the distinction between a making craft and a using craft, the using craftsman is characterized as the epistemic authority with regard to the product's form (*eidos*, *Cra.* 390b1), the use for which the product is made or to which it is naturally suited (*Rep.* 601d4–6), or the excellence of the product and the means of bringing it about (*Grg.* 517c7–518a5). This kind of knowledge allows the using craftsman to judge correctly how the product performs (*Rep.* 601d8–e2, *Cra.* 390b6–8) and whether it benefits or harms those who use it (*Phdr.* 274e9, *Grg.* 517c7–518a5). On the basis of his privileged knowledge, these passages claim, the user ought to direct the activity of the maker by issuing certain norms. The user, for instance, will give instructions to the maker about what makes a product good and bad (*Rep.* 601e4–5) and prescribe the best materials to choose so they fit the type of work the product performs (*Cra.* 389b8–c1). For instance, Socrates in the *Republic* tells us that a flute-player relays information (*exaggellei*) to the maker about what makes a good or bad flute (601e4–5). The maker thus serves (*hupêretêsei*, 601e1) and must listen (*anankaxomenos akouein*, 602a1) to the flute-player in making his product. This is the nature of the maker's subordinate relationship to the user, namely due to his ignorance of use, he must rely on the user to provide some sort of guidance in successfully making his product.

This general line of reasoning, we can reasonably believe, is what is also going on in the above kingly craft passage (291c7–d3) from the *Euthydemus*. On this reading, generalship, for instance, is the subordinate expertise of achieving victory at war. In capturing cities and camps, generals operate at the 'ground level', procuring materials to be used by the kingly craft. However, as I have highlighted throughout this chapter, victory at war is not isolated goal for Plato. In some cases, it might be more beneficial to withdraw from battle. Generalship is dependent—both in terms of its goal and context—on higher normative deliberations, in this case about what benefits the city and its citizens. Since generals lack the knowledge of correct use, they must depend on the kingly craft to provide guidance on the conditions that make their crafts beneficial. This is the manner in which knowledge of correct use enables the kingly craft to rule subordinate crafts: it engages in norm-issuing behaviour in light of human welfare.

The *Euthydemus* also does not spell out, like other architectonic passages in Plato, the exact norms that knowledge of correct use issues, for instance prescribing the best materials or communicating what makes the outcomes of subordinate crafts the best. A plausible interpretation, however, can be gleaned from the leading examples of medicine that we first encountered in the *Laches*. There, the doctors needed guidance in deciding *whether* to bring about health or safety at sea. Similarly, what generalship needs is to decide whether to pursue victory and at what risk or cost. An interesting parallel passage in the *Politicus* lends some additional insight (304e–305d). There, the Eleatic Visitor suggests that kingship, which is also identified with statesmanship, provides the right and wrong time (*enkairias kai akaiprias*, 305d4) to the activity of generalship (amongst other subordinate crafts). It does so by deciding whether we should go to war or withdraw in a friendly manner (304e9–11). In a similar fashion, the kingly craft will exercise its knowledge of correct use by dictating to generals and other subordinate craftsmen the exact set of circumstances in which they should act, and what constitutes the right course of action under such circumstances. It issues these norms always with a view to what is ultimately beneficial for human welfare. The kingly craft thus directs the activities of the subordinate craftsmen by providing the right context and target for their actions. It is in this sense that the kingly craft is said to be the cause of right action in the state (291c10).

Unpacking the architectonic features of the passage also allows us to appreciate the epistemic division of labour between the kingly craft and ordinary crafts. Generalship still provides the strategic expertise in bringing about victory. In fact, late into the second protreptic, Socrates continues to describe medicine as the craft of health and farming as the craft of providing nourishment from earth (291e4–292a2). As such, we have no reason to think that Socrates rejects the specialization of ordinary crafts. What he does deny, however, is their capacity to bring about their products or results in a beneficial manner without the direction of wisdom. On this picture, subordinate craftsmen are the ‘foot soldiers’ who engage in the practical activities of daily life in light of the executive decisions of the kingly craft. They carry out the normative vision set out by wisdom. Their expertise, under the rule of wisdom, can be properly oriented towards the right goal and performed under the right circumstances. When generalship accomplishes victory at the behest of the kingly craft, then victory can be rightfully said to benefit us.

If this characterization of wisdom and the kingly craft is correct, then we have reasons to believe that there is no essential difference between individual and political wisdom on the *Euthydemus* picture (I discuss in a moment what an architectonic conception of wisdom looks like in the individual person). And thus, Socrates is warranted to shift his focus from inquiring after the cause of individual happiness in the first protreptic to the cause of happiness in the city in the second protreptic. Wisdom in the individual and in the political ruler may differ with respect to their areas of application, given that the latter will exercise his wisdom in a larger domain. However, both protreptics understand wisdom as the most authoritative knowledge, the nature of which rules all other crafts for the sake of promoting human welfare. It is important to clarify that given this interpretation of wisdom, I do not mean to suggest that any wise person, in virtue of possessing wisdom, will need to be a manager of crafts in order to be happy. Nor does this view entail that the individually wise person is a *de facto* political ruler. However, in conceiving wisdom as the most authoritative knowledge and presiding over the crafts, we can appreciate the full extent of Plato's account of happiness in the *Euthydemus*.

Living well inevitably involves making decisions about a variety of subject matters and goods under many different circumstances. In doing so, we will need to make decisions about things that happen to be the proper goals of other experts. In the Platonic context, these experts can range from doctors, financial advisers, physical trainers, and, more insidiously, sophists, orators, and poets. Practically speaking, the wise person will not know every sort of craft nor be entirely self-sufficient. He might need to depend on other craftsmen for their technical proficiency or to perform the specific tasks in areas where he lacks expertise. For instance, he might consult a doctor when he is ill, or rely on a helmsman while seafaring. However, in positing wisdom as an architectonic form of knowledge, Plato's point is that the wise person will always remain sovereign concerning matters of human welfare. Whatever circumstance he finds himself in, whichever expert he encounters, his wisdom will remain decisive in promoting happiness. Thus, wisdom acts as the organizing and guiding principle of the entirety of his life.

In recalling an old drinking song in the *Gorgias*, Socrates tells us to suppose we get a doctor, a physical trainer, and a financial expert in a room. Each would without hesitation call the product of his craft the greatest good (452a–d). The arguments of the *Euthydemus* show us that wisdom aims at the *real* greatest good. It is in this way that it “alone sits at the helm of the state, governing all things, ruling all things, and making all things useful” (291d1–3).

Chapter 4

4. Architectonic Knowledge in the *Gorgias*

In Chapter 3, I explored the idea of an architectonic conception of political rule in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*. Drawing from the *Laches*, I contended that one of Plato's main motivations for positing an architectonic form of knowledge as the basis for political rule is his concern with the issue of how virtue can remain authoritative in guiding our actions where other forms of expertise rule. This concern leads Plato to the idea that any knowledge fit for promoting human welfare must be fit to preside over the crafts in the right way. In this chapter, I argue that the *Gorgias* also presents us with an architectonic view of political rule. This time, however, the threat facing the sovereignty of political expertise is much more sinister than the specialization of ordinary crafts. In the *Gorgias*, we find Plato confronting the powerful influence exercised by the orators and the dangers they pose to his vision of politics and a well-governed society.

I begin this chapter by exploring the contrasting views on the nature and character of oratory between the orators themselves and Socrates. This contrast serves as the important backdrop for the dialogue's development of politics as architectonic. I argue that all three orators—Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles—share to some extent the idea that oratory is a tool for gaining freedom and power (Section 4.1). In particular, they understand their discipline as a means for being free from the rule of others, the constraints of laws and morality, social roles and duties, and as a way of returning to what is just by nature. This radical commitment to freedom and the power for self-governance stands in contrast to Socrates' commitment to a society governed by the rule of knowledge. I argue that at the heart of Socrates' critique of oratory is the idea that the discipline directly threatens an architectonic conception of political rule (Section 4.2). Instead of preserving the expertise of ordinary crafts and using them to promote the good, oratory does exactly the opposite. It competes and undermines the advice of ordinary craftsmen in the affairs of the city and subordinates them in order to advance the orators' own private good.

Following this account of the two views of oratory, I move on to the textual evidence in support of the idea of politics as architectonic (Section 4.3). The main passage on which I support my reading comes from the refutation of Calicles, where Socrates presents the hierarchical arrangement of the crafts (517c–518a). I detail what this picture of political craft might look like, especially if it fully realized. Finally, I close this chapter by outlining how an architectonic conception of political rule coheres with the other features attributed to political rule in the dialogue (especially its corrective branch, the craft of justice), such as providing order to the soul and treating it of injustice and corruption (Section 4.4).

4.1. Oratory as a Source of Freedom and Power

In Gorgias, Polus, and Calicles, we encounter three distinct orators who vary in their willingness to explicitly state the true motivations for taking up oratory. However, over the course of the dialogue, it becomes increasingly clear that those who pursue oratory view it as a means for attaining political power and the freedom (*eleutheria*) to pursue one's self-interests. The first indication of this idea comes from Gorgias. When asked by Socrates what is the greatest good and how does oratory bring it about (452d2–4), Gorgias answers:

The thing that is in actual fact the greatest good, Socrates. It is the source of freedom for mankind itself and at the same time it is for each person the source of rule over others in one's own city...I'm referring to the ability to persuade by speeches judges in a law court, councillors in a council meeting, and assemblymen in an assembly or in any other political gathering that might take place. In point of fact, with this ability you'll have the doctor for your slave, and the physical trainer, too. As for this financial expert of yours, he'll turn out to be making more money for somebody else instead of himself; for you, in fact, if you've got the ability to speak and to persuade the crowds (452d5–e8).

By far the most modest out of the three orators, Gorgias argues that oratory instills in its practitioners and students the ability to speak persuasively in political gatherings in order to exert influence in the affairs of the city. This ability is lauded on the basis it is the source (*aition*) of both freedom and one's rule over others. Here, Gorgias expresses two ideas that are central to the orators' worldview, freedom and power. At first it is not clear how these two ideas are connected, but we have in fact encountered a similar position from another

orator in Chapter 2. In my analysis of Thrasymachus, I argued that he viewed the world in competitive terms where goods (e.g. wealth, property) are zero-sum. I suggested that one of these goods is the power attached to political authority. This power enables one to be in a position to have access to material wealth and to be freed from the constraints of conventional morality and laws. For these reasons, Thrasymachus praised the tyrant's ability to be completely unjust as "stronger, freer, and more masterly than justice" (344c5–6).¹¹²

Though Gorgias is not so bold to express these ideas openly, by locating oratory as the source of both freedom and one's rule over others, he shares with Thrasymachus to some extent the idea that authority is a zero-sum good. The underlying worldview is that we are faced with two options: either we are ruled by others or we are in a position of rule ourselves. The former can be understood more generally as being subject to the constraints placed upon us by the laws and norms of one's society or more specifically, being subject to the authority of other experts. From the orators' perspective, obedience to these constraints denies or significantly limits our capacity to determine and pursue what is in our self-interests. As Polus and Callicles make it clear later, the orators view their society as fundamentally predatory, where everyone is vying to possess some power over others in order to serve their own interests, and they do so at the expense of others having less. As such, other people cannot be entrusted to provide what serves us. The only available alternative is to be in a position where one can "rule over others in one's own city" (452d7–8). Oratory thus enables its practitioners the ability to gain substantial political influence and to exercise control over others through the power of persuasion. What constitutes freedom then is to be in such a powerful position where we can pursue what is in our self-interests without the constraints of others. This may involve taking from others through

¹¹² See especially section 2.6 in Chapter 2.

manipulation or on a larger scale, deviating from the conventional rules of behaviour such as committing injustice with impunity.¹³

Socrates next interlocutor Polus makes these ideas explicit by connecting oratory with injustice. Earlier, Gorgias was forced to admit out of shame that orators, in addition to teaching their students how to speak persuasively, also taught them what is just and unjust (460a2–b1). This admission had the unfortunate consequence that orators must now be held responsible for those students who use their skills unjustly. In contrast, Polus is more forthcoming that oratory is a means for fulfilling one's political ambition. He claims that orators have the greatest power in their cities (466b4–5). Echoing Thrasymachus' open admiration for tyrants and potentates, Polus claims that what is admirable about the power of orators is that like tyrants, they can "put to death anyone they want, and confiscate the property and banish from their cities anyone they see fit" (466b11–c2). This comparison highlights the true goal of oratory and the corresponding way of life of which it is committed. It functions as a powerful tool for committing injustice and it affords one the freedom to do whatever one sees fit.

Besides making explicit the bolder implications of Gorgias' defence, Polus adds another layer to the idea of freedom secured by the practice of oratory. In a discussion on whether people who act unjustly are truly happy, he cites Archelaus, the King of Macedonia as a chief

¹³ See Cooper (1999), n35 for a more positive interpretation of the relationship between oratory and freedom in Gorgias' defence. Cooper interprets Gorgias to mean that oratory guarantees freedom for mankind itself, rather than just the orator himself. On this picture, oratory is the means by which a city of free people commit themselves to self-rule, rather than being submitted to the enforced rule of tyrants and oligarchs. In this way, oratory is an essential tool for protecting the democratic process. I am somewhat skeptical of this interpretation as Gorgias immediately follows up the praise of oratory as a source of freedom with its power for enslaving and exploiting other experts. This remark paints a more sinister picture than the one suggested by Cooper. By "mankind itself", I take Gorgias to mean that oratory is the only source of freedom for mankind because the ability to use speeches to persuade others is something that is unique to human beings. It should also be noted that all three orators consistently emphasize oratory as something the practitioner practices against *other people*, whether it is other experts, enemies, or the majority of people. This is especially clear when Callicles urges Socrates to take up oratory as a means of defending oneself against those who are eager to take him to prison or rob him of his property and rights within the city (486a6–c3). Here Callicles emphasizes not the way that oratory secures freedom for the whole of society, but for the individual person against others.

example of someone who is deemed the most blessed by his society while having come by his power through unjust means. He notes:

Why of course he's [Archelaus] unjust! The sovereignty which he now holds doesn't belong to him at all, given the fact that his mother was a slave of Alcetas, Perdiccas brother. By rights he was a slave of Alcetas, and if wanted to do what's just, he'd still be a slave to Alcetas, and on your reasoning would be happy. As it is, how marvelously "miserable" he's turned out to be, now that he's committed the most heinous crimes (471a4–b1).

The most interesting claim here is the suggestion that injustice is a means for social mobility. If we abide by conventional morality and the traditional codes of conduct, then we would forever be confined to our fortune and social circumstances. Archelaus willingness and the ability to achieve injustice has now taken him from pauper to King. If we take seriously the idea that oratory is an essential tool for accomplishing injustice, then we can draw the similar conclusion that the orators also see their discipline as a means of transforming one's station in life. On this picture, oratory is seen as an instrument for subverting traditionally defined social roles and duties, and in turn it alters that to which we are appropriately entitled.

These ideas culminate in a dramatic confrontation between Socrates and Callicles. The introduction of Callicles delivers us with one of the most memorable personalities in the Platonic corpus. Callicles provides the orators with a much needed theoretical defence for the views advocated thus far. With Callicles, we learn not only the goals and power of oratory, but on what basis we ought to pursue the kind of life endorsed by the orators. As Socrates remarks a little later, the central issue between them is: "what it is I'm to devote myself to, and in what way I might come by it" (488a5–6). Is it the life of oratory-politics? Or is it the life of philosophy? (500c3–d4).

The foundation of Callicles defence turns on a familiar distinction between *phusis* (nature) and *nomos* (convention), the latter include both legally enacted laws and the wider set of customs and social conventions. Callicles chastises Socrates for failing to make explicit the difference between what is just by nature and what is just by *nomos*:

I believe that the people who institute our laws are the weak and the many. They do this, and they assign praise and blame with themselves and their own advantage in mind. They're afraid of the more powerful among men, the ones who are capable of having a greater share (*pleon echein*), and so they say that getting more than one's share is "shameful" and unjust", and that doing what's unjust is trying to get more than one's share. They do this so that those people won't get a greater share than they. I think they like getting an equal share, since they are inferior. These are the reasons why trying to get a greater share than most is said to be unjust and shameful by law and why they call it doing what's unjust. But I believe that nature itself reveals that it's a just thing for the better man and the more capable man to have a greater than the worse man and less capable man (483b4-d2).

To begin with, the language of "*pleon echein*" (outdoing, overreaching, the desire to have more) recalls that of Thrasymachus.¹⁴ Like Thrasymachus, Callicles sees conventional justice as a form of restraint.¹⁵ He argues that legally enacted laws and the basis on which we assign praise and blame are simply means of controlling the stronger few by the weaker majority. The terms "stronger" and "weaker" are measured with respect to one's ability to get more than one's share, intelligence in the affairs of the city, and the courage to do whatever one sees fit (491b1-4). On this view, the weaker Many relies on laws, shame, and education to curb the pleonexia of the stronger few, and to mold them into adopting the set of behaviours and actions prescribed by conventional morality (483e4-484a2). They do so in fear of being dominated by the stronger few. In contrast, nature shows that what is just is for the stronger to have a greater share. Callicles points out, everywhere we look, among "other animals and in whole cities and races of men" (483d3-4), the stronger prevails over the weak (483d5-6). In this way, Callicles shows that oratory and its way of life is just according to nature. In particular, oratory allows the stronger few to attain political power so they can rise above the constraints placed upon them by *nomos* and rule the many according to the "law of nature" (483e3).

Another important element of Callicles' worldview fills out this picture. At first, it is not precisely clear of what the stronger should have a greater share. However, a little further in

¹⁴ See Barney (2004) on the important similarities and differences between Thrasymachus and Callicles.

¹⁵ Before Socrates' more in-depth discussion of justice, particularly its relationship to order (*kosmos*) at 504a^{ff}, justice is understood between all parties as abiding by the laws, and in particular paying what's due, see especially 479a5-e6.

the argument, Callicles is revealed to be committed to a strong version of hedonism—the view that the pleasant and the good are the same (495a2–6). Socrates asks whether those who are deemed the stronger by Callicles ought to rule themselves, in addition to ruling the Many (491d4–6). By rule, Socrates clarifies, he means being temperate and self-controlled, ruling one’s appetites and pleasures (491d8–9). To this, Callicles responds that it would be miserable for those who are free to enjoy good things to restrain themselves with “the law of the many” (492b5–8). And in the fact, the goal of life and what ultimately constitutes happiness is not to restrain our appetites. Rather, it is to let them become as large as possible and to procure the means of fulfilling them (492d5–e1). The goal for the stronger and the more intelligent few then will be to have a greater share of pleasure for pleasure sake: “having as much flow in as possible” (494b1–2).

These considerations outline the major characteristics of oratory according to Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. In particular, I underscored the idea that all three orators share to some extent the view that oratory is a means for gaining political power and thus allowing one to break free from the constraints of society. I close this section by considering a possible response to the orators on the value of freedom from the *Lysis*.

Socrates: [I]n those areas where we really understand (*phronimoi*) something everybody... will trust us, and there we will act just as we choose, and nobody will want to get in our way. There we will be *free* ourselves, and in control of others. There things will belong to us, because we will derive some benefit from them. But in areas where we haven’t got any intelligence (*nous*), no one will trust us to act as we judge best, but everybody will do their best to stop us...And there we are going to be subject to the orders of others; there things are not going to be ours because we are not going to derive any benefit from them (210a9–c4, emphasis mine).¹⁶

Here we find Socrates warning Lysis against the exact sort of lessons that the orators would have unduly imparted on impressionable youths much like Lysis himself. Just before this passage, Socrates makes a point of showing that at first, we might believe that happiness is incompatible with a life of servitude to the orders of others and being forbidden from doing whatever one likes (207d–209a). However, as Socrates takes care to demonstrate in the

¹⁶ We have briefly encountered this passage in Chapter 1, section 4.2. There, I highlighted the general structure of passages of this type, here I focus on its content.

above passage, such a limited interpretation of freedom and happiness is misguided. Just as we would submit to the orders of a doctor when we are ill rather than letting ourselves do whatever we like (209e6–210a8), being subject to the epistemic authority of others in areas where we lack understanding is beneficial and contributes to our well-being. Freedom from the rule of others is not in and of itself desirable if we cannot derive any benefit from the things we are pursuing and the matters about which we are deliberating. And we can only derive such benefits, Socrates argues, through either possession of the relevant understanding required for judging what is beneficial and harmful ourselves or to entrust others who has expertise in such matters.

This lesson to the young Lysis illustrates the central tension Plato depicts between Socrates and the orators in the *Gorgias*. What is the key to general happiness? Is it the commitment to the rule of knowledge or the unbridled freedom to pursue whatever one sees fit? As we will see below, Socrates criticizes oratory precisely on the grounds that it pursues the things it does (wealth, power, especially pleasure) without having first investigated their nature and cause (501a1–2). Though oratory may be “the source of freedom for mankind itself” and “the source of rule over others” (452d6–7), it lacks the kind of understanding necessary for determining whether what it accomplishes is really beneficial or harmful. And thus it is suggested, the rule of knowledge should always take precedence over unbridled freedom.

4.2. Oratory as a Threat to Political Rule and Expertise

At the centre of Socrates' critique of oratory is the revelation that, despite what the orators claim, oratory is not a craft, but belongs to a form of flattery called *empeiria*—an experience based practice or knack (463b4).¹⁷ According to Socrates, there are two kinds of crafts, those that aim at the body (medicine and gymnastics) and those that aim at the soul (justice and legislation), the latter two constituting the two parts of the political craft (*politikê*) (464b2–

¹⁷ The Greek term “*empeiria*” is typically translated as “experience” and does not always carry a negative connotation. The choice of “knack” in Cooper (1997) is somewhat awkward, but it does capture the pejorative sense in which Socrates is using the term. In addition, I do not think that Plato is setting up *technê* as purely theoretical and therefore opposed to *empeiria*. Rather, I believe that referring to a practice as an *empeiria* implies that it is based on *mere* experience.

8). Medicine is said to be a counterpart to justice while gymnastics is a counterpart to legislation (464b7–8). The division here between medicine/justice and gymnastics/legislation seems to be distinguishing between those crafts that perform a corrective function in restoring the conditions of the soul and body and those crafts that maintain and regulate their conditions. The flattering knacks, on the other hand, *appear* craft-like (464b3) by masking itself with each of the parts of the genuine crafts (464c6–d1). Oratory imitates justice, while pastry-baking imitates medicine, sophistry to legislation, and cosmetics to gymnastics:

Crafts		Knacks	
Soul: Political Craft (<i>politikê</i>)	Body: Unnamed	Soul: Flattery (<i>kolakeia</i>)	Body: Flattery
Justice	Medicine	Oratory	Pastry Baking
Legislation	Gymnastics	Sophistry	Cosmetics

On this picture, genuine crafts are those practices that provide care for the body and soul with a view towards what is best (*pros to beltiston*, 464c4), in particular the best state of the body and soul (464a2). They are based on knowledge and therefore able to provide the nature and causes of the objects they care for and the means by which they care for them (465a2–5, 501a3). In contrast, knacks imitate genuine crafts by aiming at what *appears* to be the best (464a3–b1), namely pleasure. They are based on guessing rather than knowledge. Knacks have not investigated the nature and cause of pleasure (501a3–6) and whether it is good for the objects they serve. And thus they proceed without discrimination and produce pleasure based on “the memory of what customarily happens” (501a6–b1).

Socrates’ characterization of oratory as a knack reveals some of the dangers posed by the practice. For starters, oratory has discovered a device for effectively persuading the Athenian populous (459b6–c2): pleasure. Given the orators’ natural cleverness at dealing with people and their strengths in estimating the psychological forces that make people feel

pleased (463a6–b1), the orators succeed in persuading the citizens in the affairs of the city without possessing any relevant expertise. That oratory poses a threat to political rule, especially the corrective part performed by the craft of justice, is manifest in Socrates' division above. As Socrates puts it, oratory is an image (*eidôlon*) of the craft of justice (463d1–2). But how precisely does oratory imitate justice? And what is it about oratory's production of pleasure that makes it such a threat to the task of true political craft?

I want to suggest that what makes oratory especially dangerous in Plato's eyes is that it directly challenges the architectonic structure at the heart of his conception of political rule. I shall present evidence for why we should construe true political craft in the *Gorgias* as an architectonic form of knowledge in the next section. In this section, I focus on the specific ways in which oratory undermines the expertise of ordinary craftsmen.¹¹⁸ The upshot of my argument is this. Oratory makes speeches about what appears to be good to the Athenian public but in fact those speeches are designed to gratify their the public's desire for pleasure. The content of these speeches concerns the affairs of the city and how it is to be well-managed (491b1–2). In particular, I argue, they primarily concern decisions that belong to the proper domains of ordinary craftsmen. Rather than preserving their expertise and utilizing them towards producing the good condition of the citizens (as an architectonic conception of political rule would do), oratory corrodes the authority of ordinary crafts and subordinates them under its rule for the sake of promoting injustice.¹¹⁹ In doing so, oratory orients the Athenian citizens away from what is in fact good for them towards what appears good, namely, pleasure and the gratification of their bodily appetites. In this way, I suggest that oratory disrupts Plato's vision of an orderly society that sees the rule of knowledge as its fundamental fabric.

¹¹⁸ I briefly presented this idea back in Chapter 1, section 4.2. Here I focus on developing it in more detail.

¹¹⁹ In characterizing oratory as threatening the expertise of ordinary crafts and thereby challenging the function reserved for an architectonic conception of political rule, I do not mean to suggest that this is oratory's *only* function. Indeed, the *Gorgias* also depicts oratory as being practiced in the courts to defend oneself and in general matters of dealing with people, such as in private business (484d2–5). However, I wish to show that it is this threat oratory poses to ordinary expertise in the political setting that makes the practice especially harmful for Plato. And as I shall demonstrate below, this picture is confirmed in the refutation of *Gorgias*.

The idea that oratory threatens the authority of ordinary expertise is most clearly expressed in the refutation of Gorgias, in a discussion (455b–456a) concerning the kind of advice that orators offer in city meetings.¹²⁰ Socrates begins by giving us some examples of the kind of decisions that take place in these meetings. They involve the appointment of expert craftsmen (e.g. doctors and shipbuilders), specific concerns about wall-building, equipping the harbors and dockyards, and decisions in the military such as the selection of generals, the organization of troops against enemies or an occupied territory (455b2–c3). Here, Socrates highlights for us that the “affairs of the city” (491b1) are primarily concerned with practical and concrete decisions about what to do in the knowledge and skills of other craftsmen. Socrates argues that in these matters, it is usually the relevant craftsman who gives speeches and advises the city.¹²¹ However, Gorgias quickly points out that it is in fact the orators whose opinions succeed:

Well, Socrates, I'll try to reveal to you clearly everything oratory can accomplish. You yourself led the way nicely, for you do know, don't you, that these dockyards and walls of the Athenians and the equipping of the harbor came about through the advice of Themistocles and in some cases through that of Pericles, but not through that of the craftsmen....And whenever those craftsmen you were just now speaking of are appointed, Socrates, you see that the orators are the ones who give advice and whose views on these matters prevail (455d6–456a3).

He concludes that oratory “encompasses and subordinates to itself just about everything that can be accomplished” (456a7–8).¹²² Gorgias offers us a closer look at the kind of influence past successful orator-politicians have held over the city. It is through their power

¹²⁰ This is also where we are presented with the best extensive discussion of the content of the orators' speeches. Polus and Callicles are mostly vague on this matter. Callicles notes that the orator-politician are those who are intelligent about the affairs of the city, and about the way it is to be well managed (491b1–2). A little earlier, he suggests that those who pursue oratory and the life of politics are experienced in the “laws of their city” and “the kind of speeches one must use to deal with people” (484d2–5).

¹²¹ The relevant craftsmen advise the city on the basis of their expertise, but as I will bring out in this interpretation, their advice is not absolutely authoritative, as the true political ruler will ultimately decide how their advice can best serve the city. In contrast to the orators, the true political ruler is not contentious towards ordinary expertise, but rather preserves them and brings them towards serving their ultimate goal of benefitting the citizens.

¹²² “Εἰ πάντα γε εἰδείης, ὃ Σώκратες, ὅτι ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἀπάσας τὰς δυνάμεις συλλαβοῦσα ὑφ' αὐτῆ ἔχει”.

of persuasion that these specialized matters of the city were decided. It is always the orators' views that wins over any individual expert:

Many a time I've gone with my brother or with other doctors to call on some sick person who refuses to take his medicine or allow the doctor to perform surgery or cauterization on him. And when the doctor failed to persuade him, I succeeded, by means of no other craft than oratory. And I maintain too that if an orator and a doctor came to any city anywhere you like and had to compete in speaking in the assembly or some other gathering over which of them should be appointed doctor, the doctor wouldn't make any showing at all, but the one who had the ability to speak would be appointed, *if he so wished*. And if he were to compete with any other craftsmen whatever, the orator more than anyone else would persuade them that they should appoint him, for there isn't anything that the orator couldn't speak more persuasively about to a gathering than could any other craftsmen whatever. That's how great the accomplishment of this craft is, and the sort of accomplishment it is! (456b1–c7, emphasis mine)

Gorgias is careful to downplay the hostility oratory poses to medicine here by adding that the orator could appoint himself as the doctor only “if he wished” (456c2). He immediately qualifies this praise with the warning that the orator should use his skill justly and only against enemies and wrongdoers (456e2–457a2). Putting aside the question of whether Gorgias' defence of the just use of oratory is successful or sincere, for our purposes, these passages reveal that the orators do compete with ordinary experts often and are always successful whenever they choose to do so.¹²³

So how precisely does oratory win over ordinary craftsmen? And why is this considered a bad thing? As Socrates pressures Gorgias to reveal, the orators are only able to be successfully persuasive in large gatherings “among those who don't have knowledge” (459a3–4). The orators best specialized experts by making themselves appear more knowledgeable than an actually knowledgeable person (459b6–c2). In particular, they do so by making speeches that gratify the appetitive desires of the Athenians. Jessica Moss has helpfully argued that the kind of pleasure oratory elicits in the masses is the pleasure of having one's judgements of what is good and bad affirmed.¹²⁴ The orators approve and disapprove of the same things as the masses and in doing so, they praise the masses

¹²³ For an analysis of Gorgias' defence, see Barney (2010).

¹²⁴ Moss (2007), especially section III.

judgements of value.¹²⁵ And this kind of praise, Moss suggests, may satisfy what is attributed to the spirited part of the soul in the *Republic* as the desire for honour and esteem. It may also encourage the masses' pursuit of the things they already value and thus the orators' praise indirectly gratifies the masses' desire for ordinary pleasures like wealth and excess. Lastly, the masses are easily gratified by this method because they fail to distinguish between what is pleasant and what is best for themselves.¹²⁶

We can extend Moss' view to the way in which orators succeed in defeating the craftsmen when it comes to giving advice on specialized matters in political gatherings. The orators give speeches that approve and disapprove of the same things as the Athenian people. For instance, one may advise the selection of a specific general by praising the qualities admired by the masses such as brashness, intemperance, and aggressiveness. Or one can encourage specific building projects by appealing to the fears of the masses, and thus soothing their anxieties about certain perceived threats. The orators can also succeed in making patients take or refuse medication on the basis of rewarding the patients' own (mis)conceptions of health. In these sorts of ways, the orators please their audience on the basis of affirming their judgements of value. And in doing so, they succeed in persuading the masses because the latter mistakenly believe that whatever please them are "services and benefits" (522b5–6).

Ordinary craftsmen, on the other hand, advise on the basis of their expertise. This advice will often be unpopular, running counter to the values and opinions of the Many given the gap in knowledge between ordinary people and experts. We can imagine that it is often painful for the masses to have their mistaken beliefs corrected as it may dishonour their judgements of what is good and bad. Furthermore, if the craftsmen's advice succeed, the masses will have to live with the decisions and outcomes that directly oppose their own values. This adds another possible source of pain in that by submitting to the advice of craftsmen, the masses will be (indirectly) discouraged from pursuing the things they value.

¹²⁵ Moss' key evidence for this claim comes from Socrates' account of how a tyrant only breeds those who are alike him in the city (510b7–e8). The young aspiring tyrant becomes a friend of the tyrant by accustoming himself to like and dislike the same things as the tyrant (510d4–9).

¹²⁶ Moss, (2007), 243–244.

Given the choice between the expert craftsmen who cause pain and the orators who produce pleasure, and given that most people fail to distinguish between what is good and what appears good (pleasure), the orators' advice will always prevail whenever they are in large gatherings. This is especially the case in the Assembly where these affairs of the city are deliberated and decided in front of the masses.

The corrosion of the authority of ordinary expertise is harmful because as Socrates explains later, this kind of speeches—ones that gratify the citizens—slight the common good for the sake of promoting the orators' own private good (50d10–503a1). Here, we can see the tangible ways in which orators slight the common good. The orators actively interfere in the practical decisions of the city without a view to what is best, as a true political ruler would do by keeping in view the excellent condition of the citizens. Instead, the orators keep in view their own private good, the attainment of political power and the gratification of their appetites. This state of affairs engenders the disorganization and disorder of the city. The affairs of the city are managed and decided according to whatever happens to please the citizens' own mistaken beliefs and values at the time, rather than according to the dictates of craftsmanship.¹²⁷ This will often lead to disastrous outcomes such as defeat at war, ill-planned building projects, poverty, and gluttonous citizens.¹²⁸ This is amplified by the fact that the orators (driven by *pleonexia*) also *intend* to commit injustice against the masses by exploiting their desire for pleasure in order to have a greater share themselves at the cost of the masses having less. In this way, the orators obstruct the citizens from receiving the kind of knowledge and advice that is beneficial for their welfare in order to further their (the orators') own interests.

Moreover, the means by which the orators achieve their own private good contribute and increase the disorder in the citizens' souls. Rather than redirecting the citizens' appetites towards the truth and correcting their mistaken beliefs (517b5–c1), the orators' continue to indulge them. In particular, they do so under the guise that they are after the citizens' best

¹²⁷ As we will see in section 4.4, craftsmanship is presented in the *Gorgias* as the cause of order and absence of craftsmanship is disorder.

¹²⁸ This point is also made in the *Phaedrus* where Socrates argues that when a skilled orator, who does not know the good from bad, employs his powers onto the city who knows no better either, it will lead to disastrous consequences (260c6–d2).

interests. This combination of actively harming the citizens through gratifying speeches and the illusion that these speeches are beneficial makes the masses less open to be persuaded by knowledge and reason.¹²⁹ As Socrates puts it, whenever an orator is more persuasive than a doctor, “a non-knower will be more persuasive than a knower” (459b3–5). Oratory thus undermines the place of genuine expertise in society and most importantly, it makes the citizens hostile towards the possibility of true political craft, which pays no attention to what is gratifying but only what is best (521d8–e1). Continuous exposure to the orators’ speeches, like continuous exposure to the pleasure of the pastry chef, leads to the enlargement of the appetites of the masses. That is, they demand more gratifying speeches, greater indulgence of their mistaken views, and see to it that those who please them are put in positions of power. As Socrates describes in the leaky jar analogies (493a–494a), the appetites in the corrupt soul become insatiable and require greater difficulty and toil to procure their satisfiers. And this condition ultimately makes one miserable. The *Gorgias* does not provide an extensive psychological profile of the inner experience of the disordered soul, in particular, what makes his undisciplined and unjust soul so miserable.¹³⁰ However, we will see later, Socrates basis the good condition of the human soul on the orderliness of the universe. And implicit in the suggestion here is that, *contra* Callicles, injustice is at odds with nature.

To sum up, we have seen in this section that Socrates criticizes oratory and its way of life on the basis that it is a knack, which provides and satisfies the apparent good, pleasure. In Socrates’ division of the crafts, oratory is presented as a threat to true political rule—an image of justice. I argued that the basis of this imitation lies in the way in which the orators undermine the authority of ordinary expertise in the management of the affairs of the city. Though the orators lack knowledge of the subject matter they are advising, their views always prevail because they gratify the masses under the pretense that they are benefitting them. This ultimately brings about and worsens the disorder in the city and its citizens. The corrosion of genuine expertise for the sake of promoting injustice directly opposes the

¹²⁹ See Moss (2006) on the relationship between pleasure and illusion in Plato.

¹³⁰ In contrast, for example, to the kind of detailed description of the inner turmoil of tyrannical person we get in *Republic* Book IX.

function assigned to true political craft, which I will argue below, is one that rules and uses crafts for the sake of accomplishing justice.

4.3. Politics as Architectonic Knowledge

Towards the end of the dialogue, Socrates gives a memorable speech where he describes himself as the only person who has ever taken up “the true political craft (*politikê technê*) and practiced true politics” (*ta politika*) (521d5–8). On the occasion that he does give speeches, Socrates argues, they are always aimed at what is best rather than gratification (521d8–e1). How should we understand the nature of this true *politikê technê* according to the *Gorgias*?

The answer to this question, I suggest, begins with conceiving of political rule as architectonic.¹³¹ The strongest evidence for this idea comes towards the end of Socrates refutation of Callicles:

For my part, I believe you’ve agreed many times and recognized that after all this subject of ours has two parts, both in the case of the body and the soul. The one part of it has the servient one, enabling us to provide our bodies with food whenever they’re hungry or with drink whenever they’re thirsty, and whenever they’re cold, with clothes, wraps, shoes and other things our bodies come to have an appetite for. I’m purposely using the same examples in speaking to you, so that you’ll understand more easily. For these, I think you agree, are the very things a shopkeeper, importer, or producer can provide, a bread baker or pastry chef, a weaver or cobbler or tanner, so it isn’t at all surprising that such a person should think that such a person should think himself and be thought by others to be a caretaker of the body—by everyone who doesn’t know that over and above all these practices there’s a craft, that of gymnastics and medicine, that really does care for the body and is entitled to *rule all these crafts and use their products because of its knowledge of what food or drink is good or bad for bodily excellence*, a

¹³¹ In characterizing the true political craft as architectonic, I do not intend to suggest that the methodologies and ethical commitments that are typically associated with the character/historical Socrates are architectonic. Rather, my focus is to articulate the picture of political craft we get in the *Gorgias* and what such a craft might look like if it is fully realized. The view of political craft that I defend here will fit consistently with Socrates’ remark that he is the only one who practices such a craft on the basis that his speeches aim at what is best rather than what is gratifying. However, it should be emphasized that the nature of true *politikê technê* involves more than simply making speeches that aim at what is best as evidenced by the passage I quote here at 517c7–518a5.

knowledge which all of the others lack. That's why the other crafts are slavish and servient and illiberal, and why gymnastics and medicine are by rights mistresses over them. Now, when I say that *these same things hold true of the soul, too...*(517c7–518a5, emphasis mine).

Several things stand out to us in this passage. To begin with, Socrates characterizes the bodily ruling crafts of gymnastics and medicine with the familiar language of “use” that we encountered in the last chapter, especially in the *Euthydemus*. The basis of this rule is medicine and gymnastics privileged knowledge of the sort of materials (food and drink) that bring about bodily excellence. On the basis of their privileged knowledge, the ruling crafts are the rightful users of the products of the lower crafts. In this iteration of architectonic thinking, Plato incorporates the division of crafts introduced in the *Gorgias*, between crafts that perform a regulatory role and ones that perform a corrective role. So for instance, we might imagine that gymnastics prescribes the kind of diet that are appropriate for a healthy body, to maintain its excellent condition. Whereas in the case of medicine, doctors will prescribe a stricter regimen tailored for the specific purpose of curing the body of its sickness and bringing it back to health. Similarly, legislation will be concerned with enacting laws that preserve the excellent condition of the citizens whereas justice involves giving punishment and speeches that are intended to remove corruption and injustice. Though both practices are arms of the ruling craft, they work separately with distinct focuses.

The next important point to note about this hierarchical arrangement of crafts is that Socrates begins by listing a variety of subordinate crafts ranging from cooking and weaving to cobblery and even pastry baking. These crafts are grouped together under the description that they are the things “our bodies come to have appetite (*epithumia*) for” (517d4–5).¹³² Socrates inclusion of pastry baking is interesting here given that it is the bodily counterpart to oratory and he has previously argued that both are knacks rather than crafts. This inclusion might be pointing towards the possibility, hinted throughout the dialogue and later developed in the *Phaedrus*, of a noble oratory that will suffice as a craft.¹³³

¹³² This claim seems to also confirm the core feature of crafts that I have been advancing: crafts are services, which minister to our basic needs or help facilitate social and civic life.

¹³³ For the possibility of a noble oratory, see 503a–b and 517a.

Socrates does not specify in the above passage how precisely medicine and gymnastics might govern the subordinate crafts or what it means to use their products. However, as I explored this theme in more depth in the last chapter, the user is characteristically described in Plato as engaging in some kind of norm-issuing behaviour that provides guidelines and sets limits on how the subordinate crafts are practiced. This typically involves prescribing the appropriate materials, providing the right timing and right circumstances for the activity of the lower crafts, and in general setting a target for flourishing, in this case, the excellent condition of the bodies. Altogether, the task of the bodily ruling crafts is to devise the material conditions of daily life with a view towards promoting health. And it accomplishes this through the management of the skills and knowledge of other craftsmen whose goals are subordinate but auxiliary to health.

At the end of the above passage, Socrates notes that “these things hold true of the soul too” (518a5). That is, the two branches of the *politikê technê*, justice and legislation, are to govern the relevant subordinate crafts in order to promote the excellent condition of the soul. This gives us the clearest indication that true political craft is envisioned by Plato to be architectonic in nature in the *Gorgias* as well. What might these subordinate crafts be? If we take seriously the idea that oratory is an intimation of justice, and if I am right that it does so by subordinating those craftsmen whose expertise make up the kind of understanding required for the welfare of social and civic life, then we can draw the same conclusion here about true politics as well. *Politikê technê* will also govern crafts like generalship, wall-building, shipbuilding, but in a benevolent rather than competitive manner.¹³⁴

Going beyond these examples, we can imagine that, if fully realized, this *politikê technê* will encompass a large and diverse collection of crafts that come to fill out a well-run society designed to promote the flourishing of its citizens. Political rule may involve regulating the crafts designed for cultivating the temperament of the citizens, like music and poetry as outlined in the *Republic*. Or it might preside over a variety of subordinate crafts that are

¹³⁴ I develop this in more detail in the next section.

concerned with tool-making, conveyance, and defence according to the taxonomy of the *Politicus* (*Plt.* 287d–288b). With true *politikê technê* at the helm, such a society may come to tolerate and even see the need for oratory. In this noble version, oratory will not rival the task performed by *politikê technê*, that is, it will not manage the affairs of city according to what is just, but supports it through its knowledge of persuasion (*Plt.* 303e–304e). Oratory will thus be relegated to its own area of expertise, which the *Phaedrus* suggests involves something like the study of different types of soul and their receptiveness to different kinds of speeches (*Phdr.* 271e–272b).¹³⁵

The *Gorgias* however does not stop at this hierarchy. It argues that ultimately, the ruling crafts of the soul will govern the ruling crafts of the body and everything else subordinate to them. Socrates had previously expressed this commitment to the sovereignty of the soul to Polus: “if the soul didn’t govern the body but the body governed itself, and if pastry baking and medicine weren’t kept under observation and distinguished by the soul”, then the world described by Anaxagoras would be true, where “all things would be mixed together in the same place” (465d5–7). The soul is not only distinct from the body but the excellence of the soul is more teleologically superordinate than the excellence of the body, since it is the former that determines how we will fare in this life and the next.¹³⁶ We find this idea again later in an extended discussion on the contrast between a modest craft like helmsmanship and Callicles’ oratory (511c7–512d6). Contrary to the grand posturing of orators, the helmsman understands the limits of his expertise. He has brought about the goal of his craft—preserving lives at sea—but remains agnostic as to whether that goal was ultimately beneficial to those lives. “For he’s enough of an expert”, Socrates states “to conclude that it isn’t clear which ones of his fellow voyagers he’s benefited by not letting them drown in the deep, and which ones he has harmed” (511e6–8). To know this, he would need to know the conditions of their souls (512a5–b1). Thus, the ultimate task of the true *politikê technê* is to subordinate all crafts and use their products for the sake of promoting the excellent condition of the souls of citizens.

¹³⁵ See Yunis (2008) for a useful analysis on the true craft of oratory in the *Phaedrus* and its relationship to dialectic, philosophy, and the *Gorgias*.

¹³⁶ This is illustrated in the closing myth of the dialogue on the judgements we face in the afterlife (523a–527e).

4.4. Order (*kosmos*) as a Normative Bedrock

If the nature of political rule is architectonic, then how precisely can such a craft deliver on the promises attributed to justice in the dialogue, namely remove the soul of injustice, act as a treatment against corruption, make people self-controlled (478e4–c2), and bring order to their souls (504c1–d3)?¹³⁷ Moreover, how does the nature of this rule differ from that of oratory, especially in its relationship to ordinary crafts?

I address these questions in this section by starting with perhaps the most significant thing we learn about the nature of crafts from the *Gorgias*, the idea that craftsmanship is the cause of order (*kosmos*):

But surely we are good, both we and everything else that's good, when some excellence (*aretê*) has come to be present in us...But the best way in which the excellence of each thing comes to be present in it, whether it's that of an artifact or of a body or a soul as well, or of any animal, is not just any old way, but is due to whatever organization (*taxis*), correctness, and craftsmanship is bestowed on each of them...So it's due to organization that the excellence of each thing is something which is organized and has order?...So it's when a certain order (*kosmos tis*), the proper one for each thing, comes to be present in it that it makes each of the things there are good?...So also a soul which has its own order is better than a disordered one?...But surely one that has order is an orderly one?...And an orderly soul is a self-controlled one?...So a self-controlled soul is a good one (506d2–507a2).¹³⁸

¹³⁷ The *Gorgias* focuses almost exclusively on the corrective part of the political craft—justice—and it is mostly silent on the topic of legislation. This focus seems to fit with the general bitter tone of the dialogue: it depicts an entirely negative view of the Athenians as having been too long corrupted by the orator-politicians. And hence the emphasis is on the removal of corruption, rather than the maintenance and regulation of good citizens.

¹³⁸ I have edited out the translation of Socrates' own response in place of Callicles for brevity sake. The Greek here is complete: Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀγαθοὶ γέ ἐσμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ τὰλλα πάντα ὃ σάγαθὰ ἐστίν, ἀρετῆς τίνος παραγενομένης; — Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι, ὦ Καλλίκλεις. — Ἀλλὰ μὲν δὴ ἡ γε ἀρετὴ ἐκάστου, καὶ σκεύους καὶ σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς αὐτῆς καὶ ζώου παντός, οὐ τῷ εἰκῆ κάλλιστα παραγίνεται, ἀλλὰ τάξει καὶ ὀρθότητι καὶ τέχνῃ, ἥτις ἐκάστῳ ἀποδέδοται αὐτῶν· ἄρα ἐστὶν ταῦτα; — Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ φημι. — Τάξει ἄρα τεταγμένον καὶ κεκοσμημένον ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐκάστου; — Φαίην ἂν ἔγωγε. — Κόσμος τις ἄρα ἐγγενόμενος ἐν ἐκάστῳ ὃ ἐκάστου οἰκείος ἀγαθὸν παρέχει ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων; — Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ. — Καὶ ψυχὴ ἄρα κόσμον ἔχουσα ὄντων; — Ἐμοιγε δοκεῖ. — Καὶ ψυχὴ ἄρα κόσμον ἔχουσα τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἀμείνων τῆς ἀκοσμήτου; — Ἀνάγκη. — Ἀλλὰ μὴν ἡ γε κόσμον ἔχουσα κοσμία; — Πῶς γὰρ οὐ μέλλει; — Ἡ δέ γε κοσμία σώφρων; — Πολλὴ ἀνάγκη. — Ἡ ἄρα σώφρων ψυχὴ ἀγαθή.

The claim that crafts are a means of bringing about order has been only alluded to in the other dialogues we have looked at thus far, but here Socrates makes this idea explicit. Moreover, he presents order as the basis for the concept of goodness. Just a few pages earlier, Socrates attempts to persuade Callicles that order is a good-making feature in both inanimate objects like boats and houses and in living things like the body and soul (504a–d). Later, Socrates bases the principles that determine the goodness of the soul by appealing to the cosmic order:

Yes, Callicles, wise men claim that partnership and friendship, orderliness, self-control, and justice hold together heaven and earth, and gods and men, and that is why they call this universe a world order, my friend, and not an undisciplined world-disorder.¹³⁹ I believe that you don't pay attention to these facts, even though you're a wise man in these matters. You've failed to notice that proportionate equality has great power among both gods and men, and you suppose that you ought to practice getting the greater share. That's because you neglect geometry (507e6–508a8).

In all these passages, Socrates does not attempt to defend order as the basis for goodness but simply takes it for granted as a founding principle that holds true for the universe and all things within it. In this respect, we might say that order is presented as a normative bedrock in the *Gorgias*. This being the case, we can now ask how does craftsmanship bring about this order?

Socrates claims that a true craftsman does not proceed at random but always keeps in view of something (*pros ti*) (503d7–e1). This “something” is the product (*ergon*) of his craft, that which structures the craftsman's entire process. With a view to his product, the craftsman can select and work with his materials not at random, but in a way so that he may bring some shape (*eidos*) to them (503e1–5). He works by arranging everything he does according to a certain organization (*taxis*), and “compels one thing to be suited for another and to fit to it until the entire object is put together in an organized and orderly way” (503e5–504a2). From Socrates' remarks, we can interpret the nature of this order, whether it is present in an artifact or in the universe, as a kind of structural arrangement where the different

¹³⁹ The Greek word for order “kosmos” is where we derive the English word “cosmos”. It was reported that the Pythagoreans were the first to ascribe the name “kosmos” to the universe. Alternatively the sentence can be translated as: “and that is why they call the whole of this world by the name of order, not of disorder and licentiousness”.

elements within it are organized in such a way that preserve or bring about its structural integrity, or in other words, its excellent condition.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, disorder is the kind of arrangement that is put together haphazardly. An arrangement of this kind or rather a lack of arrangement disintegrates the entity's structural integrity and actively brings about its eventual decay.

Socrates lists a few examples (housebuilders, shipwrights, and painters) that help us fill out this picture. A good house, for instance, is one where we would ascribe certain features that make it a good house. These might be the ability of the house to withstand environmental factors, to last for a very long time, or its ability to provide comfortable shelter.¹⁴¹ These features that are the basis for describing the house as good are the result of its internal orderly arrangement, the kind that is appropriate for an object of this sort. A craftsman, as we have seen, is described as someone who has studied the nature of the object he serves and the means for serving them (465a2–5, 501a3). What these passages bring out in more detail is that a craftsman is really someone who understands the internal orderly structure of his product and the sort of materials and manner of composition that can accomplish such a structure. And so when a housebuilder works, he keeps in view of well-built house, which is a composite entity made up of various materials fitted in a certain way, and this product acts as an organizing principle for everything the housebuilder does. From the selection of wood and tools to the way he chooses to put them together, the housebuilder acts for the sake of realizing the orderly arrangement of his product.

In the case of political rule, the true craftsman will also keep in view of his product: the excellent condition of the souls of his citizens. What sets him apart from the orator is that he knows what constitutes a good soul, namely the kind of orderly structural composition that is appropriate for preserving and achieving its good condition, as opposed to merely knowing what most people *believe* is good for their souls. And according to Socrates, a well-ordered soul is the kind of structure that leads “people to become law-abiding and orderly”,

¹⁴⁰ For my discussion of order and the concept of goodness, I have drawn from White (2006).

¹⁴¹ The natural progression of Socrates' argument should lead him to the claim that the excellent condition of something is the one that enables it to perform its characteristic function well. And thus, what makes the orderly arrangement of a house a good one is that it enables the house to provide shelter and do so well. However, we do not find an argument of such a sort until *Republic I*.

which in turn give rise to the virtues of justice and self-control (*sophrosunê*) respectively (504d1–3). Now, we may ask what sort of things are being arranged by the political craftsman?

Socrates language of “one thing” being fitted to “another”, and the image of a well-ordered soul as being constituted by a certain organization of its distinct elements naturally invite the speculation that Socrates is speaking about the different parts of the soul. Indeed, some have argued that Plato recognizes in the *Gorgias* the bipartition of the soul between reason and desire.¹⁴² And thus, the task of the true political ruler would be to bring about the harmonious state between reason and desire. Others have cautioned us against this reading. John Cooper, for example, argues that the *Gorgias* does not advocate for the repression or diversion of desires in light of what the agent knows to be good, thus supporting the view of bipartition. Rather the dialogue only suggests that the appetites ought to be eliminated or restrained so they are not disruptive.¹⁴³

Putting the controversy of this issue aside, we can say that whichever position we take, the ordering of the soul minimally requires the political ruler to redirect the appetites of Athenians in a way that leads them to become better (517b5–c1). As we have seen, excessive appetites, especially appetites for pleasure under the guise of the good supplied by the orators, are responsible for the disorderliness of the soul. And thus, the goal of *politikê technê* is to manage the appetites in a way that brings about the soul’s orderly constitution. The dialogue suggests a number of things that are needed in order to achieve this goal. First, it involves administering some form of discipline (*kolazein*) onto unjust souls, such as paying one’s due and even undergoing physical punishments (476a7–8, 480c8d3). Second, all forms of flattery must be avoided and we must ensure that “oratory and every other activity is always to be used in support of what’s just” (527c3–4). Finally, as Socrates makes clear in his proclamation as the true political craftsman, it involves making speeches that aim at what is best rather than what is gratifying (521d8–e1).

¹⁴² Dorion (2012).

¹⁴³ Cooper (1999), 65–67.

It is useful now to return to our account of *politikê technê* as an architectonic form of knowledge. I shall demonstrate that such an interpretation can fulfill the things listed above. Recall that an architectonic conception of political rule is one that subordinates all crafts and uses their products to promote the excellent condition of the soul. It's corrective branch—the craft of justice—will prescribe the kind of cure that corrects the excessive appetites for pleasure bred in the Athenians by the orators. The task of appetite correction, I submit, *begins* with restoring the place of genuine expertise in society. Rather than affirming their judgements of value as the orator-politician would do, the architectonic ruler submits the Athenians under the rule of knowledge. This ensures that the affairs of the city are governed *not* according to whatever pleases the soul, but according to what is best. By preserving the authority of genuine craftsmen, the true ruler ensures that every aspect of the citizens lives are performed by those with the relevant expertise. It protects the masses against the harms caused by the deception and malpractice of non-craftsmen.¹⁴⁴

This kind of appetite correction constitutes a kind of discipline because it severs one major source of the masses' pleasure, the affirmation of their values based on incorrect beliefs. On this kind of discipline, Socrates notes:

Now, isn't it also true that doctors generally allow a person to fill up his appetites, to eat when he's hungry, for example, or drink when he's thirsty as much as he wants to when he's in good health, but when he's sick they practically never allow him to fill himself with what he has an appetite for?...And isn't it just the same way with the soul, my excellent friend? As long as it's corrupt, in that it's foolish, undisciplined, unjust and impious, it should be kept away from its appetites and not be permitted to do anything other than what will make it better...Now isn't keeping it away from what it has an appetite for, disciplining it? (505a6–b9).

The architectonic ruler thus restrains the masses' appetites by preventing them from being gratified by the orator-politicians' speeches, and it does so by orienting their appetites towards the truth. Following this step of reinstating genuine expertise, the most important

¹⁴⁴ This feature is what made “knowledge of knowledge” initially attractive to Socrates as a candidate for political rule in the *Charmides*. Though this condition does not suffice as happiness, ensuring that those who are in charge of some area of expertise are genuine craftsmen remains an important preliminary step.

and distinctive task of the architectonic ruler is to govern the activities of the lower crafts with an eye towards what is ultimately good for the soul.

As we saw in section 4.3, Socrates envisions the two branches of politics, justice and legislation, as the rightful ruler of all crafts in light of their privileged knowledge of what is good and bad for the soul. Like the housebuilder, the political craftsman looks to his final product, a well-ordered soul, and uses the products of the subordinate crafts like the housebuilder relies on his materials and tools, in order to devise the life of his citizens in a way that is conducive to moderating and restraining their appetites. In doing so, he will provide guidelines on how subordinate crafts are practiced, decide when it is best to act, and provide the right target for action. In addition, the political craftsman can ban all forms of flattery or moderate their practice by orienting them towards benefitting the soul. Will oratory and its bodily counterpart pastry-baking be included in a society whose goal is to produce flourishing citizens? If so, under what circumstances? What kind of military personnel and building projects will be ultimately of service to the stability and health of the city? And how can these matters be decided with the virtues of justice and self-control of the citizens in view?¹⁴⁵ This is what Socrates has in mind, I suggest, when he claims that one must ensure that oratory and every other activity should always be used in support of justice (527c3-4).

This manner of rule stands in contrast to the competitive way in which orator-politicians relate to the subordinate crafts. Rather than attempting to win over the craftsmen as the orators would do, the true political ruler preserves their expertise and furthers their practice so that their expertise and products can be used to promote the common good. If fully realized, an architectonic conception of political rule can remove the soul of injustice by bringing order to the appetites of the masses. It does so by providing the correct account of the good towards which all other life-shaping arrangements are made. And this correct account of the good serves as a target for the ruling craftsman to shape his citizens by arranging the practical, social, and political aspects of their lives with an eye towards

¹⁴⁵ At times Socrates seems extremely critical towards previous politicians for filling the city with harbours, dockyards, and tribute payments. But at 519a, he seems to suggest that what he takes issue with is not these activities, but the fact that the previous politicians did so “without justice and self-control” (519a2).

correcting their disorderly appetites. Eventually, if the citizens are no longer corrupted, then the *Gorgias* seems open to the idea that the political ruler can arrange the lives of the masses by training them to take pleasure in the right things (500a4–6).

The *Gorgias* remains somewhat ambiguous as to how true *politikê technê* will implement this program onto the masses. At 517b, Socrates notes that in redirecting the city's appetites and getting the citizens to become better, one can use "persuasion or constraint" (517b6). This passage leaves open several possibilities. The political craftsman can implement the genuine craft of oratory (one that has been alluded to throughout the dialogue) to persuade the masses, especially in political gatherings, to vote in favour of decisions that will ultimately benefit them. It can also rely on noble oratory to persuade the Athenians towards adopting the correct conception of the good, thereby submitting them to another type of persuasion, one that provides conviction with knowledge (454e3–4). Or, if we give priority to Socrates' claim that he is the only one who practices true politics, then perhaps the dialogue envisions something more personal. The political craftsman can implement its program by relying on the elenchus, where corrupt souls are submitted to a series of questions that expose their incorrect beliefs. Lastly, if it is necessary, the *Gorgias* seems open to the idea of a kind of autocracy, a constitution that enforces its governance without the direct input of its citizens.

4.5. Conclusion

I began this chapter with the aim of demonstrating that the *Gorgias* also presents us with an architectonic view of political rule. In doing so, I explored the crucial context against which this view is presented—the value and practice of oratory. I argued that for the orators, their discipline is seen as a source of power and freedom. For Socrates, oratory is rejected on the basis that it undermines the place of expertise in society for the sake of committing injustice. In this way, oratory directly challenges the nature of the true political craft. In this iteration of architectonic knowledge, the *Gorgias* incorporates explicitly the distinction between body and soul and between regulative and corrective crafts. The dialogue also introduces to us an important connection between craftsmanship and order. On the picture,

the true political craftsman uses and guides the practice of subordinate crafts in order to provide the orderly constitution of the soul.

Conclusion

I began this thesis with the goal of investigating the relationship between Plato's account of craft (*technê*) and virtue, as it appears in his early dialogues. The overarching aim of my project was to show that craft is central to Plato's views on virtue, I hope in ways that have not been previously appreciated. In this conclusion, I consider two outstanding issues. First, I reflect on the question of whether virtue can be called a craft proper for Plato. Second, I discuss how I see the two parts of the thesis fitting together and how they reflect Plato's philosophical goals.

To begin with, is virtue a craft for Plato? Over the course of this thesis, I do not directly answer this question nor do I argue for this claim without qualification. My main motivation for doing so is that I do not believe that it is particularly useful to think along these lines. That is, it is not useful to think of virtue and craft as rigid concepts, each with a set of necessary and sufficient conditions that we can rely on for the sake of identifying one with the other. This thesis has advocated for the importance of the idea of craft to the way that Plato thinks about, inquires after, and articulates various complex features of virtue, including political rule. In doing so, I have emphasized the flexibility and the contextual diversity in which craft shows up in Plato's works. To this end, I believe that conceiving of virtue as a craft is illuminating for Plato, rather than limiting. As I noted in the introduction of this thesis, *technê* for the ancient world refers to the systematic application of human intelligence to some particular field. And to a large extent, Plato preserves this meaning. Because he considered so many activities and skills as examples of such an application of human intelligence, he could observe them and see how human intelligence can be applied to the ultimate question of how to live well, which for him is concerned with what is good and bad. This being said, I think it is appropriate to call virtue and the sort of knowledge fit for political rule a craft proper only if we keep in mind of a rich conception of craft, particularly the one I advocated for in the *origins view* in Chapter 2.

One major challenge in trying to understand Plato's account of craft is that often, we find conflicting claims in Plato's works, sometimes even within one single dialogue. This challenge is most present in the question of how Plato understands the value of ordinary crafts. Sometimes he seems to speak of their deficiencies while at other times, he is committed to their good-directness without qualification. Ultimately, my answer to this question was that ordinary crafts are benefit-oriented, and occupy a normative "middle-ground". They are not to be taken as value-neutral simply understood. Rather, ordinary crafts have a built-in notion of service, as something discovered for the sake of improving human life, whether this is to meet our basic needs or to facilitate our social and civic life. However, in trying to account for this tendency in Plato to present the crafts in conflicting terms, I found it useful to see that Plato is engaged in two related, but different philosophical projects. Thus I have organized the thesis to reflect these two projects. The first half of this thesis focuses on how Plato relies on the idea of craft and various ordinary examples as a model for virtue, while the second half of this thesis examines how Plato's account of political rule relates to ordinary crafts not as a model but as fields of expertise. When he is thinking about the crafts as a model for virtue, Plato tends to focus on their positive and even idealized features. He does so because he is trying articulate what all organized applications of human intelligence have in common and how they can be useful for developing an organized *technê* of the human and social kind, as Socrates puts it in the *Apology*.

However, in the course of trying to articulate the nature of virtue, Plato has to confront the issue of how virtue, as a branch of knowledge, relates to other branches of knowledge. This is not the approach that most ancient philosophers take. Aristotle, for example, makes it clear that crafts are concerned with production, while virtue is concerned with action. So while Aristotle is happy to compare virtue with craft, such as in the acquisition of virtue, he is clear that they operate in two distinct provinces. In contrast to Aristotle, Plato rejected the separation of the sciences and held a single view of the Good. And thus, there is a tension between seeing both ordinary crafts and virtue as a kind of expertise. As I noted in Chapter 3, one main question that drives Plato towards architectonic thinking (and perhaps even towards a more political conception of virtue) is the question of how virtue can remain sovereign in guiding our lives in the face of other experts. On this

question, virtue is ultimately concerned with what is good and bad for a human being and this is superordinate to all other human pursuits. From this perspective, Plato hones in on the limitations of ordinary crafts and why in his view, they ought to be subordinated under the rule of virtue, particularly wisdom and justice. By seeing Plato as serving two distinct, though overlapping, philosophical goals, we can account for some of the discrepancies in his view.

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