

2017

# Moral Psychology and Degenerate Regimes in Plato's Republic

Peiyong Zhu  
pzhu@wellesley.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection>

---

## Recommended Citation

Zhu, Peiyong, "Moral Psychology and Degenerate Regimes in Plato's Republic" (2017). *Honors Thesis Collection*. 507.  
<https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection/507>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. For more information, please contact [ir@wellesley.edu](mailto:ir@wellesley.edu).

Moral Psychology and Degenerate Regimes in Plato's Republic

Peiyong (Peggy) Zhu

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the  
Prerequisite for Honors  
in Philosophy Department  
under the advisement of Corinne Gartner

May 2017

© 2017 Peiyong Zhu

## ABSTRACT

---

The degenerate regimes and individuals have been a neglected topic in the literature on Plato's moral psychology in the *Republic*. This thesis contributes to the currently limited literature on degradation, and explores the following issues in the interpretation of Plato: the validity of the city-soul analogy across all regimes, including both the just city and the unjust cities, the cause of degradation, and the bad-making feature in the degenerate regimes. In defense of my account of the badness of degradation, I also examine the hydraulic model of desire, and offer an interpretation that resolves an apparent tension between the model and Plato's account of the tyrant.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my advisor, Corinne Gartner, who has kindly given me invaluable guidance, incredible inspiration and infinite support in the process of research and writing. Her teaching in the seminar on Plato's *Republic* is the reason why I decided to write this thesis.

I want to thank Anne-Sophie Tomé, who generously agreed to help me edit my draft, offered me her humorous and insightful suggestions, and pushed me in my completion and improvement of the thesis.

Lastly, I want to express my appreciation of the company and moral support of my thesis friends, Fani Ntavelou-Baum, Angela Sun, Adele Watkins, and the friendship of all my philosophy friends who have brightened my days in Founders 322.

## CONTENTS

---

Introduction

### PART ONE: CITY-SOUL ANALOGY

Introduction

I. Aristocracy and the Williams Challenge

II. Timocracy

III. Oligarchy

IV. Democracy

V. Tyranny

Conclusion

### PART TWO: DEGENERATE REGIMES

Introduction

I. The Cause of Degradation

i. Possible Explanations and Their Inadequacy

ii. The Degradation of Kallipolis

iii. The Degradation of Other Cities

II. The Badness of the Degraded Cities

i. Significance of the Question

ii. Objection to Gavrielides

iii. An Alternative Account of Badness

Conclusion

### PART THREE: THE HYDRAULIC MODEL OF DESIRE

Introduction

I. The Hydraulic Model

II. The Increase of Channels

III. The Increase of Water

Conclusion

Conclusion

Bibliography

## INTRODUCTION

---

In the *Republic*<sup>1</sup>, Plato argues that being just is more beneficial than being unjust. In his effort to define justice, he constructs an ideal city, kallipolis, in order to identify the virtue of justice in it. Later he offers a theory about the constitution of the soul and describes the condition of the soul required for a just person. Plato applies his theories about the soul to the ideal city and the just person as well as to four degraded cities, aiming to demonstrate that the people in the unjust cities are worse-off than the just person in kallipolis. This thesis examines Plato's moral psychology in the context of the degenerate regimes. Much of the literature on Plato's moral psychology, such as the work by Hendrick Lorenz<sup>2</sup> and Christopher Bobonich<sup>3</sup>, focuses on the virtuous person and the just city, while the unjust people and the degenerate regimes have been relatively neglected.<sup>4</sup> Although virtue is a central focus in Plato's philosophy, the degenerate regimes and the unjust rulers are the main topics of *Republic* Book VIII and IX. Hence, as an integral part in Plato's discussion in the *Republic*, the degenerate regimes can play a significant role in the examination of Plato's moral psychology. In recent years, scholars like Mark Johnstone,<sup>5</sup> Zena Hitz,<sup>6</sup> and Ezra Gavrielides<sup>7</sup> have contributed to topics on the degenerate regimes, including the structure of the

---

<sup>1</sup> This thesis is based on the Grube edition of Plato's *Republic*.

<sup>2</sup> Lorenz (2009, Part One) investigates the rational and non-rational motivation in Plato's theory. The investigation is conducted through examining the tripartite soul theory, which Plato discusses as part of the description of the just person. Lorenz does not examine how the tripartite soul theory applies to the unjust individuals in the degraded cities.

<sup>3</sup> Bobonich (2002, I.11-I.13) discusses the (possibility of possessing) virtues, ultimate ends, and happiness of the non-philosophers. The discussion about the non-philosophers is structured around the features of the philosophers—only the philosophers with the right ends can possess virtue and live a happy life—instead of the vice of the non-philosophers.

<sup>4</sup> This point has been helpfully brought up by Zena Hitz (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Johnstone (2013), Johnstone (2015).

<sup>6</sup> Hitz (2010).

<sup>7</sup> Gavrielides (2010).

soul of the degenerate characters, the relation between the structure of the soul and degeneration of the regimes, and the bad-making feature of the degenerate regimes. I aim to contribute to the current discussion with this thesis, for I believe that we stand to gain from the investigation of the degenerate regimes as much as we stand to benefit from examining the just city.

This thesis examines several key interpretive issues surrounding the debate of the degenerate regimes. Part One focuses on the city-soul analogy, which is a key premise in Plato's account for the just city and the just individual. I explore how the city-soul analogy should be construed and applied to the degenerate regimes and establish the overall validity of the analogy across all regimes. The city-soul analogy functions as an important explanatory tool in the rest of the thesis. Part Two answers two questions regarding degradation: what is the cause of degradation and why are the degenerate regimes bad. I offer a unified account for the cause of degradation and propose an alternative account of badness of degradation to Gavrielides (2010)'s account. Part Three resolves a potential tension between Plato's "hydraulic model" of desire<sup>8</sup> and my proposal, and offers an interpretation of the hydraulic model that preserves the consistency in Plato's discussions.

---

<sup>8</sup> Lane (2007), p. 45.

## PART ONE: CITY-SOUL ANALOGY

---

### **Introduction**

In the Republic, Plato introduces an analogy that relates the characteristics of a city with the characteristics of the soul of its citizens in order to ascertain a correct conceptualization of justice. In Book II, Plato takes on the task of investigating justice and injustice to demonstrate that the former is more beneficial than the latter. To initiate the investigation of justice, he proposes that it would be easier to seek an understanding of justice as it relates to the city in order to subsequently seek an understanding of justice as it relates to the individual, for the former supposedly has more justice due to its larger size (368e-369a). This proposal shifts the focus of the following two books (II-III) from individual justice to political justice, and sets up for the construction of kallipolis, the ideal city that is completely good, and therefore where justice, along with all other virtues, must be found. In Book IV, upon completing the construction of kallipolis, Plato searches for justice among the virtues in the city and gives a tentative definition of justice in the city (“the having and doing of one’s own”) (434a). To complete the inquiry into justice, the next step is to ascertain whether a similar kind of thing can be accepted as justice in the individual and finalizing this definition. This is where the city-soul analogy, which functions to bridge political justice and individual justice, first appears. At 435e, Plato points out that each of the citizen must have the same parts and characteristics as the city, because it is hard to imagine where else the characteristics of a city come from, if not from its people. He uses Thracians and Scythians as examples of spirited people who give spiritedness to their cities, and Phoenicians and Egyptians as examples of money-lovers who install a love of money in their city. It then follows that justice in kallipolis must also come from the just people in it. If this is the case, justice in the individual



will be found through the examination of their souls. The analogy raised here is intuitively true. It lays out the foundation for a more elaborate analogy between the structural features in the just city and the just soul. Plato then introduces the tripartite soul theory, according to which the soul consists of three parts (appetite, spirit, and reason), each corresponding to one of the three classes in the ideal city (producers, guardians, and rulers). In a just soul, the relationship between the three parts and their respective features resemble those of the three classes in the just city.

The identification of justice in the city and the individual concludes the investigation of justice (one that is as rigorous as it can be without appealing to the more complex philosophy and mathematics in Book V-VI), and the city-soul analogy does not appear again until Book VIII, when Plato returns to the debate regarding the benefits of justice and introduces the other four types of political regimes and their corresponding human characters. Although Plato seems to believe that there could be an indefinite number of political constitutions<sup>9</sup>, he claims that only four types other than aristocracy (exemplified by kallipolis) are worth discussing (544a). All four constitutions are unjust and together they represent a gradual degradation of the just city. Since Plato aims to demonstrate that it is more beneficial for the individual to be just instead of unjust, the city-soul analogy is once again invoked in order to connect the discussion of the city with that of the corresponding individual. At 544d, Plato argues that there should exist “as many forms of human characters as there are of constitutions”, because constitutions must be born from the characters of the people “who live in the cities governed by them...and drag the rest along with them.” Therefore, the description of each degraded constitution is accompanied by a description of an individual with the corresponding character. Furthermore, besides the apparent resemblance between the constitution and the character of the individual, there also exist some structural

---

<sup>9</sup> I use the words “regime”, “constitution”, and “city” interchangeably in this thesis.

similarities between the city and the corrupted individual's soul (not unlike the relationship between kallipolis and the souls of its citizens). For example, a tyrannical city is ruled by a single ruler (a tyrant), and the soul of a tyrannical person is ruled by a single lawless erotic desire. However, unlike kallipolis, none of the degraded cities seem to have three distinctive social classes that correspond with the three soul parts. Moreover, the condition of the soul of the four types of individuals is not clearly explained. It is not immediately apparent what role each soul part plays in the degenerate souls. The description of the unjust constitutions and their corresponding individuals is completed in Book IX, where Plato concludes that the happiness of the city and the corresponding individual declines as the constitution declines (580c).

The two articulations of the city-soul analogy in Book IV and Book VIII seem to suggest at least two different levels of analogy between the city and the souls of the citizens. The first level, as proposed in Book IV, is the analogy between the characteristics of the city and the characteristics of each of its citizens. The examples he uses (Thracians, Scythians, Egyptians etc.) imply that it is possible for all people in a city to share a universal character, which in turn gives rise to the character of the city. However, this is not necessarily the case with the five types of constitutions described in the Republic. To begin with, it is not clear that the just city kallipolis consists of only just people. Plato sets a rather high standard for the just soul: in order for a person to have a just soul, reason must be the naturally strongest part in the soul; the person whose reason is naturally the strongest must be raised in a way that is proper for her nature, which includes strict physical training and education in poetry and music; such education will then put her soul in the right condition, where reason rules over appetite with the assistance of spirit (441e-442b). Since reason is the naturally strongest soul part only for a small number of people, namely the rulers, it is unclear whether the rest of the city (producers and guardians) also have justice in their soul.

Since Book IV provides no direct description of the soul of the other two classes, one must use speculation to decide the condition of their souls from indirect evidence. It is known that the guardians are characterized by their love of honor and warfare, which makes them naturally suited to engage in warfare, and the producers are characterized by their love of materials and money, which makes them the money-makers in the city. It seems natural to assume that the guardians' souls are ruled by spirit and the producers' souls are ruled by appetite. If this is indeed the case, then the city-soul analogy cannot be interpreted as the analogy between the characteristics of a city and those of all of its citizens, but perhaps only as an analogy between the city and its rulers. This kind of interpretation constitutes the second level of analogy and is supported by the articulation of the city-soul analogy in Book VIII, which suggests that the characteristics of a city come from the people that govern the city and "drag the rest along with them" (544e). Although this interpretation appears to be a solution to the problem for kallipolis, it cannot yet be readily accepted as the final say on the issue. On one hand, admitting that the analogy exists between only the rulers and the city may create a bigger problem for kallipolis—since the rulers of the city are in the minority, it would then follow that the just city consists largely of unjust people, which is certainly problematic. This is the challenge famously raised by Bernard Williams. On the other hand, the introduction of the other four constitutions complicates matters. Unlike kallipolis, the other constitutions do not necessarily have stable rulers and/or social structures. Indeed, each one gradually degrades until it becomes a worse type of constitution. Tyranny is possibly exempt from this process, since tyranny is the last stage in degradation process. However it is worth noting that even the tyrant undergoes changes in the soul. The education system and institution of kallipolis ensure that only just people, who have true knowledge and are capable of right judgment, will be selected rulers. Therefore, the social class structure of kallipolis will remain intact, at least until

the ruler eventually makes a mistake, due to sense perception, which leads to the decline of kallipolis (546b). In the other constitutions, there is no such institution to ensure stability. In democracy, for example, the ruler is constantly changing and the nature of the soul of each ruler is uncertain—money-lovers and honor-lovers have the same chance at ruling as those who are naturally suited to rule (but would not have the right upbringing to become real philosopher kings). Before comparing the character of the ruler to the city, it would be difficult to decide what the character of the ruler is in a democracy in the first place. Therefore, neither of the possible interpretations is without problems.

The purpose of this chapter is to work out an interpretation of the city-soul analogy that can sufficiently account for potential discrepancies between the analogy and Plato's description of the five types of constitution and their corresponding individuals. In order to achieve this goal, this chapter will examine how the analogy is drawn in each type of constitution in order to reach an interpretation that can be consistently applied to different types of constitutions. The two articulations of the analogy in Book IV and VIII will serve as a starting point for the examination to provide a tentative account of the analogy. After examining this tentative account in each type of constitution, I will make necessary revisions to the account so that it is consistent with the descriptions of the constitutions and their corresponding individual.

Based on the accounts of the city-soul analogy in Book IV and VIII, the two possible conditions of the city-soul analogy can be summarized as follow:

- (1) A city has the same characteristics as does the soul of the ruler(s) within the city;
- (2) A city has the same characteristics as does the soul of the non-rulers of the city.

It is important to note that (1) and (2) do not directly correspond to the two kinds of analogy in Book IV and VIII. The Book IV account posits both (1) and (2), and the analogy in Book VIII

posits only (2). Since the truth of (1) and (2) entails the truth of (2), it would be easier to examine (1) and (2) as separate conditions and avoid the redundancy of examining both (1) & (2) and (2). Since the truthfulness of (1) and the truthfulness of (2) are not inter-entailing, it is easy to see that there exist four possible results of the examination in each type of constitution: 1. (1) is true and (2) is not true, 2. both (1) and (2) are true (in which case both the analogies in Book IV and VIII are right), 3. (1) is not true and (2) is true (in which case the analogy in Book IV is not right but the analogy in Book VIII is right), and 4. both (1) and (2) are not true (in which case the city-soul analogy is inconsistent with Plato's description of the constitution). Although 4. is listed as a possible result, it is highly unlikely to appear. If 4. indeed occurs in any of the constitutions, then the city-soul analogy will fail as a tool to bridge the characteristics of the city and that of its people, which means that the characteristics of a city do not necessarily resemble those of its people and justice or injustice in the city do not necessarily entail justice or injustice in the individual. Plato will have to prove that being just is more beneficial than being unjust using a different approach. The current approach examines the happiness of each type of individual that corresponds with each type of constitution and ranks their happiness along with the justice/injustice of the city. Moreover, as stated above, Plato's claim that the characteristics of a city must come from its people has an intuitive appeal and holds at least some kind of truth. It would be counter-intuitive to arrive at a conclusion that suggests little to no similarity between the people and their city. The aim of this chapter will be to preserve the consistency of the city-soul analogy with the rest of the text in the *Republic*. Now that the tentative account and possible results of the examination are clear, the process of the examination of each city can be roughly outlined as follow: 1. to identify the characteristics of the city, 2. to identify the characteristics of the person that corresponds with the city, and 3. to compare the rulers and non-rulers in the city to the person in step 2 and decide if

their characteristics are analogous to those of the city. This process may vary for each constitution depending on the available textual evidence, but it can nevertheless serve as a guideline for the following sections.

As will be demonstrated in the following sections, condition (1) applies in all types of constitution except democracy, which lacks a single leadership; and condition (2) applies to almost all constitutions, although the degree of resemblance between the citizens and the constitution may vary.

### **I. Aristocracy and the Williams Challenge**

Aristocracy, exemplified by kallipolis, is the first and the only just constitution in the Republic. Kallipolis is constructed as the ideal city in which all virtues, including justice, must be found. The most distinctive characteristics of kallipolis are therefore the four virtues: wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice (427e), which come from the unique social structure and educational system in kallipolis. Three social classes exist in kallipolis: producers (craftsmen), auxiliary guardians (soldiers), and complete guardians (rulers). Each class consists of people who are naturally best suited to practice their designated craft. The producer class, which is the majority in the city, is composed of appetitive people with a love of money. Hence, the members of the producing class are the money-makers in the city. The auxiliary guardians are spirited people with a love of honor. The complete guardians are the ones with the most valuable nature and have a love of learning. The educational system of kallipolis ensures that the complete guardians, who are born with the rarest, best nature (both spirited and philosophical), receive the best education. This education serves to instill within them a sense of order through the right kind of poetry and music, so that they can guard the established system and its values and guard against internal and external enemies. In his discussion of the four virtues, Plato points out that kallipolis is wise

because of the knowledge possessed by the rulers, which is about the maintenance of the city as a whole (428d); it's courageous because of the power of the auxiliary guardians to preserve the laws of the city through pains, pleasures, desires, or fears (429d); and it's moderate because of the agreement between the naturally better and naturally worse about who is to rule in the city (432a). Justice, as it turns out, is doing one's own work and not meddling with what is not one's own (433b). The city is therefore just because each individual has and does their own.

The three-part structure of the city and the four virtues are perfectly mirrored in the just people. It is important to recognize, however, that since every soul consists of three parts (but not every city has three classes), the key analogy between the just city and the just soul is the relation and functioning of the three parts, instead of the mere existence of the three parts. According to the tripartite soul theory, each person has three parts<sup>10</sup> in her soul: appetite, spirit, and reason. Appetite is the part that gives rise to bodily and material desires (439d); it is also the largest and the most insatiable part of the soul (442a). Spirit is the part that gives rise to emotion, especially the sense of honor, anger, and shame; it's the natural ally of reason, perhaps because one is easily angered if treated unjustly. Reason is the part in charge of rational calculation (439d); it holds back appetite, which seeks for instantaneous satisfaction of desires, and decides what is best for the person in the long run. The love of money comes from appetite, the love of honor comes from spirit, and the love of learning comes from reason. Since a just person, like the just city, is completely good, she will also possess the same four virtues. Like in the just city, justice in the soul is each part doing its own work, which requires reason to rule, spirit to be its ally, and appetite to be ruled (441e). A just person would be wise because of the knowledge possessed by reason

---

<sup>10</sup> Plato seems to allow more parts in the soul at certain places—maybe Plato thinks that it's impossible to have unity in the soul if the structural relationship between the three parts is lacking.

regarding what is good for each part and for the whole soul (442c), courageous because of the spirit's preservation of reason's judgement about the right object of fear through pains and pleasure (442c), and moderate because of the common belief of each part that reason should rule, which makes the soul parts harmonious and friendly with each other (442c).

The question that arises now is whether the rulers and non-rulers in kallipolis respectively are just people, whose characteristics are analogous to those of the just city. There is little controversy on the fact that the rulers of kallipolis are just people, since they are the ones who have the strongest love of learning, and receive the best education that conditions their souls in the right way. At 441e, Plato points out that the necessary condition for a just soul is "a mixture of music and poetry, on the one hand, and physical training, on the other, that make the two parts (reason and spirit) harmonious, stretching and nurturing the rational part with fine words and learning, relaxing the other part (spirit) through soothing stories, and making it gentle by means of harmony and rhythm". This is exactly the kind of training that complete guardians receive from birth according to Book II and III. We can thereby infer from this passage that the complete guardians' soul parts are put in order and harmony as a result of their training and education. Furthermore, the complete guardians of kallipolis possess the knowledge of what is best for the city, and are able to discern what is just from what is unjust. According to Book VI, this kind of knowledge about justice must be derived from knowledge of the Forms, which makes all just things useful and beneficial (505a). In other words, a complete guardian's knowledge about how to maintain a just city must come from her knowledge of the form of the good, which also includes the knowledge about how to main one's soul in a proper way. Therefore, both their education and their knowledge about the city necessarily entail that the rulers of kallipolis have the right conditioning for a just soul and the knowledge to regulate their soul justly, which make them just people whose characteristics



resemble those of their city. Condition (1) of the tentative account of the analogy thus applies in kallipolis.

Unlike the rulers of kallipolis, it is difficult to determine the condition of the soul of the non-rulers in kallipolis, especially the condition of the soul of the producer class. As I pointed out in the introduction, since the producers and craftsmen are money makers in the city, which is determined by their money-loving nature, it is natural to assume that these people's souls are ruled by the appetitive part and that their souls are not just like those of their rulers. The possibility that the producer class's soul is ruled by appetite gives rise to the famous challenge by Bernard Williams<sup>11</sup>. Williams points out that the city-soul analogy posits that a city is F if and only if its men are F and the explanation of a city's being F is the same as that of a man's being F. In the case of kallipolis, the explanation of a man's being just refers to the special condition of his soul, the condition being that each part does its job, which entails reason's rule over spirit and appetite. In order for the explanation of a man's justice to be the same the explanation of a city's justice, the just city must also have the equivalent three parts (reason, spirit, and appetite). According to Plato, the majority of men in the just city are money-makers, whose souls are ruled by appetite. A contradiction thereby arises, since the just city has a majority of unjust men.

Williams's challenge rests on the premise that the souls of the money makers in kallipolis are ruled by appetite, which at first glance seems to be true. However, nowhere in the *Republic* has Plato explicitly described the condition of the soul of these people, probably because of their less important role in the city. All that's known for sure about them is that they are naturally suited to be producers and craftsmen, due to a lack of spirit and reason in their souls, which merely indicates that their appetite is stronger than spirit and reason by nature, but does not necessarily mean that

---

<sup>11</sup> Williams (1973).

their soul is ruled by appetite. The reason behind this claim is that the power status of a soul part (or a set of desires in the soul) does not always depend on its natural strength or size, but largely on a person's upbringing and the education that she receives. Plato's emphasis on the upbringing and education of youths is seen throughout the *Republic*. He believes that even the (naturally) best soul (in fact, especially the naturally best soul) is corruptible if the person is surrounded by the wrong kind of people and does not engage in the right kind of activity (philosophy). In Book IX, Plato describes a type of lawless desire that is savage and beastly and seeks to gratify itself when the owner of the soul goes to sleep (571b). Judged by the gruesome content of the desire and the frequency of their appearance in dreams, they are the worst and strongest desires if not controlled by reason. These lawless desires are "probably present in everyone" (571b), even "in those of us who seem to be entirely moderate or measured" (572b), "but they are held in check by the laws and better desires in alliance with reason" (571b). In fact, the tyrants in Book IX who eventually admits these desires into the soul are supposedly those with the better natures—they become the target of the drones who corrupt them precisely because of their superior nature. The tyrants may as well have souls that are naturally suited for philosophy and obtaining knowledge of the Good, but the city that they live in drags them to the opposite direction. This shows that the natural strength of a soul part or a set of desires in the soul does not necessarily align with its actual power status in the soul. A person whose lawless desires may not naturally be the strongest can be corrupted by her environment so that these desires completely dominate the soul, whereas another person who is naturally imbued with these same desires can be shaped by fine learning to suppress these desires when she is awake and gradually eliminate them even in sleep (571c).

What then, is the power status of each of the soul parts in the producer's soul? Unfortunately, as is said above, no definitive evidence exists. However, it must be recognized that the producer

class is performing their own job, and not meddling with others' work in the city, as a result of their agreement that the complete guardians should rule. In other words, they participate in and contribute to the moderation and justice of the city. The question to be asked then becomes: can a person who contributes to the moderation and justice of the city have an unjust soul? Book IV provides some kind of answer to the question at 442b, specifically that the well-nurtured reason and spirit will watch over appetite so that it does not become so big and strong such that it no longer does its own work but attempts to ruler over the other soul parts, "thereby overturning everyone's whole life". It seems that according to this passage, a soul ruled by appetite would not only cause chaos in the soul but also disturb the order of the city. It could well be the case that the "everyone" in the text is a metaphorical term that refers to the soul parts instead of citizens, since Plato also uses "class" to refer to the soul parts instead of the actual social class in the city. However, even if that is the case, it is hard to imagine that someone whose soul is ruled by appetite (and therefore is in chaos) would be willing to accept the ruling of the complete guardians, who constantly restrain their desires (the rulers guard against wealth so that the producers do not become so rich that they stop performing their crafts). One potential objection could be that the complete guardians and auxiliaries rule over the producers and craftsmen by force, and the producers are merely compelled to obey the rulers, instead of willingly accept their ruling, but that doesn't seem like the case with kallipolis. For one thing, the guardians are told the Myth of the Metal from youth so that they love and treat their people as brothers and sisters (415a-d). Additionally, moderation in kallipolis entails that both the better class (rulers) and the worse class (producers) agree that it is best for the city if the complete guardians rule and the worse class does not start civil wars against the rulers in order to gain power in the city. Therefore, there is reason

to believe that the producers' souls are ruled by reason instead of appetite, which allows them to engage in their designated crafts and agree with the arrangement of the city without revolting.

If the producers' souls are indeed ruled by reason, it must be explained in what way their reason can rule, since their reason is a naturally weak soul part. Although it is counter-intuitive to say that a soul can be ruled by its weaker (or weakest) soul part, it is nevertheless not inconceivable. One proposal by Ferrari<sup>12</sup> can be helpful for understanding how this might be possible. Ferrari argues that the producers are just people, and their souls are just insofar as they are ruled by the reason of the rulers. Ferrari believes that the reason of the producers by itself is too weak to rule, yet it does not mean that the producers are unjust people. The justice of their soul comes from their willing obedience to the rule of the ruler's reason, which is strong enough to be the proper ruler of a soul. Ferrari's proposal holds certain appeal, since it solves the Williams challenge by finding a way for the producers to be just. Nevertheless, according to this proposal, the producers' souls are just in virtue of their relations to other people's souls, which is unsatisfying because it does not answer which part is ruling in their own souls. A small revision to his proposal would be that the producers' souls are just because their reason is ruling in their souls with the help of the reason of the rulers, which makes up for the weakness of the producers' reason. It is true that the producers do not have the proper knowledge to decide what is the best for themselves. Their lack of knowledge is determined by the natural lacking in their rational part. However, the institution of kallipolis makes the rulers, who have the knowledge, aid the producers' reason by supplying it with true beliefs. With the supervision and instruction from the rulers, the producers' reason can rise to the highest power status in the soul and rule over its naturally strongest part (appetite). This is the way that a producer can be just without having a naturally strong rational part in the soul.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ferrari (2003), p.44.

It has now been shown that both the non-rulers and the rulers in kallipolis are just individuals, with a particular kind of relation between their soul parts that resemble the relation between the classes in the city. Some may still question whether the non-rulers are in fact just individuals, since their proposed way of achieving justice is significantly different (and lacking) compared to the justice of the rulers. Admittedly, this kind of questioning is justified, but it is not devastating to the argument above. It is true that the justice of the producers is not the same as the justice of the rulers. This kind of discrepancy should be expected based on their distinct nature. However, it is unrealistic to require a city that consists of different kinds of people to reach the same level of justice among all of its citizens or to assert that there is only one way of achieving justice in one's soul. At the beginning of Book IV, Plato points out that in a happy city, each class should be as happy as their nature is allowed. It is wrong to make a single class so happy that they become something that they are not. The same line of argument can be applied to justice. In constructing a just city, the goal is not to make any one class particularly just, but to make the city just as a whole. As for the justice in the individual, it should be left to nature to provide each group with their share of justice, whether it is large or small. It may be the case that the justice in producers is not as much or as "pure" as the justice in rulers, but it would be wrong to claim that the producers are unjust. In kallipolis, each class is as just as their nature allows, which is sufficient to make the city a just city.

## **II. Timocracy**

After aristocracy, timocracy is the second-best constitution. It comes to be as a result of the mixing of iron and bronze types into the ruling class. The most distinctive features of timarchy are the love of victory and love of honor, due to the predominance of the spirited element in the city (548c). Timocracy emerges after the rulers of aristocracy, who inevitably rely on their fallible

sensory perception, make a mistake about breeding in the city, which leads to the mixing of iron and bronze type into the gold ruling class. The two kinds of rulers pull the constitution towards different directions: one towards moneymaking and acquisition of property and the other towards virtue and the old order. After struggling with one another, the two types of rulers compromise on a middle way, which is to engage in warfare and enslave the people whom the rulers used to treat as brothers (the lower classes) (547b). In the new constitution, spirited people will be chosen as rulers, because the original ruling class (the wise ones) are now mixed. The rulers will have a secret pleasure with spending other people's money although they will still live communally (548b). At the same time, they will value physical training more than music and poetry and therefore their education will be by force (548b).

A man whose characteristics correspond those of the timocracy is obstinate and not very well trained in music and poetry (548e). He will be harsh to slaves, gentle to free people, and obedient to rulers out of his love of ruling and a love of honor (549b). He will develop a love of money as he grows older. His attitude towards virtue won't be pure (549b). All of this is caused by the lack of reason in his soul to guard against improper desires and preserve his virtue (549b). He is raised by a good father who tries to be just in an unjust city and a mother who blames the father for not meddling with other people's affair to gain honor. The son thereby settles in the middle part and becomes a proud and honor-loving man (549d-550b).

Since timocracy is a constitution that gradually declines from aristocracy, its ruling class and social structure must also undergo gradual change to reach a relatively stable state, although none of the unjust constitutions will be stable for long, because no city other than kallipolis is in fact "one" (422e) and civil war is bound to break out in these constitutions that leads to its degradation to a worse constitution. To compare the rulers and non-rulers to the city, one must look at the

relatively stable state of the constitution, which is also its most representative state. In its more stable state, that is, after the compromise between the bronze and gold classes has been made, the ruler of the city will be chosen from the spirited and honor-loving, who are likely to be the youths described above. The characteristics of these youths (honor-loving, spirited, untrained in poetry and music) correspond with the characteristics of the ruler, who will pull the city towards honor loving (note that the servants in these young people's households also speak highly of honor and complain about the fathers like their mothers do). It follows thus that the rulers of timocracy must share the characteristics of the city. Therefore, condition (1) applies to timocracy.

There is little information on the non-rulers in the city, but it is known from the text that the city now consists of a ruling class that engages in warfare and servants and slaves. These servants and slaves are the same people who used to be producers and craftsmen in aristocracy, who were ruled over but not enslaved by the ruling class. It seems unlikely that the servants and slaves will have a spirited nature that makes them honor loving, but as pointed out above, they have adopted the timocratic values. Although these people may be naturally more money-loving than the rulers, since the rulers do not have reason to guard virtues in the soul, they will eventually become more and more money-loving. Thus, at its relatively stable state, the whole city (both the rulers and non-rulers) will be an honor-loving society with a secret love for money.

### **III. Oligarchy**

Oligarchy comes to be from the timocracy when the timocratic rulers stretch and disobey the laws to satisfy their desire for material possessions (550d). The honor-loving men in timocracy become money-lovers and the money-loving rulers "make the majority of the others like themselves" (550e). In an oligarchy, wealth is valued the most and virtue is valued even less than in timocracy (550de). Wealthy people will be chosen as rulers because of the city's valuing of

wealth, and the rulers will establish a wealth qualification that dictates that only people who have a certain amount of property are qualified to rule. Several faults exist in an oligarchic city. The first is its ill choice of rulers by wealth, instead of by their capability of governing the city (551c). The second fault is the necessary division that exists in the city between the rich and the poor who, as a result of this division, often plot against each other, which makes the city a split one, instead of a whole (551d). The third fault is the city's inability to guard against external enemies because of both the rulers' fear of uniting the poor into an army and their unwillingness to pay mercenaries due to their love of money (551e). The fourth fault is meddling in other people's affairs, given that the same people will be farmers, money-makers, and soldiers simultaneously in the city. Lastly, the greatest evil of an oligarchic city is allowing someone to sell all her possessions for money and stay in the city as a ruler, when she is in fact nothing but a squanderer (552b). Under this constitution, the rulers will be the few people who sell their possession to accumulate wealth, while the rest of the city is deprived of their money and becomes beggars or evildoers, as a result of lack of education, bad rearing, and bad political institution (552e).

A person that resembles the oligarchic constitution is a timocrat's son who sees his father brought to court by false charge and has his property confiscated (553b). Humbled by poverty, the son enslaves the formerly ruling part (spirit) in his soul and establishes the money-making part of the appetite as the ruler (553c). He will use his reason to calculate how to make more money, and his spirit will treat wealth as honorable (553d). He will enslave his unnecessary desires and only fulfill the necessary desire for money, make a profit of everything, and hoard his wealth (554a). Due to the lack of education, he will also have dronish appetites (some beggarly, others evil), but will forcibly hold them in check (554c). This description fits the previous description of the oligarchic ruler, who will sell all possessions for money and become one of the few wealthy people



in the city. Therefore, rulers of an oligarchy must also be oligarchic individuals who resemble the characteristics of the city.

As for the rest of the city, they are the ones whose dromish appetites are more manifested than the rulers of the city. The majority of the city will be deprived of their wealth and become harmless beggars or harmful evildoers in the city. Indeed, except for the rulers, almost everyone is a beggar in the city (552e). It is clarified at 559d that the dromish people are ruled by unnecessary desires, which refer to the desires that go beyond what is beneficial to one's well-being and are harmful both to the body and to the reason and moderation of the soul. It's possible that the education received by these people is even poorer than that received by the rulers. Alternatively, their reason and spirit may be too weak to acquire wealth and satisfy the dromish appetites that make them beggars or evildoers in check. Either way, they do not seem to share in the oligarchic value as much as the rulers do, even though they may also desire money. This division between the oligarchic people and the rest of the citizens is what will eventually cause the decline of the oligarchic city. Therefore, it can be concluded that condition (1) applies in oligarchy; condition (2) does not apply to the majority of the non-rulers in the city because they are ruled by unnecessary desires instead of necessary desires, although they may also have a desire for money.

#### **IV. Democracy**

The democratic city comes to be when the poor in oligarchy realizes the physical weakness of the rich ruling class, starts a war against the rulers, overthrows them, and gives the victorious an equal share in ruling by assigning people to positions of rule by lot (557a). Democracy is a constitution characterized by its freedom. The city enjoys full freedom, including freedom of speech (557b). Each citizen is licensed to do whatever she wants and arranges her life to her own pleasure. Democracy is also the constitution that contains all kinds of constitutions on account of

the license it gives to its citizens. In a democracy, each citizen can establish any order she wants (557d). There is no requirement to rule or to obey the law (557e). If one wants, one can avoid the duty to serve or escape a sentence (558a). Moreover, a democracy completely lacks any established value besides freedom and despises the values established in the previous constitutions (virtue, honor, and wealth). It distributes equality to equals and unequals alike and does not have a stable ruling class (558c).

A democratic individual is raised by an oligarchic father and forcefully rules over his non-money-making, unnecessary desires when he is young (558d). However, because of the extreme lack of education, the young boy changes when some of his desires other than the necessary ones receive help from the external forces with which he associates (559e). Through the struggle inside him between the oligarchic and democratic desires, more desires are nurtured without his awareness and they become numerous and strong. These desires eventually occupy his soul since his soul lacks the knowledge or truth to guard against them (560b). The democratic man will then return to the dronish people who will persuade him that moderation and orderly expenditure are “boorish and mean” and continue to instill insolence, anarchy, extravagance, and shamelessness in his soul, thereby releasing all useless and unnecessary pleasures (560e). After this, the democratic man will treat his necessary and unnecessary desires equally, satisfying any desire that comes along as if chosen by lot (561b). He will not accept any word of truth that claims some desires are good while others are not and will instead declare that all pleasures are equal (561c).

In order to decide whether the rulers and non-rulers in a democracy are also democratic in their souls, we must first decide who are the rulers in a democratic city. It has been said that the ruler of a democratic city is constantly changing because the constitution provides everyone the license to rule. At 564d, Plato claims that a democratic city can be divided into three parts. The

first part is the class of idlers, or the dronish people, who also exist in oligarchy but have more power in democracy because of the freedom in the constitution. This is the dominant class that manages everything in the city (564d). The second class is the naturally organized people who make money and become the wealthiest (564e). The last class is the largest group of people who work with their own hands and do not participate in politics (565a). It seems that Plato believes that, although the freedom of democracy allows anyone willing to rule to manage the city, the actual rulers are the dronish people, because the rest of the people do not have the desire to manage the city's affairs. Another interpretation could be that although theoretically anyone can rule in the city, the city does not actually have a stable class of rulers with unified goals and values. Each person is left to do whatever she wants and there is not a single leadership or a set of functioning law in the city, because the so-called "shared value" is in effect the absence of value. If the first understanding is adopted, the rulers of a democratic city are not truly democratic because dronish people are only occupied by unnecessary desires (and not necessary ones) whereas a democratic person treats necessary and unnecessary desires alike. If the second interpretation is adopted, then the comparison between the rulers and the city is meaningless for democracy because there is simply no ruler in the city. Either way, in the absence of a real ruler in the city, condition (1) does not apply in democracy. However, the third class of the city, which is also the majority of the city, are the most likely to be democratic since they do not have a unified task in life (either to persuade and speak to the crowd like the drones do or make money like the second class). The second class are more oligarchic than the third class, but are not true oligarchs, since they do not plot against the rest of the city to obtain wealth. It can be inferred that the second class is also democratic because there exist unnecessary desires in their souls that prevent them from selling all their

possessions for money like true oligarchs do. Therefore, condition (2) applies to the majority of the people in democracy.

## **V. Tyranny**

Tyranny is the last type of constitution and the most unjust of the five types of constitution. It arises when the drones in a democratic city trick the working class into believing that the money-makers are oligarchic and are plotting against them, which triggers a war between the people and the rich. The people then select and nurture a champion as their leader, who will eventually execute the rich on false charges (that they are plotting against the people to restore oligarchy) and promises the redistribution of land and the cancellation of debts. The killing of her kindred turns the leader into a tyrant (566a). She will continue to stir up wars against the rich (who now wants to execute her) and receive protection from the people, who believe that the tyrant's safety is endangered but not their own. The rich will then either flee the city out of fear or get executed and the tyrant will thus become a complete tyrant rather than a leader (566d). After the exile of the rich, the tyrant will keep stirring up a war so that the people will continue to believe in the necessity of her leadership (566e). In an effort to prevent the people from plotting against her, the tyrant will impoverish the people by forcing them to pay war taxes (567a). All those who are brave, large-minded, knowledgeable, or rich will be purged from the city, so that they won't be able to overthrow her rule (567b). The tyrant will pay the drones as her bodyguards and free slaves in order to enlist them in his bodyguard. She will pay them by feeding off the people that give rise to her leadership and will not be afraid to use violence against the people, including her own parents, if they dare to refuse (569a-b). Ultimately, the people, in trying to avoid enslavement at the hands of the rich people, end up being enslaved by the real slaves (569c).

A tyrannical person that resembles tyranny comes to be when she is led to lawlessness by the drones that also tried to enchant her father (572d). Her father will come to the aid of the middle desires (the democratic desires that treat all desires equally and allows one to enjoy them in moderation), and pull her back (572e). When the tyrant-makers cannot keep hold of her, they plant an erotic love in her to be the leader of all idle desires like a winged drone (572e). This erotic desire will be nurtured to grow as large as possible. When it's fully grown, the tyrant-makers will plant a sting of longing in it, which makes the leader of the soul frenzied (573b). It will find and destroy any good or shame in the person until she is purged of moderation and filled with imported madness (573b). Clearly, this erotic desire, which is a tyrant in the soul, is analogous to the tyrant of the city. The idle desires in the soul will grow alongside the tyrannical one, which will satisfy the idle desires by acquiring wealth from every source: first borrowing, expenditure, and then theft or robbing by violence against her own parents and the public. Plato states explicitly that tyrannical men who are born in a non-tyrannical city will act as bodyguard to some other tyrant or serve as mercenaries at wartime (575b). They are the tyrant makers, who create the most tyrannical person (575d). It is then clear that, since the ruler in a tyrannical city is a tyrant, condition a must apply to tyranny. As for the rest of the city, the majority of the citizens will be the tyrant's bodyguard, who are also tyrannical people according to the description above. It is not clear how many of the democratic people that first gave leadership to the tyrant will eventually be left, since the tyrant constantly starts war against them and purges any good or knowledge from the city. Since democratic people treat necessary and unnecessary desires equally with some moderation, which is against the lawlessness in tyranny, they will most probably be forced to obey the tyrant or be exiled from the city. Therefore, condition (2) can be applied to at least a majority of tyranny.

## **Conclusion**

It has been demonstrated that the tentative account of the city-soul analogy proposed at the beginning of the chapter is mostly consistent with Plato's description of the five types of constitution, although the way in which it applies differs for each constitution. As can be seen above, it would be difficult to give a single account of the city-soul analogy that applies to all types of constitutions because of the unique condition in each type. In aristocracy, the characteristics of the rulers resemble those of the city to a large extent, while the degree of resemblance of the characteristics is less in the non-rulers. In the rest of the constitutions, all rulers have characteristics that correspond to the characteristics of the city, with the exception of democracy, which lacks a single leadership or a constant ruler. The non-rulers in these constitutions mostly consist of people that share values similar to those of the city, but lack the ability or opportunity to rule, although there are often citizens with different values from the city, who will eventually tip the scale and drag the city into civil war and degradation. Clearly, Plato has carefully designed the constitutions to resemble the individuals in them, and the city-soul analogy provides a successful tool for his later argument about the benefits of justice over injustice.

## PART TWO: DEGENERATE REGIMES

---

### Introduction

In the first chapter, I established the overall validity of the city-soul analogy, which grants that each of the five constitutions has characteristics corresponding with the characteristics of the soul of its citizens and/or ruler. Plato's five constitutions are described in order of decreasing justice. The account of the diseased cities begins at 544 in book VIII, where Plato explains to Glaucon the other four constitutions worth discussing besides aristocracy. The first diseased city, timocracy, exemplified by the Cretan or Laconian, is victory-loving and honor-loving and "is praised by most people" (544c). The following city, the oligarchy, "is filled with a host of evils" (544c). The next one in order, "antagonistic to [oligarchy]" (544c), is democracy. And the last city is genuine tyranny, which surpasses all the previous three in its evils and injustice. These inferior cities come to be through a gradual degradation. Each of them comes to exist as the result of the previous one's decline. Based on the city-soul analogy, the corresponding souls degrade by the same order, from the timocratic to the tyrannical. To clarify, the degradation of the soul does not happen in an individual soul, but takes place across generations. An aristocrat in kallipolis begets a timocrat, a timocrat begets an oligarch, and so on.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter seeks to establish a unified account of Plato's degraded cities. Specifically, this chapter aims to address two questions. The first one is: why does each city decline? That is, is there a unified account that can explain the cause for each case of degradation? I argue that the

---

<sup>13</sup> The cross-generational degradation of the soul may create a potential problem for the city-soul analogy, since degradation happens to an individual city—a city can degrade from timocracy to oligarchy to tyranny, but not to an individual soul. However, since the city-soul analogy is not the focus of this chapter, I will not examine the implications of this discrepancy here.

degradation of kallipolis should be treated differently from that of the other cities and that the cause of kallipolis's degradation is the failure of sensory perception, which tampers with reason's judgment. I argue the cause of degradation in the other cities is the enslavement of reason by spirit or appetite, which refers to the situation where reason is forced to take on appetite's goals. The second question is: what's bad about the degraded cities? I argue that the badness of degradation is not exhausted by the fact of degradation and propose that the badness of the degraded cities comes from the objects of the degenerate characters' desires, which increase in number, kind, and strength as the city declines.

## **I. The Cause of Degradation**

### **i. Possible Explanations and Their Inadequacies**

In this section, I consider several possible explanations for degradation and argue that they all fail to provide a satisfying answer. I also point out that the degradation of kallipolis may be treated separately from other cases in the unified account, given the unique status that Plato gives to the ideal city.

In some passages, Plato suggests that what destroys the city is the excessive pursuit of what a city deems as good (555b, 562b), yet this explanation does not apply to the decay of kallipolis. It cannot be the case that the pursuit of justice causes kallipolis to degrade. Nevertheless, the unified account may not have to accommodate kallipolis, since there are reasons to treat the degradation of kallipolis differently from other cases. Plato considers kallipolis as the only unified city – in fact, he believes that kallipolis is the only city that “deserves to be called *a city*” (422e) – because all the other cities suffer from internal division and civil war. Furthermore, unlike other constitutions, for kallipolis, degradation is not a direct result of the system. It is precisely the disruption of the established system that causes kallipolis' decay. However, even if kallipolis



should be singled out in the unified account, this kind of explanation remains problematic for timocracy. At 550d, Plato points out that it is the secret desire for property that leads timocracy to degradation, instead of what the city values the most, namely honor. Therefore, although the explanation by excessiveness has substantial textual support, it fails as a holistic account of degradation.

Another potential explanation could be that the city is destroyed as a result of structural instability. This explanation again does not work for kallipolis, which has a stable structure as long as its established rules are properly followed. We can avoid this problem by treating kallipolis as a separate case. A more serious problem with this explanation is that it is essentially question-begging. To say that a city has an unstable structure is basically the same as to say that it is subject to falling apart. One might argue that an unstable structure merely points to the potentiality of degradation, but not the actuality of degradation, thus differentiating the two notions. Yet accepting this point will invite even more questions: why does a city that lacks stability, which entails the potential to degrade, allow that potentiality to become reality?

A more fine-tuned version of the structural instability explanation appeals to the tripartite soul theory and ties the structural instability to the enslavement of reason in the ruler and/or citizens' soul. It is important to note, however, that there may be some difficulties in regard to identifying the same kind of unstable structure in the city. According to the city-soul analogy, similar structural problems must also be found in the degraded city, which means that the counterpart of reason in the city, namely the wise people whose souls are ruled by reason, must be enslaved. Yet it is unclear whether there are any people whose souls are ruled by reason at all in the unjust cities, where fine education and correct upbringing that nurture the best soul part don't exist. It could be the case that due to the lack of proper education, those whose reason is naturally

the strongest part in the soul in the unjust cities do not end up practicing philosophy. Therefore, they do not have knowledge of the Forms that enables right judgments about the governance of their soul or their city. If that were indeed the case, then it would seem weird that the enslavement of these people can undermine the stability of the city, because they share the wrongly praised pursuits with the rest of the city and more importantly, do not possess knowledge that can save the city from degradation. However, certain passages caution us against such an interpretation. To begin with, Plato does believe that there exist “wise people,” no matter how much knowledge they have, in the unjust cities. When timocracy is formed, the city is said to be “afraid to appoint wise people as rulers” (547d). One may think that these wise people come from the previous constitution of aristocracy, yet even in tyranny, the tyrant must “keep a sharp lookout for anyone who is brave, large-minded, knowledgeable, or rich” (567b). This suggests that knowledgeable and wise people exist even in the worst city. Furthermore, Plato does grant the possibility that philosophers can emerge in unjust cities. Socrates, for example, is a philosopher in a democratic city, even though he claims<sup>14</sup> that he does not participate in politics and thus may not have knowledge about public affairs. At 496a-c, Plato describes the small group of true philosophers that exist despite the absence of good education in their city, including the well brought-up character who is kept down by exile (presumably the wise one in timocracy), the great souls living in a small city who rightly disdain the city’s affairs, those who are too sick to participate in politics, and the few like Socrates, who receive daimonic signs. Plato claims that it is best for these people to preserve themselves by staying away from politics and engaging only in philosophic work, because they are too weak to save the city in which there is no ally in the pursuit of justice. In a just city that is willing to appoint

---

<sup>14</sup> In the *Apology*, Socrates denies that he participates in public affairs by teaching the youth (19e).

them as rulers, they will be able to use their knowledge to save both themselves and the city. Therefore, even in unjust cities, there are wise people who philosophize and have at least the knowledge of the correct ruling of their souls. According to this fine-tuned version of explanation, it is the enslavement of these people in the city, and the enslavement of reason in the ruler's/citizens' soul, that cause the degradation of the city.

This more specific version of the structural instability explanation is appealing as a result of abundant textual support. In oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny, reason is said to be enslaved by appetite (553d, 561b, 573b). One may wonder whether reason is enslaved by spirit in the timocratic soul, since spirit is supposedly a natural “ally” of reason (422e). It is odd to conceive of reason as being enslaved by its natural ally. This worry can be resolved by the passage at 587a, where Plato claims that when one of the parts other than reason gains control, it will compel the other parts to pursue its own ends, namely the “alien and untrue pleasure”. Here Plato does not distinguish between the case where spirit rules from the case in which appetite rules, which provides reason for believing that spirit is only the ally of reason when the soul is properly conditioned. In a badly governed soul, spirit can indeed enslave reason in pursuit of its own ends. However, there are more concerns about this account. As Gavrielides<sup>15</sup> points out: merely stating that reason must rule in the soul is uninformative. The same applies to the degradation of the city. It is true that a city in which reason/philosophers do not rule is subject to degradation. But what makes the ruling of reason/philosophers the only kind of ruling that can ensure stability? The explanation cannot be that the philosopher's ruling is the only kind that prevents the city from degrading. This runs the explanation into a circularity—when stability is used to explain the lack of degradation, the prevention of degradation cannot be used to explain stability. Therefore, to fully explain the cause

---

<sup>15</sup> Gavrielides (2010), p. 204.

of degradation, an account that appeals to reason's ruling must address the difference between reason's ruling and the other parts' ruling.

In the next two sections, I examine the cause of degradation in kallipolis and the other degraded cities respectively, and offer an explanation that can account for the difference between reason's ruling and the other parts' ruling.

## ii. The degradation of kallipolis

I have pointed out that kallipolis is a unique case as a city that is subject to degradation. The first thing that one may wonder about concerning its degradation is how it is possible for the ideal city to degrade into a lesser form when Plato seems to have come up with a perfect institution that secures the city's harmony and continuation in the previous books. Plato provides one answer when he points out to Glaucon that "the cause of change in any constitution is civil war breaking out within the ruling group itself" (545c), which serves as a general account of how degradation begins in any city. Yet this account does not explain how and why civil war breaks out within the ruling group of the ideal city. Plato goes on to give a more complex explanation of the decay of kallipolis. For some reason he imitates the tone of the Muses from the *Iliad* when he gives the explanation, possibly indicating that he believes that he has no authority in this matter and must appeal to a higher power to solve the predicament<sup>16</sup>. Plato first appeals to the principle that "everything that comes into being must decay" (546a). Then he states that even though the leaders of kallipolis are wise, because they rely on sensory perception for their calculation of the right

---

<sup>16</sup> The true reason for which Socrates speaks from the Muses is unclear, yet there exists textual support for this interpretation. At 382c, Socrates claims that falsehoods in words are useful in the stories when one does not know the truth about the ancient events involving the gods, and "by making a falsehood as much like the truth as (one) can", one makes the falsehood useful. It could be the case that Plato is telling a falsehood about the Muses, which he does not really know the truth about, to lend some credibility or authority to his tentative theory about the degradation of kallipolis.

timing of reproduction, they will eventually make a mistake about “the fertility and barrenness of the human species”, and “beget children when they ought not to do so” (546a). Plato includes a complex arithmetical account of the birth of a noble child, which requires “a cycle comprehended by a perfect number” (546a). The arithmetical account given here is confusing at best, but passages from Book V may shed light on the kinds of mistakes that the rulers can potentially make, which lead to the city’s decay.

At 459, Plato elaborates on the marriage and breeding rules that the rulers must enforce in the city for the optimal offspring and the proper size of the city. The duties of the rulers are multi-step and deal not only with abstract mathematical calculation, but also with observation and understanding of material factors. Plato first highlights the importance of breeding from the best ones in their prime as much as possible to produce the best offspring, which requires the rulers to prioritize those with the best nature when they select candidates for marriage. Besides determining the nature and age of the people, rulers also need to decide the number of marriages, with the aim of keeping the number of males stable, so that the city remains a proper size<sup>17</sup>. In the process, the rulers must consider factors like war, disease, and other things that might affect the population.

The emphasis on the right size of the population helps to explain the mathematical account in Book VIII, specifically helping to explain why correct calculation is crucial to breeding. However, the calculation does not merely involve mathematical knowledge, about which the rulers supposedly do not err. It also involves the knowledge of people’s age, the possibility of war and disease, and so on. On one hand, the rulers may not have the accurate information about certain empirical facts. For example, they may not know the correct age of all the citizens because the birth time is sometimes wrongly recorded, which is a common human mistake. On the other hand,

---

<sup>17</sup> The importance of the proper size of the city is also addressed at 423b.

some of the factors concern uncertain possibilities in the future. Although the rulers can do the right math about the ideal number of citizens, they necessarily rely on perceptual evidence to predict political climate and public health, which is largely an estimation of chance without a definite, correct answer. Moreover, since factors such as war and disease are highly contingent, without an essential nature, and subject to the influence of many other factors beyond the rulers' control, they do not participate in the Forms, which are the proper object of knowledge. The nature of these factors indicates that it is not the rulers' reasoning ability that causes mathematical mistakes, but the fact that they must reason about unintelligible things, which are the object of sensory perception instead of reason. Since sensory perception is by nature fallible and misleading, it is bound to cause mistakes. Therefore, the degradation of kallipolis is caused by the rulers' fallible sensory perception, which tampers with reason's calculation and judgments.

### **iii. The Degradation of Other Cities**

Following the description of the decay of kallipolis, Plato begins his discussion of the unjust constitutions and the corresponding individuals, which I have recounted in the previous chapter. Plato gives elaborate descriptions of the degradation of each constitution, yet it is difficult to identify a universal cause of degradation that applies in each case. For timocracy, it seems that it is the rulers' secret desire for property that destroys the city, since the rulers will bend the laws for their pursuit of wealth and drag the rest of the city towards money-loving (550d-e). For oligarchy, Plato suggests that it degrades to democracy because of its insatiable desire for what it sets as the good, namely wealth (555b). As for democracy, Plato again uses the phrase "insatiable desire for what it defines as the good", which is freedom in democracy's case, to explain the cause of its destruction (562b). As I've pointed out in I.i, it is unlikely that the pursuit of honor causes timocracy's degradation, which rules out the excessive pursuit of what the city sets as good as the

universal cause. Instead, I advance the account that it is the enslavement of reason by the other parts and the ruling of appetite that cause the degradation of the other cities, and explain why reason's ruling is superior to other parts' ruling by appealing to the nature of different parts of the soul.

Before I analyze the individual cases of degradation, there is one more clarification required for the argument. I have argued that it is possible for both spirit and appetite to enslave reason and force reason to take on its ends, but have yet to explain what it is like for parts other than reason to rule in the soul. Debate still exists about the cognitive capacity of each soul part, specifically, on whether each part is capable of means-ends reasoning aside from generating its own desires. Reason is obviously capable of means-ends reasoning, while people differ on whether appetite and/or spirit can generate actions by themselves. The cognitive capacity of the other soul parts determines reason's condition when it is enslaved. If spirit and appetite are capable of means-ends reasoning, then reason's role in an enslaved soul will be minimal. Both the desires and the function of reason will be inhibited, effacing reason's presence in both the decision about the ends and the process of generating action for the ends. Reason does not need to take on the ends of the other soul parts, because they are cognitively strong enough to generate actions by themselves. However, this interpretation is contradicted by reason's condition in the oligarchic soul, where "(appetite) won't allow... (the rational part) to reason about or examine anything except how a little money can be made into great wealth" (553d).

The competing account suggests that spirit and appetite cannot directly produce action and have to rely on reason for means-ends reasoning, which is more consistent with the passage quoted above. According to this account, the form of enslavement will be that spirit or appetite forces reason to perform means-ends reasoning about their desires and generate actions through the

compelled aid of reason. In this case, reason's role in the soul is still significant albeit its enslavement. One difficulty for this account is explaining how spirit and appetite can move reason to perform means-ends reasoning about goals that are incompatible with reason's own goals, especially since they are not capable of means-ends reasoning themselves. In other words, it seems like the action of forcing reason to take on foreign ends requires some kind of means-ends reasoning, which the other parts are not granted under this interpretation. I recognize the existence of this puzzle, but do not aim to resolve it in this chapter. I take on Gavrielides's approach<sup>18</sup> and suggest that the nuance about reason's state does not affect the statement that an individual as a person can pursue the ends of spirit or appetite when her soul is ruled by one of those parts, which is the premise needed for my following argument.

In a timocracy, the ruler's soul is ruled by spirit. Although spirit's ends do not directly cause the ruler to secretly desire private property and bend laws to fulfill this desire, which eventually transforms the constitution into oligarchy, the rule of spirit should be held accountable for this process due to its negligence of fine education. In 548b-c, Plato points out that timocrats enjoy the secret pleasure of spending because they value physical training more than music and poetry, the two things that can condition spirit to align with reason's goals. As a result, timocrats can only refrain from spending their own money by the forceful command of spirit. At 549a-b, Plato claims that the timocratic youth shares the money-loving nature because he does not have reason as the guardian in the soul, which is the only thing that can preserve virtues for a lifetime. In other words, it is only through the rule of reason in the soul that an individual can resist the desires and impulses produced by appetite. Under spirit's ruling, it is just a matter of time before the soul falls under the rule of appetite, which explains why reason's rule has more stability than spirit's rule. To conclude,

---

<sup>18</sup> Gavrielides (2010), p. 207.



spirit's ruling is inferior to reason's ruling because a soul under spirit's ruling will eventually be ruled by appetite, whereas reason's ruling ensures that appetite will always be under control. Spirit's rule is therefore both instrumentally bad and intrinsically bad, in the sense that it both leads the soul to further degradation and lacks virtue in its own ends. It is important to note that it is not the case that spirit's ends are naturally aligned with appetite's ends. Rather, it is because spirit by itself does not have sufficient resources to restrain appetite. In a timocracy, spirit may be able to preserve some true beliefs from kallipolis, which in turn let it restrain appetite temporarily. Simultaneously, spirit's own desire may drive it to subdue appetite, since a person can better pursue honor when appetite is restrained. However, due to the lack of fine education and the real understanding of justice, the timocratic individual eventually lets appetite take over her soul. We may deduce that both reason's ends and spirit's force are necessary to restrain appetite<sup>19</sup>. When reason is ruling in the city and in the individual's soul, reason's rule is sufficient to ensure both necessary conditions, because the fine education will persuade spirit to aid reason's goals with force. In contrast, spirit's rule is insufficient, because it cannot provide reason's ends in an individual's soul; nor can it generate the right upbringing in a city.

What, then, makes appetite's rule the most inferior and intrinsically bad? To answer this question, we can appeal to the nature of appetite and bodily desires and compare them with the nature of reason and rational desires. At 588c, Plato provides analogies for different parts of the soul. He compares appetite to "a single kind of multicolored beast with a ring of many heads that it can grow and change at will—some from gentle, some from savage animals," which shows that appetitive desires are multi-formed, changing and growing, and not unified. Spirit is visualized as a lion and reason as a human being. The beast, the lion, and the human being are joined together

---

<sup>19</sup> I will discuss the role of force in reason's rule in more detail in II. ii.

to compose one soul. In an unjust soul, the beast and the lion are well fed and strong, and the human being is starved and dragged along; the three parts are left to bite and kill one another (588e-589a). In a just soul, the human being takes control of all parts, domesticates the gentle heads of the beast and prevents the savage ones from growing, and makes the lion care for the community of all his parts (589a-b). Therefore, the first difference between reason's ruling and appetite's ruling is that under reason's rule, different parts of the soul are harmonized, allowing reason to pursue its unified goals such as knowledge and virtue, while appetite's rule inevitably produces both necessary and unnecessary bodily desires and causes conflicts among soul parts. The second difference is that reason's rule enables the soul to successfully attain its unified goals, whereas appetite's rule cannot lead to the successful fulfillment of its goals and desires. Under reason's rule, the agent can fulfill her desire by acquiring knowledge of the forms and achieve the goal of living a virtuous and good life. Under appetite's rule, the agent can never fully satisfy the ceaseless competing bodily desires that require constant filling and replenishing. The impossibility to fulfill one's desires and achieve one's goals makes appetite's rule riotous, with each newly grown desire threatening the fulfillment of a former desire and competing for the agent's energy and attention. A similar chaotic state is found in the appetitive cities, where the rich and the poor are constantly at war. The nature of appetite's rule determines its unstable structure and makes the life in a degraded city inferior to the life in kallipolis, which is unified by reason's rule and reason's harmonious goals.

To conclude, the degradation in cities other than kallipolis is caused by the enslavement of reason by spirit or appetite and the rule of the soul by these lower soul parts. The rule of spirit is unstable because spirit lacks the resources to restrain appetite from growing, with the latter eventually becoming the ruler of the individual who rules the city. Under appetite's rule, the soul

is full of ceaseless, competing desires and conflicts between different parts. A person whose soul is ruled by appetite, and a city ruled by such a person, do not have a unified set of goals and cannot achieve their ends, leaving the person and the city in internal riots.

## **II. The Badness of the Degraded Cities**

### **i. Significance of the Question**

One may find the question about the badness of the degraded cities redundant, since a declined regime by definition is worse off than its precedent, and a city that lasts is better than a city that decays. However, it is hard to explain the increasing badness of the four degraded cities merely by longevity or stability, if stability is taken to mean a state without change or degradation. It is important to note that kallipolis is a regime that eventually declines, whereas tyranny, at the pinnacle of injustice, does not have a worse form to degrade to. If a state free from degradation is the ultimate bad-making feature, then tyranny would be deemed a better constitution than kallipolis, which is the opposite to Plato's ranking. Although the lack of stability is indeed a bad-making feature according to Plato's metaphysics, there must be other features that can explicate the increase of injustice and undesirability in the declined cities. Even though instability can partially account for the fundamental badness of the degraded cities, one still needs to press on the underlying question of what makes instability bad. One may appeal to Plato's metaphysics, as mentioned above, and argue that instability indicates a lack of being. Alternatively, one may look for more practical explanations, such as that people don't enjoy living in a city with political turmoil and thus that instability is empirically undesirable. Therefore, even if instability counts as an answer to the second question, it fails to be a comprehensive or exhaustive one.

Since I have been using the word "longevity" in conjunction with "stability", it is important to clarify that although persistence may be part of what stability is, stability does not merely refer

to diachronic persistence, but also to an internal state. Plato would argue a philosopher's life, even if it lasts for a short time, would be more choice-worthy than a tyrant's long life, precisely because it has virtue and harmony, which contribute to an internal stability that is lacking in the tyrant's life. In other words, Plato is not only concerned about which kind of constitution lasts longer, but cares more about which constitution is in fact the best to live in. Plato wants to demonstrate that the degraded cities are worse-off than the just city. It is not merely the fact that they end up in destruction that makes them worse than kallipolis, which also degrades eventually, but that they are worse to live in while they last. Therefore, the badness of degradation cannot be simply explained by the fact that the degraded cities degrade.

In my attempt to answer the second question, I seek to identify a feature that can successfully address the order of degradation, in the sense that the extent or degree of this bad-making feature should increase as the regime declines. I consider and reject Gavrielides's explanation that the degraded cities are inferior because they have the wrong kind of unity (a unity by force)<sup>20</sup> while the unity in kallipolis, under the rule of reason, is a unity by persuasion. My rejection of the account is based on three reasons. First, it is questionable whether Plato grants unity at all to the degraded cities, which undermines the existence of the first kind of unity in the degraded cities and the distinction between two kinds of unity on the city level. Furthermore, the distinction is invalid, even if unity exists, since the rule of reason also inevitably involves force, given the beastly nature of appetite. Lastly, it is difficult to explicate with unity by force the gradation of badness, namely, the progressive degree of badness and injustice as the city degrades. Since the unity in each degraded city is the same kind, it is not clear that the force of rule is stronger in a more degraded regime. Although Gavrielides recognizes this last flaw and appeals to a different account to explain

---

<sup>20</sup> Gavrielides (2010).

the progression of badness, I argue that a well-rounded account ought to explain both the badness and the gradation of badness. I propose instead that the badness of the degraded cities comes from their degrading ends. It is the deteriorating objects of desire in each degraded city that accounts for the gradation of badness.

## ii. **Objection to Gavrielides**

Gavrielides (2010) argues that the difference between reason's rule and other parts' rule is not that reason's rule is the only kind that can ensure unity and stability in the soul, but that the unity in the degenerate souls is the wrong kind, which is a unity by force, as opposed to unity by persuasion under reason's rule. Gavrielides believes that the ability of the degenerate rulers to organize their lives indicates their internal unity (p. 206). He claims that, since each degenerate character is capable of means-ends reasoning as a whole person (p. 207) and the degradation is transgenerational<sup>21</sup> (father-to-son) instead of individual (p. 209), the degenerate souls are unified and stable. However, when lower parts are ruling in the soul, unity is made possible by force, which is unpleasant and unattractive (p. 210). Since the lower parts do not care for the community of soul parts and cannot plan actions on behalf of the whole soul, they cannot produce the same kind of unity as reason does (p. 211). The timocrat, for example, only abides the law out of fear of punishment, which is a sign of rule by force (p. 213). In the oligarch's soul, reason is forcefully enslaved by appetite (p. 213), and the oligarch forcibly holds her dronish appetites in check (p. 214). Similarly, the democrat still forcefully holds her dronish appetites in check (p. 215). Force and tension are also present in the tyrant's soul, which is full of slavery and disorder (p. 216). Gavrielides realizes that this account does not explain how degenerate souls are worse than each other and argues that gradation should not be explained by the degree of force, but by the extent

---

<sup>21</sup> See Introduction of Chapter 2.

to which each degenerate individual resembles the person ruled by reason (p. 217). He further points out that rule by persuasion is superior to rule by force because only a soul ruled by persuasion can possess virtue (p. 221).

I reject Gavrielides's account for three reasons. First of all, the fact that the degenerate characters are capable of means-ends reasoning and ordering their lives around good-dependent desires does not prove their unity by Plato's standards, which exceed the functioning of the agent and require internal agreement and harmony. At 422e-423a, Plato points out that any city other than kallipolis does not deserve to be called *one* city, because it is in fact two cities—those of the rich and the poor—at war with one another. The presence of war is not only due to conflicts of distinct desires between different classes of people, but also because they prioritize the fulfillment of their desires over the well-being of the city as a whole. According to the city-soul analogy, the degenerate individual shares characteristics with the corresponding degenerate cities. As a key feature of the degenerate cities, inner conflicts are also present in the degenerate individual's soul. More importantly, within the degenerate souls, not only do different parts have different ends, the soul parts also do not agree on what is best for the soul as a whole. Appetite and spirit lack the capacity to judge what is best for the whole soul, while reason does not have the means to achieve its end, namely unification of the soul parts. Furthermore, despite Gavrielides's belief that the ability to organize life around an object of desire proves unity, each of the degenerate cities also has a corresponding goal (honor, money, freedom, etc.), yet the possession and pursuit of these goals do not qualify them as unified cities. Given these similarities between the city and the individual soul, it would be strange if Plato is willing to grant unity to the individuals when he denies unity to the corresponding cities.

A potential problem with using the city-soul analogy to disprove the unity of degenerate souls is that the classes at war in the city are the rich and the poor, whereas the parts at war in the soul are reason, spirit, and appetite. This disparity reveals the bigger problem that there may not exist three corresponding classes in the degraded cities at all. I argue that despite the absence of three classes, the degraded cities can still have groups of people whose souls are naturally rational, spirited, or appetitive. I proved in section I.i that there can be wise people in the degraded cities and the same should apply to spirited people. For example, in the democratic city, the rich people are described as “naturally most organized” (564e), a trait that is often related to good means-ends reasoning and the capacity of achieving personal goals. It is therefore safe to say that their reason is naturally stronger than the poorer working class, who “work with their own hands” (565a), a description that resembles the producer class in kallipolis, whose appetitive part is naturally the strongest. In the tyrannical city, the tyrant is portrayed as ruthless in acquiring wealth and resources, which renders her and her bodyguards the rich class. At the same time, the tyrant is highly calculative and tactical, using lies to mislead people into trusting her and bribing the bodyguards to ensure her power, which proves that she also has strong reason. In this sense, the war between the rich and the poor in degenerate cities can be understood as the war between reason and appetite.

My second objection is focused on the validity of the distinction between unity by persuasion and unity by force. Gavrielides suggests that reason’s rule employs persuasion instead of force to unify different parts of the soul. The only direct evidence for such differentiation appears at 548c, where Plato points out that timocrats “haven’t been educated by persuasion but by force,” which seems like a contrast between reason’s rule and spirit’s rule. The context of this sentence is that the timocrats value physical training more than music and poetry and thus are not educated by

persuasion but by force. However, the difference drawn here is between two types of education in the two constitutions, instead of two kinds of rule in the soul. It is crucial to note that having naturally strong reason is not sufficient for reason to rule and proper education is required for the right condition of the soul. At 441e, Plato claims that it is the mixture of music and poetry and physical training that nurtures reason and soothes spirit. With these trainings, reason and spirit learn their proper roles in the soul and govern appetite together. Therefore, persuasion of the soul parts comes from proper education and both reason and spirit are on the receiving end of persuasion.

Now that it is clear that it is not reason doing the persuasion but the education, Gavrielides's view may be modified this way: when reason rules in the city, it provides the education that unifies the soul by persuasion, while when lower parts rule in the city, they can only provide an inferior education that unifies the soul by force. This modified account, albeit more accurate than the original one, is still false because the receivers of education do not include appetite. As the animalistic and beastly part, appetite is not capable of understanding human language. Given the nature of appetite, reason and spirit must employ some degree of force to restrain appetite's growth, which also explains why physical training is included in the proper education. Appetite is a name given to a variety of desires that are related to the body and the material, which can be categorized into necessary desires and non-necessary desires. When reason is ruling, it allows the agent to fulfill the necessary desires that contribute to the person's well-being, such as the nourishment of the body or the acquirement of wealth to sustain one's life. These are the portions of appetite that reason tames and befriends. However, there are other appetites whose growth (and even existence) reason seeks to restrain. The lawless desires such as the desires to murder and incest threaten the well-being of the person. In the small number of virtuous people, these desires



are said to be “eliminated entirely or only a few weak ones remain” (571c). The elimination of lawless desires necessarily involves force, because it is impossible to make a beastly desire disappear by mere persuasion. Nevertheless, reason’s rule does not aim to eradicate all appetitive desires but rather to subdue the unnecessary appetitive desires so that the necessary, gentle part of appetite can remain a proper size and perform its proper task, which is to support the body and the material life. In kallipolis, the producer class, which consists of appetitive people, is ruled by the philosophers so that they can perform their jobs and provide material sustenance for the whole city without becoming lazy or greedy. In this sense, the force in reason’s rule is compatible with reason’s aim to harmonize and befriend lower parts of the soul.

My last critique of Gavrielides’s account points to a flaw that he addresses in his paper, whose solution I find wanting. Gavrielides recognizes that it is difficult to explain the progression of badness in the degenerate cities by appealing to force, because it is not clear that the force of rule increases in each degenerate city or soul. Therefore, he argues that it is wrong to think of force in terms of *degree*. Instead, we should think of force as a *kind* of rule—the degraded cities all belong to the same *kind* of rule, which is unity by force, and the kind does not account for the degree of their degradation. He proposes that the gradation of badness should instead be understood by the extent to which each degenerate character’s actions and responses resemble those of the person ruled by reason. However, Gavrielides cannot dodge the problem with this alternative account. Plato sets up the degenerate cities in such a way that their gradation of injustice and badness is prominent for the story. It is reasonable to expect that the feature that accounts for the badness of the cities also comes in degrees. To separate the bad-making feature and the account for the gradation of badness is therefore intuitively problematic.

Perhaps Gavrielides can save his account by saying that the bad-making feature does not need to account for the explication of the degree of badness, as long as they are not completely unrelated. For example, a person can be evil because she enjoys harming others, which is a bad-making feature. Yet the degree of her evilness can be determined by how many evil thoughts she holds or how many crimes she has committed, instead of how much she enjoys harming others, and thereby the bad-making feature is separated from the account for the degree of badness. Yet at the same time, the account for degree of badness is not entirely isolate from the bad-making feature, because having evil thoughts and committing crimes are manifestations of, or caused by, an enjoyment of harming others. Gavrielides's account may be understood in a similar way. Although the bad-making feature in the degenerate souls, namely unity by force, cannot be used to account for the progressive degree of badness, we may try to find some relation between the bad-making feature and the account of the gradation of badness. Analogous to the "evil thought" example, the lack of resemblance of the person ruled by reason can be understood as a manifestation of being unified in the wrong way. Hence the bad-making feature of the degenerate souls and the account of the gradation of badness are connected. Yet we can still press on this connection and ask why the extent of resemblance decreases as the badness of the soul increases. The only plausible answer seems to be this: the degenerate soul becomes more unified by force, and less unified by persuasion, as the degradation proceeds, which makes the degenerate individual resemble the individual ruled by reason less and less. This answer raises a new problem for Gavrielides. If the increasing degree of badness can be explained in terms of decreasing unity by persuasion, then the proposed bad-making feature, unity by force, is not doing explanatory work. We can simply say that the degenerate souls are bad because they are not unified by persuasion, or even because they are not ruled by reason, and as they become less and less so, their resemblance of the person ruled

by reason decreases, which accounts for the gradation of badness. Therefore, despite my best effort to save it, Gavrielides's account fails as a satisfactory one.

I argue that a more satisfying explanation of badness needs to account for the increasing degree of badness through the progression of degradation, which means that the bad-making feature of the degenerate souls can be understood in terms of degree. In the next section, I will provide such an explanation.

### **iii. An Alternative Account of Badness**

In the last section, I pointed out that Gavrielides's explanation of why the degenerate individuals are bad is problematic. I now propose an alternative account, which argues that the badness of the degraded cities and individuals should be explained by their degraded ends, which are respectively honor, wealth, freedom, and lawlessness<sup>22</sup>. These degraded ends lead the degenerate individuals to organize their lives around wrong pursuits and cause them to have false beliefs. I argue that this account is not subject to the objections raised for Gavrielides. On one hand, it does not touch upon the issue of unity at all. As I have argued in the last section, I do not intend to grant unity to the degraded cities or souls. If anything, the lack of unity is a bad-making feature in the degenerate cities and souls, although it is hard to account for the gradation of badness with this feature, which is why I do not appeal to unity in my account. On the other hand, degraded ends can successfully account for the gradation of badness. As we move down on the list of degenerate individuals, their degraded ends cause them to have more appetitive desires and

---

<sup>22</sup> The tyrant's object of desire is not as clear as the other degenerate individuals. Mark Johnstone (2015) argues that the tyrant's soul is ruled by the "erotic love" (572e) that drives the tyrant to pursue all kinds of bodily desires (including the lawless ones). I accept his account. However, it is important to differentiate the ruler of the soul and the object of desire of the ruler. It seems like what the erotic love most distinctly wants is the fulfillment of lawless desires that are characterized by their madness and viciousness (573a) Therefore, here I refer to the tyrant's end as "lawlessness".

generate increasing false beliefs. I consider two potential responses to my account, one of which I will resolve within this chapter while the other one will be more fully addressed in the next chapter.

Plato structures the tale of the degenerate individuals and regimes in such a way that each regime or individual is paired with a distinct end. Such an arrangement is not coincidental for Plato believes that having the right pursuit is the precondition of becoming a virtuous person. At 489e, Plato points out that “to become a fine and good person” one has to “be guided by the truth and always pursue it in every way”. The degraded cities and individuals, guided by their false ends, mistake wrong things for *the good* and organize their lives around that which they have mistaken for the good instead of knowledge and virtue. Because of their degraded ends, the degenerate individual cannot access truth or possess virtue. The timocratic city and individual praise honor as the highest good. Because of their pursuit of honor, they value physical training without learning music and poetry and therefore lack real understanding of virtue. The oligarchic city and individual value wealth the most and their desire for money leaves no room for the desire of spirit or reason. The desire for money lets in the greatest of all evils, which allows the oligarch to sell all her possessions for money and live in the city without performing any real job (552a). The democratic city and individual value freedom the most and therefore admit all kinds of constitutions in the city and the soul. Freedom drives them to treat necessary and unnecessary desires as equal, making the democrat the first to fulfill her unnecessary desires. The tyrannical city and individual praise lawlessness and let the lawless desires drive the city and soul wild. They prioritize the fulfillment of unnecessary desires, especially the lawless ones that are suppressed in all the other cities.

As the regime degenerates, the end of the city becomes more inferior and gives rise to stronger and/or numerous desires, which helps to explain the increase of badness as a result of the degradation. When timocracy becomes oligarchy, appetite takes over in the soul and enslaves the

former ruler, namely spirit, and the pursuit of the city changes from honor to wealth. Given the distinct natures of spirit and appetite, the desires generated by them differ in type. As I pointed out in section I. iii, a timocrat can still preserve some true beliefs and have a superficial understanding of virtues, which shows that the desire for honor does not eliminate or directly opposes virtue. Yet the desire for money, being an appetitive desire, is “so opposed (to virtue) that if they were set on a scales, they’d always incline in opposite directions” (550e). As such, the more a person values money-making, the less they value virtue (550e). This difference in their relations with virtue shows that the desire for money not only belongs to the different category of bodily desires, it is also inferior to the desire for honor. Moreover, the desire for money increases as timocracy transforms to oligarchy, both on the individual level and on the city level—the ruling class first finds ways to spend money themselves, then bends the laws to satisfy their growing desires and their wives’, and eventually makes the majority of the citizens share their value and pursuit of money (550d-e). Therefore, compared to timocracy’s end, oligarchy’s end is inferior in kind and shared by more. When oligarchy becomes democracy, the pursuit of the city shifts from wealth to freedom. Under the pursuit of freedom, the democrat admits unnecessary desires into the soul, and fulfills them equally with necessary desires. Clearly, there is an increase in the number of desires when oligarchy transforms to democracy. Moreover, since unnecessary desires are “harmful both to the body and to the reason and moderation of the soul,” (559b) they are an inferior kind of desire compared to the necessary ones, which are beneficial to one’s health and well-being (559a). Similarly, in the transformation from oligarchy to tyranny, we see an increase both in the number of desires and the kind of desires. The tyrant’s soul is ruled by a powerful erotic love, which drives the agent mad in her pursuit of all kinds of bodily desires, including the vicious, lawless ones that are suppressed in the other types of souls. The pursuit of lawlessness makes the tyrant the most

enslaved and miserable individual due to both the potency and proliferation of her desires. Based on the description of the tyrant, she possesses all of the same kinds of bodily desires as the oligarch and democrat. However, the strongest desires in her soul are the lawless desires. Therefore, it is arguable that the acquiring of wealth may simply be a means for the tyrant to satisfy her lawless desires. The fulfillment of all kinds of bodily desires fully occupy the tyrant's life, making it impossible for her to enjoy freedom or friendship, even for a day (576a). As the city degrades, its desired end becomes more inferior and causes stronger desires to proliferate, which accounts for the increased badness across the degenerate regimes.

The degraded ends not only produce more bodily desires in the soul as the degradation proceeds but also reduce the correct beliefs in the soul. The timocrat preserves some true beliefs, such as that one should guard one's city against enemies and that the ruling class should not possess wealth or enjoy spending their own money. The oligarch does not share the timocrat's beliefs about protecting one's city or refraining from spending, but still knows that unnecessary desires are bad and should be held in check. The democrat doesn't believe in controlling unnecessary desires, but has the true belief that the lawless desires should be suppressed. The tyrant, who has purged all reason from the soul, does not believe in any rules or virtues. The loss of true beliefs is directly related to the false goods praised by the degraded cities because the fulfillment of bodily desires causes a person to attach false value to material and physical things. In Book V, Plato talks about the epistemic consequence of pursuing material things. The lovers of sight and sound believe in the many beautiful things but not the form of the Beautiful itself (479a). These people cannot have true beliefs because the many beautiful things are objects of opinion, instead of knowledge. The material things that the appetitive people seek come into being and eventually come out of being (decay), they participate in both being and not being (478e). Since only immaterial things, such as

virtue, participate in being and people can only know the things that participate in being, the lovers of the material things cannot have knowledge. In the *Phaedo*, Plato describes the way that physical pleasures and pains drag the soul towards the body—“every pleasure and every pain provides...another nail to rivet the soul to the body and to weld them together” (83c). Since each degenerate individual has more appetitive desires than her predecessor, it is not surprising that the true beliefs in the soul becomes less and less as the degradation progresses.

I have shown that the degraded ends can account for the gradation of badness because they produce increasing bodily desires and reduce true beliefs in the soul. I now consider two potential objections to this account. The first objection to this account (and any account that attempts at a single explanation for the badness in all the degraded cities) is questioning whether such an attempt is valid. After all, the degraded cities are vastly different from each other and Plato treats each one distinctly without giving a unified account of all the regimes. Perhaps this omission indicates that Plato himself does not believe that a unified account of the badness of the degraded regimes exists and each case should be treated on its own. Why does there need to be a unified account for the badness of each regime when each one may be bad in its own way? I argue that, although each degraded regime has its own distinct end, these ends share a similarly bad nature in that they all lead the city and the soul away from knowledge and virtue and hence count as a unified bad-making feature across the degraded regimes. It is true that Plato does not explicitly point to one bad-making feature in his description of the regimes, yet the badness of all the degraded ends is captured by his description of appetite, and the proliferation of appetitive desires is the inevitable result of the degraded ends. Plato recognizes that this part of the soul is multiform (580e) yet he still calls it by one name instead of referring to each component separately. It is due to the multiform nature of the appetitive part that there exist three regimes (instead of one) in which the

appetitive part rules. Each regime is ruled by a different component of the appetitive soul part whose badness gradually increases. Although timocracy is not ruled by appetite, it is ruled by a part that cannot restrain appetite, allows appetitive desires to grow, and eventually gives in to appetite's rule. The fact that all the degraded ends and the desires associated with them are related to the appetitive part shows that a unified account of the bad-making feature is not only possible but also valid.

Another potential objection derives from the “hydraulic model” of desire.<sup>23</sup> Plato claims at 485d that “when someone’s desires incline strongly for one thing, they are thereby weakened for others, just like a stream that has been partly diverted into another channel.” This analogy seems to suggest that there is a fixed amount of desiderative energy<sup>24</sup> in a person’s soul, which appears to be in tension with my account, especially in the tyrant’s case. According to the proposed account, the degenerate regimes are increasingly bad because their ends become increasingly inferior and their desires become more numerous in kind and stronger in strength. At the end of degradation, the tyrant seeks the satisfaction of all kinds of lawless desires in a drunken and frenzied state. It seems that the tyrant has more desiderative energy than the other individuals, which is inconsistent with the hydraulic model. I believe that this is a valid worry both for my account and for Plato, and will resolve the inconsistency in the next chapter.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined the cause of degradation in each city and came up with a unified account for the badness of degradation. I argued that the cause of degradation is the enslavement

---

<sup>23</sup> Lane (2007), p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> Desiderative energy refers to the energy or capacity for desiring, which indicates the extent to which a person wants something. When a person’s desiderative energy towards A is higher than her desiderative energy towards B, she desires A more than B.



of reason by the lower parts of the soul and explicated why the rule of reason is superior to the rule of other parts as well as why the rule of reason is necessary for the stability and unity of the soul. I rejected Gavrielides's account for the badness of the degraded cities and offered an alternative account that can explicate the gradation of badness across the degenerate regimes. The alternative account argues that a unified bad-making feature across the degraded cities is their degraded ends, which give rise to increasing and stronger bodily desires as the degradation progresses. I defended this account against the challenge of the validity of a unified account and will consider a more substantial objection in the next chapter.

## PART THREE: THE HYDRAULIC MODEL OF DESIRE

---

### Introduction

At the end of Chapter II, I highlighted a potential objection to my proposed account of the bad-making feature of the degraded cities. The objection was the following: Plato endorses a “hydraulic model” of desire,<sup>25</sup> which compares a person’s desiderative energy to a stream and her desires to channels in the stream; when the water in the stream is directed to one channel, there is less water entering another channel (485d). The hydraulic model seems to imply that there is a fixed amount of water in the stream of desiderative energy, which contradicts with my proposal that the number, kind, and strength of desires increase in the soul as the degradation proceeds. There exist two tensions between the fixity of water and the increase of desires. First off, the increase in the number and kinds of desires entails an increase in the number of channels. To resolve this tension, I argue that since the increase of channels does not entail an increase in the total quantity of water, the proliferation of number and kind of desires is compatible with Plato’s hydraulic model. The division of desiderative energy also helps to account for the disunity of the degenerate souls that I asserted in the previous chapter. A deeper worry is that the increase in the strength of desire shows an increase in the quantity of water, which does seem in conflict with the fixity of desiderative energy. Opponents of my view may think that this tension indicates the inaccuracy of my interpretation of Plato’s tyrant. Yet textual evidence shows that there exists an apparent tension between Plato’s model and his portrayal of the tyrant, whose desiderative energy is significantly higher than the other degenerate characters. I argue that the tension can be resolved with an alternative interpretation of the hydraulic model. Although it is natural to assume that the

---

<sup>25</sup> Lane (2007), p. 45.

hydraulic model implies fixity of desiderative energy, Plato does not need to commit to fixity. Just like a stream whose volume is subject to change by the climate, the stream of desiderative energy can have varying quantity of energy over time. The tyrant acquires more motivational desire when the tyrant-makers plant a powerful erotic love in her soul. Yet even with the increased desiderative energy, the tyrant must still split it between the pursuits of different desires. The tyrant's inability to satisfy her desires proves the limited nature of desiderative energy, which is the essential feature of the hydraulic model and the only feature that Plato needs to commit to. Therefore, I argue that my account of the tyrant does not contradict the hydraulic model, but instead helps to shed light on how the model ought to be understood.

### I. **The Hydraulic Model**

The context of the hydraulic model is Plato's discussion with Glaucon about the philosopher's nature in Book VI. At 485d, Plato introduces the model as a premise for the argument that philosophers are necessarily moderate and "not at all...money-lover(s)". Plato begins the argument by claiming that, as lovers of learning, philosophers must strive for all kinds of truth from their childhood on. Then he brings up the hydraulic model: "Now, as we surely know that, when someone's desires incline strongly for one thing, they are thereby weakened for others, just like a stream that has been partly diverted into another channel." (485d). According to this model, since the philosophers' desires "flow towards learning and everything of that sort", which belong to "pleasures of the soul itself by itself," (485d) true philosophers will abandon bodily pleasures. Therefore, the philosophic nature is moderate and non-appetitive since money does not attract true philosophers.

The hydraulic model captures the negative correlation between the different amounts of desiderative energy (water) directed at different ends or desires (channels): when the amount of a

person's desiderative energy that is distributed to one end increases, the amount of her desiderative energy distributed to the other ends decreases. In the above context, the different ends are pleasures of the soul and bodily pleasures.

One may question whether the hydraulic model rightly describes the way that motivation and desire function: why does directing desiderative energy towards one object decrease the energy left for the other? Why are the pursuit of bodily desires and the pursuit of the desires proper to the soul mutually exclusive? Are there not people who are as driven regarding learning as they are about food and drink? I defend the hydraulic model against these questions with two answers. First off, it is empirically true that a person's energy, time, and attention are limited. Being deeply invested in one thing necessarily occupies a person's time and attention, which decreases the amount that she can devote to other activities. Similarly, deep investment in a certain activity is both physically and psychologically consuming and it is simply not possible to maintain a high level of energy for all kinds of activities. The philosopher, who always pursues the truth in every way (490a), is characterized by her dedication to learning. Plato describes the life style of true philosophers, which requires them to "put their minds to youthful education and philosophy and take care of their bodies at a time when they are growing into manhood, so as to acquire a helper for philosophy," "increase their mental exercises" "as they grow older," and "graze freely in the pasture of philosophy and do nothing else" after they retire from politics and military service (498b). It is not hard to see that Plato's true philosophers simply do not have the time or opportunity to pursue bodily desires as a result of the combination of such an intellectually demanding lifestyle and the educational and political systems in kallipolis, which select the gold-natured children through careful training and examination and make them live communally as the rulers of the city. Secondly, once the philosophers embark on their pursuit of knowledge and truth,

their true beliefs will lead them to avoid bodily pleasure and pain in order to avoid being subject to the power of bodily pleasure to affect one's correct judgement, make the soul corporeal, and lead it astray from the truth. I have discussed the epistemic effect of bodily pleasure in section II. iii in the last chapter and will now supplement the discussion with more evidence. In the *Phaedo*, Plato claims that philosophy can free the soul from the body by showing the soul that investigation through sensory perception is deceitful. The soul thereby withdraws from the senses so that it only trusts itself and the reality (83b). Knowing the deceptive nature of bodily pleasures and pains, a soul that is committed to philosophy will not surrender itself to pleasures and pains again (84a). Since the philosopher's devotion to truth determines her decreased bodily desires, the hydraulic model makes a strong case for the philosopher's distribution of desiderative energy.

Likewise, the hydraulic model applies to those who pursue bodily pleasures. In the *Phaedo*, Plato points out that bodily desires can cause war, which comes from the desire for wealth, and the pursuit of wealth as well as other bodily desires enslaves the soul for these ends and make a person "too busy to practice philosophy" (66d). The war caused by bodily desires can be further explained by the way that appetite rules the soul, which I described in section I. iii in the last chapter. When a person is motivated by bodily desires, the internal chaos between different desires will keep her occupied. Thus, she will not have spare energy to pursue objects proper to the soul. Moreover, as I have indicated above, the pursuit of bodily desires has an opposing effect to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. Hence, the hydraulic model applies to both philosophers and money-lovers.

## **II. The Increase of Channels**

I pointed out in the last chapter that, as the degradation proceeds, there is an increase in the number and kind of desires in the degenerate regimes. This helps to account for the gradation of

badness through the process of degradation. In terms of the hydraulic model, the number of channels increases as the number and kind of desires increase. However, the analogy between desiderative energy and water in a stream seems to suggest that there is a fixed amount of desiderative energy available in a person's soul, just like there is a limited amount of water in a stream. If the amount of water in the previously existent channels remains the same and water will flow in the newly added channels, then an increase in the number of channels will entail an increase in the total quantity of water in the stream, which creates a problem for the hydraulic model.

I resolve the above problem by identifying the falsehood in the assumption that the amount of water in the formerly existent channels remains the same as the number of channels increase: when there are more channels in the stream, the water in the existent channels is diverted into the new channels, and there is, on average, less water in each channel due to this diversion. Plato does not believe that the proliferation of desires necessarily indicates a higher level of desiderative energy. In fact, oppositely, his account of the degenerate characters suggests that when there are more channels in the stream, the amount of water directed to each channel is thereby lower. The best example is the democrat, who satisfies both necessary desires and unnecessary desires equally, and therefore is known for the variety of her desires. Based on Plato's description of the democrat's life, the democrat is not invested in the pursuit of any one of her desires particularly, at least not to the extent that the precedent degenerate characters (the timocrat and the oligarch) pursue their ends (honor and wealth). Plato describes the democrat's life as follow: "And so he lives on, yielding day by day to the desire at hand. Sometimes he drinks heavily while listening to the flute; at other times, he drinks only water and is on a diet; sometimes he goes in for physical training; at other times, he's idle and neglects everything; and sometimes he even occupies himself with what he takes to be philosophy...If he happens to admire soldiers, he's carried in that direction, if

money-makers, in that one” (561c-d). The democrat takes on many ends, but pursues each one in a random and casual manner. In comparison, real soldiers like the timocrats pursue honor relentlessly, engaging in physical training at young age and warfare in adulthood. Likewise, real money-makers such as the oligarchs organize their lives around compiling wealth. Clearly, the democrat does not desire these ends to the same extent, which also explains the qualification to the “philosophy” that the democrat does, because only those that direct all of their energy towards learning can engage in true philosophy. Therefore, although the democrat is capable of desiring the same ends as the philosopher king, the timocrat, and oligarch, there is a significant decrease in the strength of her desire for these ends; despite more channels in the stream, there is much less water in each channel. Since the addition of ends does not increase desiderative energy, the increase in channels does not entail the increase in the total amount of water in the stream.

The proliferation of desires leading to less desiderative energy being directed towards each desire accounts for the degenerate characters’ difficulty in satisfying their desires as well as their lack of well-being. Among all people, the philosophers have the most unified desires, which means that there is the least division of channels in their stream and almost all of their water flows to one channel. For the philosopher the channel of bodily desires still exists for the purposes of health and sustenance, yet only a small quantity of water flows in that channel. Because the philosophers’ ends are the least divided, their desiderative energy for their desired end is the highest. The philosophers desire learning and knowledge so much that they are willing to endure the arduous process of acquiring the truth, which Plato compares to giving birth (490b). The high desiderative energy in the philosophers makes them the most likely to fulfill their desires and achieve their ends. The timocrat and the oligarch, in contrast, have more channels in their stream. Hence, in comparison to the philosopher, they have less desiderative energy for their main ends. The disunity

of their desires makes these desires harder to satisfy, because they cannot fully commit to a single desire.

### III. The Increase of Water

In the last section, I resolved the tension between the proliferation of desires and the hydraulic model and suggested that the increase in the channels does not entail more water in the stream. However, if we take the hydraulic model to imply a fixed amount of desiderative energy in the soul, there exists another tension between the hydraulic model and my claim that the tyrant's desires increase in strength. This tension poses a more substantial worry for my account of the gradation of badness in the degenerate regimes. Potential opponents may use this tension to reject my claim that the tyrant's desiderative energy increases as his desires become stronger. I argue that Plato's description of the tyrant does in fact endorse the increase in desiderative energy. Plato's belief in the possibility of having increased total desiderative energy can be further proved by passages from the *Gorgias*. It will turn out that the tension raised here not only poses a problem for my account, but also challenges the consistency between Plato's accounts of the soul and desires in Book VI and Book IX.

Plato paints a vivid picture of how the tyrant is created at the beginning of Book IX. When the "clever enchanters" and "tyrant-makers" plant a powerful erotic love in a young man's soul, the erotic love becomes the leader of the existent idle desires that spend anything at hand (572e); these idle desires are the unnecessary desires that have no moderation and are harmful to a person's well-being. The bodily desires nurture the erotic love, as a tyrant in the soul, making it grow as large as possible and then planting the "sting of longing" in the soul (573a). The erotic love "adopts madness as its bodyguard and becomes frenzied, purging any true belief or moderate desire from the soul until the soul is filled with "imported madness" (573b). The tyrant's desiderative energy



is directed towards gluttony, luxury, promiscuity, and all other extreme forms of bodily indulgence (573d). Unlike the democrat whose dominant desire changes, the tyrant appears to desire all the mentioned things simultaneously, since these terrible desires are said to exist in the soul by the side of the tyrant day and night, growing stronger and stronger (573d). It then follows that not only are there more channels in the tyrant's stream of energy, but there is also more water flowing to each channel. In addition, the water in each channel increases over time. The increasingly strong desires bid the tyrant to "dare anything that will provide sustenance" (575a). The tyrant does not shy away from using violence, force, and enslavement to acquire what she wants. Such shameless and lawless pursuit of bodily indulgence suggests that the tyrant is willing to go to greater lengths than any other degenerate characters, which also suggests the greater strength of her desires. Therefore, Plato's descriptions of the tyrant's soul and life clearly indicate a continuous increase in the total amount of desiderative energy.

We can supplement the argument for Plato's beliefs about the fluidity of the amount of desiderative energy with evidence from the *Gorgias*. In the *Gorgias*, Plato refutes the hedonist account that is advanced by Callicles. Callicles claims that the happiest life is one where the agent can let her appetite grow as large as possible and have the capacity of fulfilling whatever desire she feels at the time (492a). Callicles believes that people who possess a natural capacity for becoming the ruler in a city should indeed establish themselves as "tyrants" (492c) and live the kind of hedonic life that Callicles endorses. Plato does not raise an objection to Callicles' suggestion that an agent's appetite can grow larger. Nor does he disagree that such an agent can be more "competent" in fulfilling her growing desires, in the sense that this agent, when compared to a moderate person, can dedicate more time and energy to fulfilling desires. According to the "leaky jar" model of pleasure (493e), an appetitive person lives a life of constantly filling the

metaphorical jars of desires that keeps leaking, because an unrestrained, insatiable appetite keeps generating bodily desires; while a moderate person can relax over them because their desires do not proliferate in the same way. The action of constant refilling to avoid pain resembles the tyrant's mad acquisition of sustenance to avoid suffering (574a). The similarity between the tyrant figures in the *Gorgias* and *Republic Book IX* suggests that Plato consistently endorses an account of the tyrant that suggests both bigger appetite and stronger desiderative energy in the soul. The fact that the tyrant in the *Gorgias* is able to both let her appetite grow as much as possible and still be able to keep filling more leaky jars demonstrates that Plato does not think that the number of an agent's desiderative energy needs to remain constant as time progresses.

A contradiction thereby arises between the tyrant's case and the interpretation of the hydraulic model in section III, which suggests that there is a fixed quantity of water in the stream regardless of the number of channels, meaning that there is a fixed amount of desiderative energy in a person's soul no matter how many desires the soul is directed towards. I argue that although this interpretation seems intuitively right, it is in fact mistaken—Plato does not need to commit to fixity in order to preserve the hydraulic model.

As I pointed out in section II, based on the text at 485d, we observe a negative correlation between the quantity of desiderative energy directed at one ends and the quantity of desiderative energy directed at other ends. It is natural to assume that this negative correlation entails fixity: since, when there is more water in one channel, there is less water left for other channels, the total amount of water must be fixed. If the quantify of water is subject to change, then the increase of flow in one channel will not necessarily lead to the decrease of flow in other channels. Although it is true that there is a finite amount of water at any given time, which is what causes the negative correlation, it is not clear that the amount of water must be necessarily fixed at different points of

time. We can think about the model in relation to the real streams in nature. Surely, at any particular point of time, the total amount of water is a constant. Yet it is unlikely that the amount of water in a stream is always fixed over time. The quantity of water is subject to changes caused by climate conditions. We can still assert that there exists a negative correlation between the amounts of water in different channels at a given time, without granting that the amount of water in the stream remains consistently fixed at all points of time.

Once the fixity claim is removed from the interpretation, we are looking at a modified interpretation of the model. I propose that the hydraulic model should be understood as follow: at any given time, if a person's desiderative energy for one end increases, there will be less desiderative energy for the other ends. This modified interpretation preserves the key characteristic of the hydraulic model, which is the negative correlation between the amounts of desiderative energy towards different ends, and successfully accommodates the tyrant's case. Hence, this interpretation is a more accurate reading of Plato's hydraulic model than the original interpretation.

Having argued that the hydraulic model does not entail fixity over time, I offer an explanation for the increase in the tyrant's desiderative energy. Given that the tyrant is the only degenerate character whose desiderative energy increases over time, there must be something peculiar in the tyrant's case. I believe that it is the planting of the powerful erotic love that brings more water into the tyrant's stream. Plato's use of words like "plant" and "imported madness" (573a-b) implies that the increasing capacity for desiring comes from external sources, namely the tyrant-makers who supply to the desires of the tyrant. Plato also uses the phrase "erotic love" to describe the philosophers' desire for learning, which reflects his belief in the importance of upbringing in a persons' development. Plato believes that the best-natured youth fares the worst when she befriends the wrong crowd and receives bad education (491d). The tyrant, as the most unjust

character, is the polar opposite of the philosopher. It could be the case that the fine education in kallipolis instills a strong desire for learning in the best-natured youth, whose appetitive desires become restrained by reason; while the best-natured youth in a degraded city will be used by bad-natured people for their own purposes and the bad education in the city, along with the crowd of tyrant-makers, will supply a strong desire for the wrong end to the youth's soul, which releases and becomes the leader of many more terrible desires in the soul.

Before I conclude this chapter, I briefly consider a potential pushback to the new interpretation that goes along the line of argument by Callicles: if the tyrant can have an increased amount of desiderative energy, why is it the case that she is the most wretched person? Shouldn't she be able to fulfill her beastly desires by all lawless means? I point back to my description of appetite's nature in the second chapter and argue that it is not in fact possible for the tyrant to fulfill all her desires, given the chaotic state of the soul under appetite's rule. Under the rule of the erotic love, the tyrant has strong desires for multiple competing ends, which are not harmonized in the least. Not only do stronger desires for these ends impede the fulfillment of these desires, but these stronger desires will make the internal war between different ends more violent. Moreover, in the *Republic*, the tyrant is the most wretched because she is the character with the least freedom and friendship (576a). Although the tyrant appears to be the ruler in a city, she is in fact the slave to her bodyguards, who have the worst nature. The crimes of the tyrant are conducted largely to acquire sustenance for the bodyguards. She lives in the fear of being overthrown as well as fear of experiencing enslavement at the hands of the worst people. She appears to have control of the city, while in fact having neither control over her soul or others (579d). For the above reasons, the increase of desiderative energy in the tyrant does not guarantee the fulfillment of desires or happiness in life. If anything, it is the source of her misery.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I resolved the apparent tensions between my proposed account in the second chapter and the hydraulic model. I argued that the first tension between the proliferation of number and kind of desires is compatible with the common interpretation of hydraulic model. The second tension, which is between the increase in the strength of the tyrant's desires and the supposed fixity suggested by the model, shows that Plato is not committed to the fixity of desiderative energy as one potential interpretation of the hydraulic model. I proposed that the removal of the fixity claim yields a more accurate understanding of the hydraulic model, which is in fact consistent with Plato's account of the tyrant.

## CONCLUSION

---

This thesis looked at several crucial interpretive issues regarding Plato's moral psychology in the context of the degenerate regimes. In the first chapter, I examined the city-soul analogy and proposed two possible conditions suggested by the analogy. The first condition applies in all types of constitution except democracy, which lacks a single leadership; and the second condition applies to almost all constitutions, although the degree of resemblance between the citizens and the constitution may vary. I concluded that the city-soul analogy is valid across all regimes. In the second chapter, I explored the cause of degradation in each case, and identified the cause of degradation as the enslavement of reason by lower parts of the soul. I offered a unified account for the increasing badness in the degenerate regimes, which identifies the bad-making feature as the degraded ends and desires, which increase in number, kind, and strength as the degradation progresses. In the last chapter, I defended my account against a potential objection, which suggests that there is a tension between the increase of desires and the fixity claim in Plato's hydraulic model of desire. I argued that the hydraulic model does not in fact entail fixity of desiderative energy overtime, and argued that this interpretation not only saves my account from the objection, but also preserves the consistency between Plato's account of the degenerate souls and the hydraulic model.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 
- Bobonich, C. (2002). *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Ferrari, G.R.F. (2005). *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gavrielides, E (2010). What Is Wrong with Degenerate Souls in the Republic?, *Phronesis* 55 (3):203-227.
- Hitz, Z. (2010). *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter Six.
- Johnstone, M. (2013). Anarchic Souls: Plato's Depiction of the 'Democratic Man', *Phronesis*, 58 139-159.
- Johnstone, M. (2015). Tyrannized Souls: Plato's Depiction of the 'Tyrannical Man', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 23:3, 423-437.
- Lane, M. (2007). Virtue as the Love of Knowledge, *Maieusis: Essays on Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, edited by Dominci Scott, 44-67, Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Lorenz, H. (2009). *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Plato (1992). *The Republic*, translated by G.M.A. Grube, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Plato, Cooper, J. M., & Hutchinson, D. S. (1997). Complete works. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Pub.
- Williams, B. (2001). *The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, from *Essays on Plato's Psychology*, Ellen Wagner.