

The Significance of Politics: Adeimantus's Contribution to the Argument of the *Republic*

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Abstract

I claim in this paper that Adeimantus's challenge to Socrates in book 2 of the *Republic* has more importance than scholars have generally recognized. The established tendency in the secondary literature is to treat Adeimantus's objection as virtually indistinct from Glaucon's objection. Such readings overlook the significance of Adeimantus's contribution to the argument of the dialogue, especially the unique emphasis he puts on the role of culture and social institutions in shaping human beliefs and desires. Whereas Glaucon objects to Socrates' conception of justice based on his views on human nature, Adeimantus introduces an indispensable political dimension to the discussion. I argue that these two objections are mutually implicating and vital to understanding why Socrates initiates an inquiry into politics in the *Republic*. Together, the objections show how Plato's wide-ranging examination of issues in ethics, politics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics hangs together as an integrated whole. A further benefit of this reevaluation of Adeimantus's challenge, I suggest, is the way it illuminates Plato's views on poetry in the dialogue. According to this reading, far from advocating for the exclusion of poetry from civic life, Plato assigns it a fundamental role in the education of the philosopher due to the importance of poetic practices in cultivating the wisdom-loving part of the soul.

Keywords

Plato – Adeimantus – politics – psychology – poetry

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For Richard Kraut

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You are talking about completely beautiful play (παγκάλην ... παιδιάν), Socrates, rather than trivial play, of a person able to play in words (ἐν λόγοις), telling stories about justice (δικαιοσύνης ... μυθολογοῦντα) and the other things of which you speak.

PLATO, *Phaedrus* 276e1–3

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I Introduction

Sometimes our ways of reading become so deeply entrenched that the prospect of approaching a text simply as it is presents a substantial task. Plato's *Republic* provides a special test case for this task. The interpretive landscape looks familiar enough, marked by well-worn paths that guide our understanding of the work and offer a sense of comprehension. For the most part these paths are forged through various influences we happen to have fallen under—established theoretical frameworks, currents of authoritative thought, a whole set of interpretive orthodoxies that govern what we think the text is saying—rather than any personal familiarity we form with the dialogue. The moves before us are already mapped out in ways that lead to fixed and accepted conclusions. This can be comforting, but it inevitably restricts the extent to which we can see the text anew and experience it as potentially uncharted territory. I suspect few of us these days actually *read* Plato.

In this paper I take issue with two common interpretive orthodoxies in reading the *Republic*. One is a scholarly orthodoxy and concerns the significance of Adeimantus's challenge to Socrates in book 2 of the dialogue. The other is more widely accepted and concerns the political project of the text, particularly in connection with Plato's views on poetry. As we shall see, both of these orthodoxies are related. I will argue that Adeimantus's contribution to the *Republic* has more importance than scholars have generally recognized. Almost all commentary on Glaucon's and Adeimantus's challenges to Socrates in book 2 conflates the two brothers' speeches as a single objection. A sizable proportion of the secondary literature, in fact, identifies the problem

that Socrates confronts solely as “Glaucón’s challenge.”¹ This fails to acknowledge a key insight developed by Adeimantus concerning the role of culture and political institutions in shaping human beliefs and desires. Both brothers present Socrates with unique but interconnected concerns in questioning the value of justice. While Glaucón approaches this issue from the standpoint of human nature, Adeimantus does so from the standpoint of politics. Plato has Socrates recognize the strength of both objections as mutually reinforcing challenges. The tripartite account of human motivation he develops in the dialogue explains the value of living justly in response to Glaucón’s challenge. But it is due primarily to Adeimantus’s contribution, I claim, that Socrates initiates the political project of the *Republic*.²

My argument in what follows will proceed in four stages. To begin, in section II, I compare the challenges that Glaucón and Adeimantus raise against Socrates’ view of justice and explain how each brother wants something distinctive from Socrates as part of a defense of the just life. Section III then explores as a hypothetical exercise how different the argument of the *Republic* would look if Adeimantus’s speech in book 2 were missing and Socrates’ work consisted only in responding to Glaucón. I suggest that in the absence of Adeimantus’s challenge, Socrates could answer Glaucón’s challenge with the theory of human psychology he puts forward in book 4 supplemented by his analysis of unjust soul types in books 8 and 9, leaving the rest of the dialogue otiose. Were it not for Adeimantus, many of the most memorable portions of the *Republic*—the city–soul analogy, the construction of an ideal city, the discussion of poetry, as well as the epistemological and metaphysical stretches of the work—would be dispensable.

In section IV, I provide a reading of Adeimantus’s challenge to Socrates where his main objection concerns the way in which *stories* (λόγοι, 362e2, 363c5) and *what people say* have the power to shape our understanding of

1 Reeve (2008, 69) notes this convention explicitly. Most modern scholarship on the brothers’ objections dwells on Glaucón’s trifold classification of goods in book 2 and regards Adeimantus’s follow-up speech as a mere repetition of Glaucón’s ideas. See Kirwan (1965); White (1984), for whom “Adeimantus is simply restating Glaucón’s challenge” (401n6); Allen (1987); Goldsmith (1995); Heinaman (2002); Brown (2007); and Payne (2011). Detailed treatments of Adeimantus’s contribution in its own right are scarce: compared with the dozens of close studies of Glaucón’s speech in the secondary literature, I have found just two publications, Stokes (1987) and Araújo (2018), that focus primarily on Adeimantus’s intervention in book 2. Both of these pieces provide valuable insights, yet they approach the importance of Adeimantus’s speech from a different angle than the one I offer in this paper.

2 To be clear, my interest is in why Plato engages in political inquiry at all in the *Republic*. I leave unexplored in this paper his commitment to the specific political proposals developed in the dialogue. For further discussion, see Kamtekar (2010).

justice and our predispositions to act justly.³ My focus here is on what Myles Burnyeat has termed “political institutions” in a wide sense, where these include (critically in books 2 and 3) sources of education and enculturation in civic life such as poetry and music, but also more generally “all the influences, all the ideas, images, and practices, that make up the culture of a society.”⁴ Section v concludes the paper by exploring how Adeimantus’s objection relates to other aspects of the argument of the *Republic*. At the level of psychology, Adeimantus’s challenge highlights the power of unreflective and prereflective cognition and its influence on our value judgments. At the level of epistemology, his contribution calls attention to the sources of our judgments and convictions, which become the object of Socrates’ focus in the middle books of the *Republic*. Adeimantus’s challenge thus prefigures much of the argument of the dialogue. Without it, I propose, the integrated way in which Plato investigates issues in ethics, politics, psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics would make much less sense.

II What Does Adeimantus Want?

Coming on the heels of Glaucon’s intervention in book 2 of the *Republic* at 357a–362c, Adeimantus’s speech at 362d–367e is usually sidelined in the secondary literature. Allan Bloom’s commentary on the text contains one of the more careful character studies of the two brothers and the roles they each play as the discussion unfolds. Each of them, Bloom observes, poses a different problem for Socrates that needs its own reply.⁵ Still, in comparing their participation in the dialogue, Bloom states that “Glaucon, with his manly intransigence, makes the most important contribution of the two interlocutors; he gives the conversation its power and its height.”⁶ Julia Annas similarly holds that

3 Greek references from Plato here and in what follows are to Burnet (1900–1907). English translations come from Cooper and Hutchinson (1997) (following the Grube/Reeve translation of the *Republic*) with selective modifications. As is well known, the Greek term *logos* resists easy translation. Liddell and Scott (1940) identify a plethora of meanings, including “word,” “account,” “argument,” “speech,” “story,” “talk,” “discussion,” “definition,” “proportion,” and “reason.” Seeing which of these senses of *logos* applies in a piece of text is generally only apparent in context, a procedure that I employ when translating the term throughout this paper.

4 Burnyeat 1999, 215.

5 “Although the two speeches seem supplementary, they are really quite different and set conflicting tasks for Socrates” (Bloom 1968, 342). I think this goes too far: the two speeches in my view present Socrates with different but complementary (not conflicting) challenges.

6 Bloom 1968, 346.

Adeimantus's addition to Glaucon's objection in book 2 is "relatively minor" and "certainly doesn't warrant the length of his speech."⁷ Even Burnyeat's reading of the *Republic*—a penetrating study of Plato as the first theorist of culture in the western tradition—assesses Adeimantus as the somewhat dimmer of Socrates' two discussion partners when compared with his younger, feistier brother.⁸

One of my goals in this paper is to offer an alternative perspective on Adeimantus. I do so by foregrounding his interest in the power of stories and images to shape human beliefs and desires. On this reading, Adeimantus's objection to Socrates in book 2 is a powerful counterpart to Glaucon's objection. Glaucon objects to the life of justice because of the obstacle it presents in satisfying our pleonectic needs. He advances a psychological explanation for why we should not be just. Our motivations for acting unjustly, he suggests, emerge from the inside: it feels good to get more and more for oneself at the expense of others.

Adeimantus suggests another way in which our motivations for acting unjustly arise. He calls attention to the reasons people give for why we *should* be just and notes that these reasons are always instrumental in nature. Such explanations come from the outside: they have their source in worlds external to the human psyche that are part of the sphere of politics. They include the myths and stories we are told about the benefits of living justly, the incentives we are given to avoid injustice, and the images that enthrall us in diverse sites of cultural production. All of these explanations locate the value of the just life in the social and material rewards that such a life provides. But for a sophisticated listener of such accounts, this opens up a gap between the life of justice and its goodness. Why not secure the rewards of a just life without the trouble of actually living justly? Why not devote oneself to *seeming* just without really being just?

For Plato, to perceive this gap and raise these questions already indicates a deep problem in our thinking about justice. Yet the political worlds we inhabit not only encourage this line of inquiry but promote a vision of the good life as a solution. The solution is to enjoy the rewards of seeming just while getting

⁷ Annas 1981, 65.

⁸ "In the *Republic*, a switch from Adeimantus to Glaucon typically marks a move to a higher level of discussion" (Burnyeat 1999, 230n30). Such remarks reflect the general tenor of commentary on the two brothers, though a number of scholars also observe the uniqueness of Adeimantus's contribution in the text: apart from the single studies in Stokes (1987) and Araújo (2018) cited above in note 1, see Ferrari (2003, 19–20), G.R. Lear (2006, 104–107), J. Lear (2006, 25–26), Weiss (2007, 103–105), Altman (2012, 105–109), Thakkar (2018, 153–155), and McCoy (2020, 96–99).

away with injustice. Hence, through a perverse logic, the reasons we are given to be just in politics are indirectly reasons to live unjustly. Depictions of the good life that endorse the idea of justice as a merely instrumental good are inherently corrupting.

Adeimantus wants a different story that explains the value of the just life. That story turns out to be the *Republic* itself. To tell it, Plato inaugurates an approach to politics that differs from that of his contemporaries, and indeed from anything found in dialogues standardly assigned to his early period, an approach that is mindful of the ways in which political institutions and cultural products like poetry and music can affect our perceptions.⁹ Closing the gap between the good life and the just life, he sees, requires closing the gap between psychology and politics, and it's thanks mostly to Adeimantus's contribution that Socrates works out this argument.

Plato's interest in processes of enculturation in psychic formation has of course not been lost on scholars. Apart from Burnyeat, I aim to build here on the work of Jonathan Lear on this topic, who finds in the dialogue "a dynamic account of the psychological transactions between inside and outside a person's psyche, between a person's inner life and his cultural environment, between *intra*-psychic and *inter*-psychic relations."¹⁰ On my reading, it is precisely the interconnectedness of psyche and polis that Socrates must address in response to Adeimantus. But Lear takes Plato to draw a conclusion from this interplay between the inner and the outer that I reject. On his reading, all poetry and poetic imitation represent a threat to harmonious relations within (and between) soul and city.¹¹ I will argue, by contrast, that Socrates' answer to Adeimantus's challenge shows a deep regard for the transformative power of poetic devices compared with discursive reasoning. Whatever the quarrel between philosophy and poetry according to Plato, it remains at heart a lover's quarrel (see 607b3–608a2 and 595b9–10). Rather than dismissing all poetry,

9 I follow Grube/Reeve throughout this paper in translating *μουσική* as "poetry and music." For more on this pairing, see Burnyeat (1999, 217–255) and Schofield (2010). Plato clearly regards poetry and music as intertwined in his analysis of poetic imitation in books 2–3; see esp. 398b–d.

10 Lear (1992, 184); his emphasis.

11 "Poetry has a hotline to the appetites. ... It establishes a split off part of the psyche to which reason is not accessible. And that is why poetry cannot, for Plato, be just a stage in the developmental cave we work our way through. Other images may generate conflicts that lead us towards reality, but poetic imitations keep us imprisoned at that level" (Lear 1992, 209). This is too pessimistic, in my view, as an account of Plato's assessment of poetry. While the *Republic* does identify a range of problems with poetic practices, Lear's reading overlooks the vital role that poetry plays in civic education and (relatedly) in the cultivation of the psyche during the dialogue.

Socrates' response to Adeimantus in fact makes considerable room for mythopoetic image-making in the service of philosophical understanding. My argument in this paper thus corresponds with important recent scholarship that attends closely to Plato's use of figurative methods in his dialogues.¹²

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. To appreciate the significance of Adeimantus's challenge, we first need to juxtapose it with the challenge of his brother. Glaucon opens book 2 by observing how starkly Socrates' conception of justice differs from the thoughts of most people (τοῖς πολλοῖς, 358a4). Picking up the argument following Thrasymachus's withdrawal in book 1, Glaucon makes a case for the majority view that one should act justly merely "for the sake of the rewards and popularity that are due to a good reputation (εὐδοκιμήσεων)" (358a5), and that justice by itself has no benefit for us but "should be avoided because of itself (δι' αὐτό) as something burdensome" (358a6). Socrates, by contrast, regards justice as an intrinsic good: whatever reputation one may enjoy from being seen as just, he believes that justice is its own reward. Even if our actions go unrecognized, each of us has reason to act justly according to this view, since justice benefits us all by itself.

Glaucon is unconvinced. He wants a better argument from Socrates:

I think that Thrasymachus gave up before he had to, charmed by you as if he were a snake. But to me there's been no proof (ἀπόδειξις) on either side. For I want to hear what justice and injustice are and what power (δύναμιν) each has when itself by itself in the soul (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ). I want to leave out of account their rewards and their consequences (τὰ γιγνόμενα). (358b2–7)

Glaucon goes on to dispute Socrates' view of justice as its own reward by claiming that we have direct reasons (from the inside) to be unjust. He identifies a root cause in human nature that underwrites and legitimates a life of injustice: pleonexia (τὴν πλεονεξίαν, 359c4–5), an innate desire to outdo others and get as much as possible for oneself. This is an objection to Socrates' view of justice grounded in a notion of what is naturally good for us.

Adeimantus's objection concentrates instead on what others say is good for us. He argues that when we consider the reasons we are given (from the outside) to be *just*, they are on closer inspection reasons to be *unjust*. The cause of

12 See in particular the three edited collections of essays in Partenie (2009); Collobert, Destrée, and Gonzalez (2012); and Destrée and Edmonds (2017). For monograph-length studies of this topic that focus on the *Republic*, see Allen (2010), Keum (2020), and McCoy (2020).

injustice, on this view, does not lie primarily in an innate human desire but in the world around us: in how we come to be conditioned throughout our lives to think about justice.

It is Adeimantus, then, who first puts on the table the core theme of education in the *Republic*. To support his objection, he cites verses from canonical poetry, with which he clearly has a close acquaintance.¹³ But several other authority figures and sources of education also receive scrutiny in Adeimantus's speech, including parents (362e5), priests and prophets (364b5), sophists (365c1), rhetoricians and politicians (365d4–5), and lawgivers (365e2–3). Adeimantus claims that those who recommend justice in civic life always do so in instrumentalist and transactional terms, due to the honor and material success that result from a reputation for justice and the divine rewards that a just person enjoys in an imagined afterlife. Those who advise against injustice likewise invoke the punishment it incurs, both human and divine.¹⁴ Beyond such instrumental reasons for acting justly, however, “they have nothing else to say” (363e3). No one recommends justice as a good worth pursuing for its own sake.

Adeimantus also draws attention to other ways people speak about the just life. He notes that many of the things we hear about justice and injustice, expressed both in private and in culture by poets (ἰδίᾳ τε λεγόμενον καὶ ὑπὸ ποιητῶν, 363e6–364a1), stress the difficulty of acting justly compared with the pleasant and easy path of injustice: people who are unjust with wealth and power are admired and deemed happy (εὐδαιμονίζειν), while those who are just but weak and poor are dishonored and despised (364a5–b2). Living well, according to these accounts, does not require living justly. Indeed, in popular depictions even the gods are not so enamored with justice that they are immune to being influenced: with enough sacrifices and offerings, Adeimantus observes, Homer himself affirms that those who act unjustly can avoid divine retribution (364d3–e2; quoting from *Iliad* 9.497–501). Along with the instrumentalist and transactional accounts mentioned at 362e–363e, these views of justice together advocate a vision of the good life where every bad deed can go unpunished.

And with this Adeimantus can drive his point home:

When all such sayings (λεγόμενα) about the attitudes of gods and humans to virtue and vice are so often repeated, Socrates, how do you think they

13 Bloom describes Adeimantus as “particularly addicted to poetry” (1968, 342).

14 Plato registers the effect of such stories in the first pages of the *Republic* at 330d–331a, where Cephalus speaks of his fears of the underworld due to myths about Hades and penalties to be paid after death for a life of injustice.

affect (ποιεῖν) the souls (ψυχάς) of young people? I mean those who are clever and able to flit from one of these sayings to another, so to speak, and gather from them an impression of what sort of person he should be and of how best to travel the road of life. (365a4–b1)

Whereas Glaucon looks inward for the source of injustice in our lives, Adeimantus looks outward. Or rather, he realizes the power that the outer world can have over our inner world, how its products slip into our lives unawares in ways that shape our beliefs and desires, and what it is we even see. His attention to the forms of discourse that impact our lives, how they affect us, and the messy way we assemble them to obtain a sense of how to live marks his challenge as a distinctive contribution to the argument of the *Republic*.¹⁵

This represents the basic difference, then, between Glaucon's and Adeimantus's objections: in emphasizing our pleonectic nature, Glaucon puts forward a psychological theory of what the good life is internally for each of us; Adeimantus, by contrast, emphasizes our political nature, he draws attention to what we're told the good life is by external forces and puts forward a theory of how these influences affect us. We can regard the difference between the two brothers' objections accordingly as a difference between an argument from nature and an argument from nurture.

This difference, however, should not be overstated. The objections raised by each brother should be seen as interlocking pieces of a larger puzzle about the relation between psychology and politics. For to the extent that Socrates can prove we have reasons (from the inside) to be just by nature, he can claim that sociopolitical pressures (from the outside) that work to counteract these reasons also work to counteract our nature. Answering Glaucon's challenge therefore seems to blunt the strength of Adeimantus's challenge: if Socrates could argue against Glaucon for the natural goodness of the just life based on an alternate theory of human psychology, then he could argue against Adeimantus that however we may be swayed by outside influences to live unjustly, these influences conflict with what is naturally good for us.

But in a way this is precisely Adeimantus's point. Even if (contra Glaucon's psychological theory) we have compelling internal reasons to view the good life as the just life, the external vision of the good life we are given in politics can have a warping effect on our psychologies and on what we see as good.

15 This perhaps is why Plato has Adeimantus remark that Glaucon's speech failed to state what was "most needed" (ὁ μάλιστα ἔδει, 362d5) in objecting to Socrates' view. By mounting a challenge solely at the level of the psyche, Glaucon overlooks the influence of the outer world on one's inner life.

Adeimantus's objection to Socrates in large part concerns this mismatch between what appears good to us and what, according to Socrates, is actually good for us. His core insight is that appearances can be not only captivating but formative. If Socrates sincerely believes that the just life is good for us—really good for us—then how the just life *appears* to us must match that reality.¹⁶

This indicates another difference between the two brothers' objections. Glaucon wants a defense of the just life in terms of what is actually good for us, regardless of conventional views about justice. Adeimantus puts these views back in play: he wants a defense of the just life that acknowledges the power of such representations in shaping what we perceive as good for us. Addressing Socrates near the end of his speech, he delivers the following exhortation:

Socrates, of all of you who claim to praise justice, from the original heroes of old whose stories (λόγοι) survive, to the men of the present day, not one has ever blamed injustice or praised justice except by mentioning the reputations, honors, and gifts that are their consequences (γυγνομένας). But as for what each itself does by its own power (αὐτὸ δ' ἐκάτερον τῆ αὐτοῦ δυνάμει τί δρᾷ) due to its presence in the soul of the person who has it (τῆ τοῦ ἔχοντος ψυχῆ ἐνόν), even if it escapes the notice of gods and humans, no one has ever adequately related (ἐπεξῆλθεν ἰκανῶς) by means of speech (τῷ λόγῳ), either in poetry or in private discussion (ἐν ποιήσει οὔτ' ἐν ἰδίῳ λόγῳ), that injustice is the worst thing a soul can have in it and that justice is the greatest good. If all of you had spoken in this way from the beginning and persuaded us (ἡμᾶς ἐπειθετε) from our youth (ἐκ νέων ἡμᾶς), we wouldn't now be guarding against one another's injustices, but each would be his own best guardian (ἄριστος φύλαξ), afraid that by doing injustice he'd be living with the worst thing possible. (366d7–367a4; emphasis added)

16 Observe how this provides equal support for Glaucon's contribution in book 2. For suppose that Socrates answered Adeimantus's challenge by neutralizing all the outside influences in civic life that present justice as a merely instrumental good, but did nothing to answer Glaucon's challenge about our inherently pleonectic nature. His defense of justice would then be little more than propaganda: we would have an appearance of the good life as the just life that fails to reflect what, according to Glaucon, is actually good for us. The point is that Socrates must respond to both brothers in tandem or not at all: their objections are not mutually exclusive but interact with and reinforce each other. Cf. Lear (1992, 207): "Justice, for Plato, is a certain harmony within the psyche; it is also a certain harmony within the polis. But now we can see that each of these harmonies is possible only if there is a larger harmony—between inside and outside—which encompasses and explains them."

I want to highlight two details in this important passage. Notice, first, the contrast between Glaucon's request earlier at 358b2–7 that Socrates explain what justice is (τί ... ἔστιν) and what power it has (τίνα ἔχει δύναμιν) “itself by itself” (αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτό)—a request he states again at 358d1–2—and Adeimantus's desire to know what justice does (τί δρᾷ, 366e6), by means of its power, to the soul of a person who has it (τοῦ ἔχοντος, 366e6).¹⁷ Adeimantus goes on to note how Socrates classified justice at the beginning of book 2 among “productive goods” (ἀγαθὰ γόνιμα) like seeing and being healthy (367c5–d2; cf. 357b4–358a3). The point here is that no one locates the benefits of health in a reputation for being healthy; it is, rather, the presence of health itself in a person that *produces* benefits. Yet this is very different from how most people consider the benefits of justice. The stories we hear about living justly from childhood on, the stories Adeimantus believes have such a formative effect on us, all deny that justice by itself “does” anything to us. What does the work in making justice good, according to these accounts, are the social and material rewards that come from a reputation for justice.¹⁸

So we have, on the one hand, the conventional narratives that surround us in sociopolitical life, according to which the benefits of living justly derive from the consequences of being seen as just. And we have, on the other hand, Socrates' anomalous view that the benefits of living justly issue somehow from the nature of justice itself. This leads to my second observation about Adeimantus's exhortation to Socrates. Unlike Glaucon, Adeimantus does not want an abstract account of justice. He wants a defense of justice that explains its power as a productive good and he wants this defense to have persuasive force. Against the conventional narratives in our lives that depict justice as a merely instrumental good, Adeimantus wants a counternarrative. Notice the general nature of his exhortation: he directs his frustration in the plural to “all of you” (πάντων ὑμῶν, 366d7–e1, 367a1), that is, to all of those authorities he believes have failed to persuade a collective “us” (ἡμᾶς, 367a2) about the

17 Also noted by Annas (1981, 66) and Ferrari (2003, 19–20). The manuscript sources are mixed on τί δρᾷ at 366e6: according to Burnet's critical apparatus, the interrogative clause occurs in F, which he follows, while A and D only have ἐν. Boter (1989, 109) considers the words in F an interpolation in the Greek text and “a clumsy attempt at simplifying the syntax, which should not have been adopted by Burnet.” Slings (2003) agrees and drops the clause in the revised OCT. However, Adeimantus's focus on the productive power of justice and his recurrent interest in understanding what justice and injustice do (see esp. τί ποιοῦσα at 367b4, occurring in all sources) lends more support for the text in F.

18 My understanding of this issue has been enriched by an unpublished paper by Vanessa de Harven, “The Distinctness of the Three Distinct Goods in Glaucon's Challenge, A Fallacy about Plato's *Republic*.”

goodness of justice. Adeimantus's challenge to Socrates is to make such a case. And this, he believes, requires a different style of persuasion than the account sought by Glaucon:

So don't only show us in a theoretical argument (μή ... ἡμῖν μόνον ἐνδείξει τῷ λόγῳ) that justice is stronger than injustice, but show what each of them itself does (τί ποιοῦσα ἑκατέρω), because of itself (δι' αὐτήν), to the one who has it (τὸν ἔχοντα), which makes injustice bad and justice good. (367b2–5)

Again, we see in this passage Adeimantus's desire to learn what it is that justice and injustice *do* in terms of their causal powers. But he also emphasizes the *means* by which Socrates should show him (ἐνδείξει, 367b3) these effects. Recall that Glaucon in his speech wanted a proof (ἀπόδειξις, 358b3–4) from Socrates to refute Thrasymachus's view of justice. By contrast, Adeimantus is explicit in asking Socrates *not* to defend justice solely by means of a proof (μόνον ... τῷ λόγῳ, 367b2–3).¹⁹

What alternative defense does Adeimantus have in mind? The form of Socrates' response clearly matters to him. To underscore the point, Adeimantus concludes his speech by restating that he does not want to be shown “only in a theoretical argument” (μόνον τῷ λόγῳ, 367e2) that justice is stronger than injustice. And the reason for this should be evident to us by now. For we have seen how, throughout his challenge to Socrates, Adeimantus displays a keen awareness of the influence of appearances in shaping the human psyche. His deepest wish is for a different image of the just life, a truer image, one so convincing that it produces a guardian (φύλαξ, 367a3) in each of us to preserve the goodness of justice, an image that involves a complete reconception of our relations to the world outside us and the world within.²⁰ To remedy the corrupting

19 Literally: “by *logos* alone.” Grube/Reeve’s “theoretical argument” for *logos* accurately captures the force of μόνον in μόνον ... τῷ λόγῳ, repeated for emphasis again by Adeimantus at 367e2. While Glaucon is content with a proof from Socrates that explains the goodness of the just life (see also 580c9, d5, and 583b1), Adeimantus wants more than an intellectual argument. This is of a piece with suspicions he voices about purely theoretical inquiry later in book 6: “Just as inexperienced checkers players are trapped by the experts in the end and can’t make a move, so they too [sc. those inexperienced in argument] are trapped in the end and have nothing to say in this different kind of checkers, which is played not with disks but with words (ἐν λόγοις)” (487b7–c3).

20 The important introduction of the idea of self-guardianship in Adeimantus’s exhortation to Socrates is observed by Ferrari (2003, 20) and Thakkar (2018, 93n17), though each take this idea in a different direction than I do in this paper.

influence of popular representations of justice in civic life, Adeimantus wants an opposing representation: a counternarrative, as I have put it, with greater persuasive force than conventional narratives about justice.

Socrates' account of an ideal city in the *Republic* is this counternarrative. Begun in book 2 immediately after Adeimantus's speech, and presented directly to Adeimantus in book 4 as "your city" (σοι ... ἡ πόλις, 427c6–d1), the account puts forward a defense of justice that is deeply attentive to the sources of influence in our lives, where the world outside us and the world within are mutually constituted. Composed of three disparate parts and governed by a group of guardians responsible for the good of the whole, the just city turns on a radically new yet compelling notion of power. According to this account, true political power—the kind that entitles the guardian class to rule—requires the formation of a guardian within the soul. We will explore the details of this account more fully in section IV of this paper. But before that, it will be worth considering the significance of Adeimantus's contribution to the argument of the *Republic* from another direction: if it were only Glaucon's challenge that Socrates needed to address in book 2, how would the argument of the dialogue look different? I shall argue in the following section of this paper that nothing in Glaucon's challenge, in fact, requires an analysis of the ideal city. The substance of both the political project of the *Republic* and the city–soul analogy itself consists primarily in how they respond to Adeimantus's challenge.

III The Purpose of the Just City

Glaucon's challenge to Socrates requires a case for justice derived from what is naturally good for us. To make this case, Socrates must examine the nature of the human soul in a way that responds to Glaucon's understanding of our inherently pleonectic nature. Plato has Socrates meet this challenge in the *Republic* by developing a view of the human good as a kind of psychological health in combination with a view of justice as a regulatory principle that is internal to the human psyche and constitutes that health. This in turn rests on a sophisticated theory of psychology where Socrates posits three independent drivers of human motivation—reason, spirit, and appetite—each of which when engaged in its own proper function and in concert with the others promotes a condition of psychological harmony. Justice, on this account, consists in a structural arrangement of the three parts of the human soul that ensures such harmony. Socrates sets forth this view famously in the following passage as the culmination of the arguments that he advances in book 4 for the tripartite nature of the human soul:

Justice isn't concerned with someone's doing his own externally ($\xi\xi\omega$), but with what is inside him ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$), with what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate, and harmonious. Only then does he act. (443c9–e2)

The most pronounced feature of this view is the way it identifies justice as an internal principle of regulation—with what is inside ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$) a human being—rather than as something represented fundamentally in one's acts. The point is not to deny the significance of action but to see the justice of a person's acts as grounded in and emerging from the structural integrity of their psyche. It is this state of integrity, creating a person who is “entirely one ($\pi\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\alpha}\pi\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha$), moderate ($\sigma\acute{\omega}\phi\rho\omicron\nu\alpha$), and harmonious ($\acute{\eta}\rho\mu\omicron\sigma\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu$),” that Plato regards as the virtue of justice properly speaking.

This helps answer Glaucon's challenge by confining the pleonectic side of human nature to a single aspect of our psychology, the appetitive part of the soul, which receives its most intense characterization in the unchecked desires of the tyrannical soul type in book 9 of the *Republic* (see esp. 571c3–d4, 573a4–b5, 574a3–575a7). Instead of having Socrates outright reject Glaucon's psychological theory, Plato incorporates it into his own. Once he has established the existence of multiple sources of motivation in us, he makes room for a vision of the good life that depends on something other than the satisfaction of pleonectic desire.

Clearly, this defense of justice stands and falls on Plato's division of the soul into three parts. He supplies arguments for this psychological theory starting at 436a, about two thirds of the way into book 4, but the search for justice as a personal virtue begins somewhat earlier in the book at 427d. Importantly, this move is accompanied by a switch in interlocutors from Adeimantus to Glaucon: having examined with Adeimantus the political conditions for the ideal city that support the education of the guardian class, Socrates turns explicitly to Glaucon, whom he calls on to “look inside it [sc. the city] and see where the justice and the injustice might be in it, what the difference between them is, and which of the two the person who is to be happy ($\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\acute{\iota}\mu\omicron\nu\alpha$) should possess” (427d1–7). This is a notable callback to the initial challenge Glaucon presents to Socrates to define what justice and injustice are, and to explain why leading

a just life is more desirable than leading an unjust life (cf. 358b2–c6). Socrates' response to Glaucon begins here. The essence of his response, however, lies in the elaborate tripartite account of human motivation that he expounds at 436a–441c, followed at 441c–443b by the identification of courage, moderation, wisdom, and justice in the individual, and culminating at 443c–445b with a description of the effects of justice and injustice on the health of the soul.

Observe how, outside this critical stretch of book 4, very little of the *Republic* bears on Glaucon's challenge. Dominic Scott has argued that the idea of justice as its own reward is well established by the end of book 4, and that the central epistemological and metaphysical sections of the dialogue in books 5–7 contribute nothing essential to Socrates' defense of this claim.²¹ I believe we can go even further. Socrates' inquiry into the internal workings of the psyche in book 4 and his view of justice as constitutive of our psychological health are sufficient to explain the intrinsic value of being just. In particular, nothing in Glaucon's challenge requires an analysis of the ideal city. If we were to consider Socrates' task in the *Republic* as a response to Glaucon alone, his introduction of the city–soul analogy and discussion of the education of the guardian class in books 2–3 would serve no argumentative purpose. These portions of the text take on special relevance, however, in answering Adeimantus's challenge regarding the corruptive influence of conventional narratives about justice and the force that cultural products like poetry and music exert on us in the sphere of politics. Furthermore, once we see the significance of this part of the dialogue as a reply to Adeimantus, it becomes evident how Socrates' examination of epistemological and metaphysical issues in books 5–7 helps address Adeimantus's concerns about the power of appearances. By addressing these concerns, Socrates shows how a proper understanding of reality is necessary for the attainment of genuine knowledge and virtue, and for the health of civic life in general.

It might be objected that Glaucon's challenge remains unanswered by the end of book 4 since Socrates at this stage in the text has not provided a specific enough account of the human good to counter Glaucon's pleonectic theory. Socrates' conception of justice as a state of psychological integration requires the rule of reason over the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul. The passage quoted above at 443c9–e2 depicts the just person as someone able to

21 Scott 2000. Cf. Burnyeat (2006, 4), who states that Plato “takes great care, when writing the *Republic*, not to make the main moral argument depend on the high metaphysics of the Theory of Forms. ... The welcome implication is that we do not have to understand or believe the Theory of Forms to be motivated to pursue justice for its own sake, as an intrinsic good.”

harmonize these various parts and put them in order, making the soul a unified and moderate whole. The rational part is qualified to rule, Socrates claims, due to its “knowledge of what is advantageous for each part and for the whole soul, which is the community of all three parts” (442c6–8). Yet without a better sense of what this knowledge consists in, it remains an open question whether the psychological integration that exemplifies the life of justice is anything more than psychological repression. At least the satisfaction of pleonectic desire can be readily understood as feeling good.

It might also be objected that Socrates’ conception of justice in book 4 fails to meet the full scope of Glaucon’s challenge. In its complete form, that challenge was not simply to defend justice as an intrinsic good but to explain the superiority of its goodness in comparison with a life of injustice (see 358c4–6 and 360e1–362d3). Socrates’ account of the psychological harmony of the just person only partially satisfies this demand. It is true that book 4 concludes with Socrates contrasting the psychological health of the just person with the inner turmoil (ταραχήν, 444b6) of the unjust person. This clarifies the superiority of the just life over a life of extreme injustice.²² But the psychological complexity implied in Socrates’ tripartite division of the soul now requires an investigation into a *range* of unjust soul types. For it raises the possibility of different configurations of the three parts of the soul, each of which may fall short of the internal harmony of a perfectly just life but which, for all that, may be regarded as a better way of life. The tripartite theory, that is to say, makes room for lives that possess different *degrees* of injustice, at least some of which may possess considerable structural integrity. For instance, a person in whom the spirited part of the soul dominates and who keeps their appetites in check for the sake of honor may commit occasional minor acts of injustice while remaining fairly well integrated psychologically. It is unclear why such a life with its accompanying social and material rewards is necessarily less desirable than the life of justice as Socrates describes it.

Let us take these two objections in turn. In response to the first, Socrates’ understanding of the human good is indeed underdescribed by the end of book 4. Still, he has numerous resources within the argument of the book to explain why Glaucon’s pleonectic theory of the good life is inherently flawed.

22 A point that Glaucon for his part finds totally convincing: “even if someone can do whatever he wishes, except what will free him from vice and injustice and make him acquire justice and virtue, how can it be worth living when his soul—the very thing by which he lives—is in turmoil and ruined (ταραττομένης και διαφθειρομένης)?” (445a9–b4). The point is reinforced later in book 9 in Socrates’ analysis of the tyrannical soul type, which explains how the tyrant is the most miserable of all human beings.

The examples he gives of desires directed toward unhealthy ends (439a4–c8) or desires that conflict with one's sense of self (439e6–440b7) are all suggestive of the way the appetitive part of the soul can lead us astray from what is actually good for us and illustrate the limitations of relying on our pleonectic nature as a guide to human happiness. Socrates could contend further that a life devoted to the indiscriminate satisfaction of our desires is ultimately unsatisfying, leading us to constantly seek out new desires to fulfill.²³ He could then maintain that his view of justice as psychological integration provides a more sustainable account of human happiness, since it is based on the idea that a well-ordered psyche is necessary for the cultivation of our desires. Insofar as reason possesses knowledge of what is good for the whole soul, it has the authority to rule. That knowledge is also underdescribed in book 4. But so long as Socrates can appeal here to a plausible guide that serves as an effective source of learning—perhaps the knowledge that comes from tradition or the accumulated wisdom of one's society—he has a robust and compelling alternative to Glaucon's theory of the good life.²⁴

In response to the second objection, Socrates is in fact keenly aware that his tripartite division of the soul allows for different configurations of unjust soul types. This is why he invites Glaucon at the end of book 4 to join him in considering multiple forms of vice (445c1–2). The task is deferred during books 5–7 but resumed in book 8, at which point Socrates turns to analyze a series of characters with diminishing degrees of rational rule.²⁵ The idea of justice as a state of psychological integration remains relevant in evaluating each way of life in the discussion of unjust soul types in books 8–9. While different lives may exhibit different levels of integration, Socrates makes plain that any deviation from a perfectly just life, even in the honor-loving soul type of the timocratic man, represents a form of internal tension prone to collapse that is not truly desirable (see esp. 550a1–b7 and 553a6–c8). In contrast, the perfectly just life achieves a condition of complete harmony with each part of the soul

23 This is very close to an argument that Plato has Socrates develop in the myth of the water carriers in the *Gorgias* against Callicles' view of happiness as a life of unconstrained desire fulfillment (see 492e–494a).

24 By this I do not mean to suggest that Socrates believes we should in fact rely on such guides. My claim is that he can respond to Glaucon's challenge in book 2 simply by invoking *some* external source of learning that promotes psychological integration. Concerns about the content of that learning are not, properly speaking, part of Glaucon's contribution to the argument of the *Republic*. That contribution comes from Adeimantus.

25 Cf. Scott (2000, 10), who stresses the way Socrates at 543c4–6 in book 8 refers to the epistemological and metaphysical sections of books 5–7 as a departure from the discussion in book 4.

performing its proper role and working together in unison. This is the only way to achieve stable happiness and fulfillment in a human life according to Plato, and hence any life that falls short of this ideal will be less worth living.

We can conclude, then, that the psychological theory advanced in book 4 of the *Republic*, supplemented by the analysis of different soul types in books 8–9, provides Socrates with all the resources he needs to answer Glaucon's challenge from book 2. That challenge concerns the internal reasons we have to view the good life as the just life. Socrates responds with an account of justice as an internal principle of regulation that constitutes our psychological health, an account that supersedes Glaucon's pleonectic theory by offering a more complete and extensive understanding of the human good. However, as we have found, nothing in this response requires an analysis of the ideal city and the education of the guardian class that Plato embarks on in books 2–3. Nor does it require the digression into the epistemological and metaphysical topics he explores in books 5–7. As we shall see in the remainder of this paper, these parts of the *Republic* are most salient as a response to Adeimantus's challenge.

iv The Guardian Within

As a cumulative total, Socrates' exchanges with Glaucon in the *Republic* make up more than half of the dialogue. By comparison, his exchanges with Adeimantus comprise only a quarter of the text. Nonetheless, close attention to Socrates' engagement with the two brothers shows a number of patterns that make Adeimantus's contribution to the discussion significant.²⁶ We should note at the outset that it is to Adeimantus that Socrates directs his analogy between city and soul in book 2, and how he presents it explicitly as a visionary aid for understanding. As other scholars have remarked, Plato curiously has Socrates explain his use of the city–soul analogy with another analogy of the “larger letters” at 368c7–d7. Socrates likens the difficulty of defining justice at the level of human psychology to the problem of someone trying to read small letters that are hard to make out from a distance. To address this problem, the reader looks for the same letters at a larger scale and makes use of those to figure out what the smaller letters say. Socrates suggests that he and his interlocutors adopt a similar approach, starting with a more accessible

26 For an outline of books 2–10 of the *Republic* structured around Socrates' exchanges with Glaucon and Adeimantus, see the Appendix to this paper.

version of justice at the level of a city to understand the notion of justice at the level of the human soul.²⁷

The care with which Socrates subsequently conducts his inquiry into the ideal city in books 2–3 and throughout the rest of the *Republic* represents an acknowledgement of the importance of Adeimantus's challenge. That challenge, as we observed in section II, concerns the effects of political life on the life of the psyche. But Socrates' account of the ideal city represents something further. For as we have also observed, at the core of Adeimantus's objection to Socrates' understanding of the just life is the problem of appearances, particularly those drawn from conventional cultural notions of justice. By examining the just city alongside the just soul, Socrates presents a new way to see justice that supplants those notions.²⁸ The letters analogy, likewise, describes a situation that involves a refinement of vision: the difficulty of reading the small letters is due to a lack of "keen eyesight" (ὀξύ βλέπουσιν, 368d4). Later, in book 3, Socrates alludes again to the letters analogy and places it in an educational context. There, while exploring the effects of poetry and music on the soul at 401d5–402c8, he describes learning how to read small and large letters by means of a careful inspection of images (εἰκόνας, 402b5, c6). It is for this purpose, I suggest, that Socrates engages Adeimantus and Glaucon (and Plato engages us) in an inquiry into the ideal city: to depict in words an image of the just life that counters the conventional images with which they (and we) are familiar.²⁹

Recall here Adeimantus's complaint in his exhortation to Socrates, a passage we considered in Section II: "no one has ever adequately related by means

27 Thaler (2017) provides a detailed account of the letters analogy and its use in connection with the city–soul analogy. He argues convincingly that the model depicted in the letters analogy is a method of studying syllables in syllabaries that would have been familiar to Socrates and his interlocutors from learning how to read as children. The city–soul analogy clarifies the nature of justice according to this model by studying a complex concept (the just city) and applying what is learned to another complex concept (the just soul), retaining all the while a sensitivity to the similarities and differences between the two concepts.

28 As Harte (2006) notes, the ability to see the similarities and differences between images and what they represent is a distinctive feature of philosophical thinking at several points in Plato's dialogues, and carries an epistemological component as well as an ontological component. It is one of the key features, for instance, that distinguishes the philosopher from the lover of sights and sounds in book 5 of the *Republic* at 476a9–d4.

29 Cf. Thaler (2017, 63): "By grouping himself and his companions together with the guardians of the just city ('neither we nor the guardians we are taking upon ourselves to educate'), Socrates seems to be implying that the philosophical exercise they have been going through in search of the nature of justice bears a close relation to the sort of education he prescribes for the philosophical rulers of the just city" (quoting 402c1–2).

of speech (τῷ λόγῳ), either in poetry or in private discussion, that injustice is the worst thing a soul can have in it and that justice is the greatest good” (366e7–9). And notice how Socrates introduces his city–soul analogy to Adeimantus a couple of pages later in the text: “if we could observe (θεασαίμεθα) a city coming to be in speech (λόγῳ), wouldn’t we also see its justice coming to be, and its injustice as well?” (369a5–7). Instead of “speech,” it would be no stretch in this context to translate *logos* as “story” given the comparison Adeimantus draws between the idea of justice found in popular mythology (cf. λόγοι, 366e2) and Socrates’ idea of justice.³⁰ What he wants from Socrates, we have seen, is an alternative story: a defense of justice through more than argument (or speech) alone (μόνον ... τῷ λόγῳ, 367b2–3, e2). We can think of the city–soul analogy along these lines as a poetic device that Socrates employs to meet this demand. The refinement of vision Plato promotes in the *Republic* will thus involve image-making as well as argument.

This is conveyed wonderfully in Socrates’ suggestion to Adeimantus that they observe (θεασαίμεθα, 369a5) how the just city comes into being. The root verb here, θεάομαι, etymologically connected with both our “theater” and “theory,” harkens back to the opening lines of the *Republic*. At the start of book 1, Socrates narrates his journey with Glaucon to the port of Piraeus outside Athens to observe (θεάσασθαι, 327a3) a new religious festival dedicated to a foreign goddess. On their return to the city, they are stopped by Polemarchus and Adeimantus, who urge them to stay at the Piraeus for a further evening spectacle. Adeimantus’s first words in the dialogue reveal his special eagerness for the event:

“Don’t you know,” Adeimantus said, “that there is to be a torch race on horseback for the goddess tonight?”

“On horseback?” I said. “That’s something new. Are they going to race on horseback and hand the torches on in relays, or what?”

“In relays,” Polemarchus said, “and there will be an all-night festival that will be well worth watching (ἄξιον θεάσασθαι). After dinner, we’ll go out to see it (θεασόμεθα).” (328a1–8)

Socrates agrees to join the group at the house of Polemarchus’s father, Cephalus, where the remainder of the *Republic* takes place. Of course, it turns out that no one actually goes back to watch the festival during the dialogue.³¹ Even so, Socrates offers his companions—and Adeimantus in particular—an

30 For the multiple senses of *logos* in Greek, see note 3 above.

31 As Adam (1902, 3) remarks: “The promise is nowhere fulfilled.”

alternative set of images with the city–soul analogy. Other scholars have noted the theme of “spectacle” (*theoria*) at the start of the *Republic* and its connection with the epistemological and metaphysical questions that Plato examines in the middle books of the work.³² Less well noticed, as far as I can tell, is the connection between this theme and the reorientation of vision that Socrates seeks to effect in his interlocutors with the city–soul analogy. In moving from the festival at the beginning of book 1 to a picture of the ideal city in book 2, Socrates and his interlocutors move from one kind of spectacle to another.

A. Constructing the Just City. Let us now consider some of the details of this picture. Socrates’ construction of the just city in books 2–3 is punctuated by a series of back-and-forth interjections by Glaucon and Adeimantus. After establishing a first simple city organized around a division of labor and the production of basic consumer goods at 369b–372b, Socrates and Adeimantus are interrupted by Glaucon, who famously dismisses such a political arrangement as a “city for pigs” (372d4). Socrates refers to the simple city instead as a “true” (ἀληθινή) and “healthy” (ὑγιής) city (372e6–7).³³ Nevertheless, he grants Glaucon’s demand that the people of their city enjoy various culinary delights, couches, perfumes, embroidered clothes, gold, ivory, and other indicators of affluence. It is this city, which Socrates dubs a “luxurious” (τρυφῶσαν, 372e3) or “fevered” (φλεγμαίνουσιν, 372e8) city, that prompts the need for a group of guardians who are differentiated further in book 3 into an auxiliary class and a class of “complete guardians” (φύλακας παντελείς, 414b2). With this, the three classes that form the foundation of Plato’s just city are put in place.

Two points about these initial stages of the just city’s development are worth stressing. First, while Glaucon’s rejection of the simple city contributes to the political project of the *Republic*, that contribution is not in the first instance a *political* one. For Glaucon’s concern really has to do with the voraciousness of human desires and their capacity for vast enlargement beyond our basic needs. Socrates in his response highlights the “endless acquisition of money” (373d9–10) occasioned by the proliferation of such appetites and its potential to disrupt social harmony. This requires the regulation of the money-making class and a framework for individuals to pursue their desires within certain limits, and so the guardian class is born. The outcome is political but what motivates the transition to the luxurious city is a point about human psychology:

32 See esp. Clay (1992, 125–129) and Nightingale (2004, 74–83).

33 This description of the first city has led to a fair amount of commentary. See McDavid (2019, 572) who argues persuasively in my view that since Plato regards justice as a feature only of composite wholes, the first city is “compositionally ineligible for being just.”

in line with his original challenge to Socrates at the start of book 2, Glaucon's reaction to the simple city is spurred by his theory of our pleonectic nature. His interest in the guardians, accordingly, focuses on the kind of nature (ποιὰ φύσει) they must have to guard the city (374e4–8).

Adeimantus's interest in the guardians is different, and this is the second point to recognize about the development of the just city. Once the luxurious city has been established, Adeimantus's engagement with Socrates throughout books 2–3 is motivated by a concern for the education of the guardian class.³⁴ Observe here, most importantly, how Plato has Adeimantus return to the dialogue in book 2. Following a brief inquiry with Glaucon into the nature of the guardians at 374e–376c, Socrates asks a question that marks the first explicit mention of the topic of education in the *Republic*:

But how are we to bring them up (θρέψονται) and educate them (παιδεύουσονται)? Will inquiry into that topic bring us any closer to the goal of our inquiry, which is to discover the origins of justice and injustice in a city? We want our account to be adequate, but we don't want it to be any longer than necessary. (376c7–d3)

This time it is Adeimantus who interrupts: “I very much expect,” he declares, “that such an inquiry will further our goal” (376d4–5). What follows between Socrates and Adeimantus during books 2–3 is an extensive discussion of the right kind of education for the guardian class that will be carried forward throughout the dialogue as part of Plato's argument for the goodness of the just life. Unlike Glaucon's focus on the psychological profile and character of the guardians, this is a topic that directly implies the significance of politics, particularly the nature of political institutions in the wide sense that occupies Plato. Such institutions cover a variety of influences that affect our beliefs and desires: not only poetry and music, but the images and material artifacts we encounter and internalize beginning in childhood; the schemas and outlooks we inherit during our upbringing; and the values, social practices, and norms of conduct into which we are encultured.³⁵

Suffice it to say, all of this follows from Adeimantus's initial objection in book 2 concerning the power of the outer world over a person's inner life. In fact, each of his subsequent exchanges with Socrates in the *Republic* revolve around this issue. After book 2, Adeimantus interjects on four more occasions

34 Also seen by Altman (2012, 107) who notes that “this explains why Socrates discourses with him on this subject.”

35 See again Burnyeat (1999, 217–222).

in the dialogue: at the start of book 4, where he initiates a discussion of civic legislation (419a–427d); briefly at the start of book 5, where Polemarchus prompts him to ask about domestic partnerships and the rearing of children (449a–450a); in book 6, where he raises the problem of how philosophers are perceived by the many (487a–506c); and in book 8, where he and Socrates investigate different forms of decline and corruption in cities and souls (548d through book 9 to 576b).³⁶ In each exchange—whether it has to do with the prohibition of extreme wealth and poverty, prescriptions surrounding family life, the need for political conditions that support those with a philosophical character, or the causes of instability in a range of constitutions—the principal focus is on the way various structural arrangements and sociopolitical forces can promote or subvert a proper education.

Glaucon's exchanges with Socrates in the *Republic*, by contrast, pertain mainly to matters of the human psyche and its nature. This is most obvious in book 4 where he and Socrates examine the tripartite nature of the soul. But even in book 3 where Glaucon participates at length in the discussion of poetry, he is brought in specifically to address psychological matters. Socrates confines his engagement with Adeimantus on poetry to questions of representation: “both what should be said (ἄ ... λεκτέον) and how it should be said (ὡς λεκτέον)” (398b7–8). His analysis of poetic imitation with Glaucon, however, concerns the mode and rhythm of the accompanying music (398c11–d9).³⁷ The issue here is not what is represented in poetry but *how it works*. Thus, Glaucon devotes his attention chiefly to the way different musical modes relate to different character traits and psychological dispositions (398e1–399e7), and explores which sort of rhythm “imitates which sort of life” (ὁποίου βίου μιμήματα, 400a7). Even the purpose of physical training is examined in these terms for its conduciveness to the guardians' nature and its use “for the sake of the soul” (τῆς ψυχῆς ἕνεκα, 410c5; cf. 400d6–7, 411e4–412b1).

So once more, the difference between Glaucon and Adeimantus can be viewed as a difference between an interest in nature versus an interest in nurture. But again, we should not overstate this difference. One of the most remarkable features of Plato's city–soul analogy is the way it depicts the goodness of the just life while at the same time integrating the role of education and the power of political institutions into the formation of a just character. Socrates goes to considerable lengths to underscore this interconnectedness between psyche and polis with Adeimantus in book 4:

36 Further details on these exchanges can be found in the Appendix to this paper.

37 Socrates comments on Glaucon's musical nature twice in the *Republic* at 398e1 and 548e4–5.

For a good upbringing and education (τροφή ... παιδευσις χρηστή), when they are preserved (σφζομένη), produce good natures (φύσεις ἀγαθὰς ἐμποιεῖ); and good natures, that are in turn well educated (παιδείας), grow up even better than their predecessors, both in their progeny and in other respects, just as in other living beings. (424a5–b1)

The import of this claim is not lost on the brothers. Each of them comes to appreciate it as the dialogue unfolds, with Adeimantus taking an interest in the nature of the philosophical soul type in book 6 at 489e–503d, while Glaucon joins Socrates in book 7 in discussing the education of the philosopher, famously as part of the cave allegory at 514a–521b and then in the program of philosophical studies detailed at 521b–541a. By this stage in the text, each brother has come some way since his initial objection to Socrates in book 2 to see how *psyche* and *polis* are mutually constituted. The original difference between their interests has evolved as they both come to recognize the interconnectedness of soul and city.

B. The Problem of Appearances. Yet remember also now other key differences between Glaucon's and Adeimantus's challenges. As we saw in section II, one of the specific worries Adeimantus has with the content of poetry is the ubiquity of stories about gods and mythic heroes that encourage a view of justice as a merely instrumental good: "when all such sayings (λεγόμενα) about the attitudes of gods and humans to virtue and vice are so often repeated," he asks Socrates, "how do you think they affect the souls (ψυχὰς) of young people?" (365a4–7). In contrast to his brother, Adeimantus is emphatic in his speech about wanting more than an abstract or theoretical account of justice from Socrates. While he is dissatisfied with the narratives standardly offered in civic life about the benefits of living justly, Adeimantus acknowledges their persuasive power. To counteract their influence, he seeks a compelling alternative representation of justice, an account he and others can find equally persuasive (cf. ἡμᾶς ἐπέιθετε, 367a2) that refutes conventional narratives. Unlike Glaucon, Adeimantus does not want a proof of the goodness of the just life; he wants an account that shows how justice can also appear to us as good.³⁸

Interestingly here, whereas Adeimantus as a rule refers to conventional narratives about justice as *logoi* (see esp. 362e2, 363c5, 365d2, 366e2), when Socrates turns to this issue in books 2–3 he is more careful about identifying such stories as *mythoi* (377a6, b6, c4, d5, 379a4, 381e3, 386b8–9, 391e12, 398b7).

38 Note again 358b2–c6, where Glaucon asks Socrates for a proof (ἀπόδειξις, 358b3–4) to establish the superiority of the just life over the unjust life, and cf. see note 19 above.

As is well known, Plato implements strict regulations on the production of myths in his ideal city, and we might infer as a consequence that he means to draw a hard distinction between *logoi* and *mythoi* that downgrades the use of mythopoetic devices in the education of the guardian class.³⁹ However, Socrates makes clear in books 2–3 the central need for such devices in the just city. As he explains to Glaucon, the use of poetry and music in fact has a deep psychophysical basis in the upbringing of the guardians due to its effect on “their eyes and ears like a breeze that brings health from a good place, leading them unwittingly (*λανθάνη*), from childhood on, to resemblance, friendship, and harmony with the beauty of reason (*τῷ καλῷ λόγῳ*)” (401c8–d3).⁴⁰

This is significant because the gradual and unnoticed way in which the outer world shapes the inner world is of course Adeimantus's principal concern in the *Republic*. During a later exchange with Socrates about poetry and music in book 4, he states that “lawlessness easily creeps in there [*sc.* in poetry and music] unwittingly (*λανθάνει*)” with the result that, once established, “it flows over little by little into characters (*ῥῆθη*) and ways of living (*ἐπιτηδεύματα*)” until eventually it “overthrows everything, in private and in public (*ιδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ*)” (424d3–e2).

For some, and Adeimantus himself may be in this category, the rational response to such a concern would be to cut the guardian class off from the influence of poets. Many readers of Plato tend to think of this as his response. Yet on the contrary, he states that poetic practices play a “most sovereign” (*κυριωτάτη*, 401d5) role in educating the guardians. When Socrates discusses this topic with Glaucon, he explicitly pairs a proper training in poetry and music with philosophy (*μουσικῆς ... καὶ φιλοσοφίας*, 411c5) and a love of learning

39 Cassirer (1946, 67) succinctly conveys the thought behind such a view: “to admit poetry meant to admit myth, but myth could not be admitted without frustrating all philosophical efforts and undermining the very foundations of Plato's state. Only by expelling the poets from the ideal state could the philosopher's state be protected against the intrusion of subversive hostile forces.” Cf. Keum (2020, ch. 5) for a good contrasting perspective that myth-making is integral to Plato's understanding of the nature and aims of politics.

40 The most notorious use of myth as a persuasive device in the *Republic* is of course the myth of the metals at the end of book 3, where Socrates suggests that each citizen in the just city be led to believe that different metals are present in their souls—regardless of their gender, family lineage, wealth, or social status—that determine their future role in the city (414d–415c). For close readings of this myth and its use by Plato in the construction of the just city, see J. Lear (2006), Allen (2010, 63–68), Tarnapolsky (2010), Lane (2011, 92–98), Keum (2020, 41–47), and esp. Rowett (2016), for whom the story “subverts an existing autochthony motif to found a new just society instead, one in which human parentage has no bearing on status and all gender roles are removed, replaced by equality of opportunity for all, maximum social mobility, and gender-neutral career structures” (85).

(φιλομαθές, 411d1). And far from a paragon of rationality, he regards the man who never associates with the Muse (κοινωνῆ Μούσης μηδαμῆ) as a misologue or hater of reason (μισόλογος) who resorts to force (βία) in place of persuasion (πειθοί) in engaging with others (411c9–e2). Rather than eliminating the guardians' vulnerability to poetry, Socrates looks to cultivate it.

Gabriel Richardson Lear for this reason refers to the love of poetry as a “proto-rational activity” for Plato.⁴¹ What the poet depicts in words are representations of the world or, as Lear puts it, “images of reality”—either how it is or was or how it might be or might have been. Our experience of poetry (and for the ancients this included its music) is thus not merely passive but carries substantial cognitive content, providing opportunities for reflection on our social and natural worlds, interpretation, and engagement. The experience itself comes cognitively loaded. This is why Plato identifies poetry as especially critical to the development of the wisdom-loving (φιλόσοφον, 411e6) part of the soul in the *Republic*, and why such images have a formative and consequential purpose in the education of the guardians.

Indeed, this is the very principle that Plato has Socrates employ within the frame of the *Republic* to convince Glaucon and Adeimantus of the benefits of justice. For Socrates himself makes extensive use of mythopoetic image-making throughout the dialogue for the purposes of persuasion. When he invites Adeimantus to join him in book 2 in the construction of the just city, he compares the entire project to the construction of a myth: “come, then, and as if we were telling stories (μυθολογοῦντές) in a myth (ἐν μύθῳ) and had leisure, let us educate the men in speech (λόγῳ)” (376d9–10). Socrates' fondness for images and other figurative methods is displayed further and consistently in the text. In book 6, when he speaks of his need for an image (εἰκόνας, 487e5) with his ship of state metaphor to explain why philosophers are viewed as useless in democracies, Adeimantus responds teasingly: “and you, of course, aren't used to speaking through images (δι' εἰκόνων)!” (487e6).⁴²

All of this implies a far more nuanced assessment of poetry in the *Republic* than readers often assume.⁴³ To meet Adeimantus's challenge in the dialogue,

41 G.R. Lear 2006, 112. Beautiful poetry has a special place in the education of the guardian class, on this view, because “the principle cause of a poem's beauty, its pattern, is also the principle cause of its psychic power” (Lear 2006, 109).

42 Cf. also Socrates' discussion with Glaucon during books 6–7, where the allegories of the sun and cave are both described as images (509a9, 517a8, d1).

43 Even in book 10, where Socrates develops a critique of poetry and all mimetic production on metaphysical grounds, he makes clear that the distorting effects of poetic imitation are avoidable if an audience has knowledge (τὸ εἰδέναι) of “what it [*sc. mimesis*] is really like, as a drug (φάρμακον) to counteract it” (595b3–7). For probing discussions of the critique

Socrates provides a defense of justice that looks outward as well as inward by recognizing the power of appearances in political life and their effects on the life of the psyche. But he does not thereby reject the use of images; instead, he seeks to curate them. To correct the distorting effect of conventional narratives about justice, Adeimantus asked for a counternarrative. He asked specifically, moreover, for an account of what it is that justice does (τί δρᾷ, 366e6) to a person. The story Socrates tells through his city–soul analogy accomplishes this. The construction of justice in the city results in the formation of a guardian class whose function it is to preserve the city from external forces that would damage its integrity. The guardians do this primarily by defending the city from sources of influence that would corrupt it: Socrates goes so far as to tell Adeimantus at 423d–e that the protection of the education of the citizens is “sufficient” (ἰκανόν, 423e2) for the creation of the ideal city.

It is easy and common to conclude from this story that the solution to the problem of appearances for Plato hinges on the exercise of political power by the guardian class, where what justice “does” to a person lies in the policing force it represents in shielding us externally from corruptive influences. This would be a solution from the outside in. The health of civic life, according to this view, demands not only state censorship but a whole host of authoritarian measures and restrictions that readers often associate with the political project of the *Republic*, including regulations on property ownership, a highly supervised eugenics program, and the abolition of nuclear families. But this is not the essence of Plato’s solution. Repeatedly during the dialogue, Socrates expresses his hesitation about the content of the political proposals he and his interlocutors set down for the just city. Strikingly, even after the exhaustive analysis of poetry and music in books 2–3, he cautions Glaucon at 416a–c against being dogmatic about the guidelines they have devised for the guardians’ education. What is crucial, Socrates asserts, is that the guardians receive the right education—“whatever it is” (ἥτις ποτέ ἐστίν)—to ensure their commitment to the good of each other and to the welfare of all (416b8–c3).⁴⁴

We should observe, further, how a solution to the problem of appearances from the outside in utterly fails as a response to Adeimantus’s challenge. For Adeimantus wants Socrates to explain what justice does “in the soul of the

in book 10, see Burnyeat (1999, esp. 222–228, 245–249, 286–324), Moss (2007), Allen (2010, esp. ch. 3), Harte (2010), and Fine (2021). Harte’s discussion of what she calls an audience’s “doxastic responsibility” in engaging with mimetic art coincides particularly well with the idea of a “guardian within” that I put forward in this section.

44 Likewise, in book 4, Socrates informs Adeimantus that all other legislation in the just city is trivial (φάλλα, 423e1) so long as the guardians “build their bulwark” in poetry and music (424d1–2; cf. 425a3–427a7).

person who has it" (τῆ τοῦ ἔχοντος ψυχῆ ἐνόν, 366e6). That is, he wants to understand the power of justice from the inside out. Socrates believes that the presence of justice in a person produces benefits in the same way that the presence of health produces benefits. The revolutionary feature of this view is the idea that justice itself has a certain productive power as an aspect of a person's psychology. Such a view represents a departure from traditional notions of political power since it shifts the focus away from external control and regulation toward internal cultivation and self-governance. It is this power that exemplifies the character of a true ruler, implying that there is something inherently valuable about justice that goes beyond the stories we are told about its instrumental value.

But what does justice produce in a person exactly? We find the answer in the city–soul analogy itself. For the analogue of the guardian that justice produces in the city is reason in the soul. We have already registered Socrates' pronouncement to Adeimantus in book 4 at 424a–b, where he affirms the mutual constitution of soul and city: a good education, when preserved, produces (ἐμποιεῖ, 424a6) good natures, and good natures in turn produce good cities. The construction of justice at the level of a person's psychology requires such an education as part of this virtuous cycle, and the effect of that education on our nature is the formation of a guardian within. Socrates stresses this point in his examination of the timocratic soul type with Adeimantus during their final exchange in book 8. Here he is recounting their conversation:

"Then wouldn't such a person [*sc.* the timocratic man] despise money when he's young," I said, "but love it more and more as he grows older, because he shares in the money-loving nature and isn't pure in his attitude to virtue? And isn't that because he lacks the best of guardians (τοῦ ἀρίστου φύλακος)?"

"What guardian is that?" Adeimantus said.

"Reason (λόγου)," I said, "mixed with poetry and music (μουσικῆ κεκραμένου), for it alone dwells within the person who has it (ἐνοικεῖ τῷ ἔχοντι) as the lifelong preserver (σωτήρ) of his virtue."

"Well put," he said. (549a9–b7)

The dialogue has come full circle: notice the direct correspondence between Socrates' depiction of reason in this passage as the "best of guardians" (τοῦ ἀρίστου φύλακος, 549b3–4) residing within a person and Adeimantus's exhortation in book 2 for an account of justice that encourages each of us to become our own best guardian (ἄριστος φύλαξ, 367a3) in living justly. As opposed to relying on external evaluations and the policing of images from the outside in,

Socrates emphasizes above how the rule of reason draws on its own resources to evaluate appearances. It's not the guardians outside who will save us, Plato suggests, but the guardian within. Once properly formed in a person, reason on this view acts as a sort of screen, permitting beneficial appearances to take root in the soul while rejecting harmful ones.

And with this Socrates' response to Adeimantus's challenge in book 2 is effectively complete. He meets this challenge in the *Republic* by defending the goodness of the just life not through argument alone but through an illustration of the value of justice, providing a kind of narrative or model with the city-soul analogy that helps make vivid the abstract philosophical claims he tries to convey. Moreover, rather than dismissing images, Socrates appeals markedly and persistently throughout the analogy to the use of poetic devices, which are critical not only to his efforts to persuade Glaucon and Adeimantus of the productive power of justice but to the sociopolitical construction of justice itself in a person. On this view, it is the conjunction of reason *with* poetry (λόγου ... μουσική κεκραμένου, 549b6) that saves us.

v Conclusion

Let me conclude this paper by addressing a concern often raised about Plato's understanding of justice in the *Republic*. Like many approaches to ethics in the ancient world, Plato's argument for the value of justice explains how living justly contributes to a person's individual happiness. The problem is that such an account appears to strip justice of its other-regarding nature, turning it simply into a tool of self-interest.⁴⁵ This objection draws its force from the intuitive idea that justice fundamentally has to do with one's treatment of others rather than one's own good. The concern is that an inward-looking argument of the sort Plato develops misconceives the aim of justice. For shouldn't any explanation for living justly begin and end with the good of others?

In fact, the good of others is exactly where the *Republic* begins. Thrasymachus in book 1 recognizes the view of justice that people purport to hold, according to

45 Variations on this concern go back at least as far as Kant. For more recent formulations, see Prichard (1912), who regards "What is the happy life?" and "What is the virtuous life?" as "radically different questions" (33); Nagel (1986) states that "living well and doing right are both things we have reason to want, and while there may be some overlap, those reasons are generally of different kinds and come from different sources" (197); and Hurka (2001) argues that "flourishing-based" theories of virtue are "foundationally egoistic" in a way that is "inconsistent with genuine virtue, which is not focused primarily on the self" (246).

which living justly requires promoting the good of others. His question is how that benefits him. And his response is that the pursuit of justice always represents an impediment to one's good. This is because justice for Thrasymachus is nothing other than a system of norms and rules designed by the powerful to maintain their power and privilege in society. As he maintains famously: justice is "the advantage of the stronger" (τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον, 338c2). Living justly and abiding by these rules must consequently be disadvantageous to oneself, especially for those not among the rulers.⁴⁶

Plato does not dismiss this topic but looks to reframe it. His whole project in the *Republic* can be understood as an effort to diminish the allure of the question "how does justice benefit me?"⁴⁷ For to find ourselves preoccupied by this question we must already assume a perspective that excludes justice from contributing positively to our psychic lives. Once ejected from this role, justice will typically be regarded as a constraining force on a person's happiness, and from here it is a short step to the view that the benefits of justice to an individual consist in the ability to secure various social rewards and external goods. Relations of solidarity with others become mere sites of performance and strategic positioning, devoid of any true sense of affinity and concern. By framing justice and a commitment to the good of others as coming at the expense of one's personal good, Thrasymachus sets the stage for Glaucon and Adeimantus's worry that pursuing justice for its own sake might be a fool's errand (cf. 348c5–d2); because what really matters from this perspective is the pretense of justice.

Adeimantus's challenge to Socrates is striking in this light. He sees that accounts of justice in civic life, expressed by the many and by the esteemed (τῶν πολλῶν τε καὶ ἄκρων, 366b6–7), all tacitly endorse the Thrasymachean perspective by encouraging the pursuit of justice with a "false façade" (εὐσχημοσύνης κιβδηλοῦ, 366b4). Given this, he asks, "how is it possible for anyone of any power—whether of mind, wealth, body, or birth—to be willing to honor justice and not laugh aloud when he hears it praised?" (366c1–3). Adeimantus's

46 This is why Thrasymachus feels he can move consistently from his initial "advantage of the stronger" view of justice to his later thesis that "what's just is really the good of another" (τὸ δίκαιον ἀλλότριον ἀγαθὸν τῷ ὄντι, 343c3–4), while injustice serves one's own good. Annas (1981, 46) notes this move well: "from the point of view of the subject of a strong ruler, justice is acting in the stronger's interest. From anybody's point of view, it is acting in the other person's interest. The common idea is that whoever I am, justice is not in *my* interest."

47 The parallel here between justice and the other "productive goods" with which it's classed in book 2 is instructive. Ultimately Plato wants us to treat the question "how does justice benefit me?" in the same way we treat the questions "how does health benefit me?" and "how does sight benefit me?" (cf. 357b4–358a3).

challenge, at its core, encapsulates the need to reconceive the value of justice—not as a simple adherence to norms for the sake of external goods, but also (crucially) not as an exclusively other-regarding good. He insists that Socrates defend the goodness of being just by explaining what justice does within the human soul (see again 366e5–9, 367b2–5, d2–4, e1–3).

Socrates' examination of justice in terms of its internal power is a key pivot in his defense of the just life. I have argued that he answers Adeimantus's challenge with his city–soul analogy by locating the productive power of justice in its generation of a guardian within the psyche. The analogy achieves this, further, as a counternarrative to conventional narratives about justice, and in a way that acknowledges the effects of political life on the life of the soul. Yet we can now see in addition how another vital lesson of the *Republic* is that an exclusively other-regarding approach to the value of justice can end up self-corrupting. An account of justice that reduces its value solely to the good of others overlooks the essential role it plays in a just person's own growth and development. From a Thrasymachean perspective, just acts are token acts, dictated by cultural expectations and a desire for prestige and status or the fear of social disapprobation. Such an outlook becomes a fertile ground for cynicism, manipulation, and the veneer of virtue, as individuals navigate the social world with the aim of extracting rewards and avoiding punishment while concealing their self-serving motives. It is thus no accident that the flip side of the belief that justice is the good of another for Thrasymachus is that the power to act unjustly with impunity is to one's personal advantage (see 343c1–d1). Plato's point here is that an approach to justice that focuses only on its other-regarding features can undermine the very goals of social well-being it aims to uphold.⁴⁸

By contrast, Socrates' approach to justice seeks to advance a richer and more sustainable view of the just life and the just society. While the pursuit of justice should undoubtedly involve a commitment to the good of others, his argument is that this pursuit needs to be rooted in the proper functioning of our psychic lives—a functioning that justice itself helps us secure. According to this framework, the just life does not require a zero-sum compromise between oneself and others. On the contrary, justice is a harmonizing force that aligns the good of the individual with the good of the collective, such that the welfare

48 Cf. Weiss (2007, 103–104) for a trenchant summary of the consequences that Adeimantus thinks this outlook has on the young: “these young men both see through the phony tributes to justice to which they are subjected from birth and recognize as more profitable the life that involves no compromise but contains instead the best of both worlds: doing injustice (without paying the price) while not suffering it (since they will seem just). These young men recognize the hypocrisy of their friends and relatives: they smell the lust for injustice on the breath of those who praise justice; they see through the pieties and proprieties of their elders.”

of others is seen not as a constraint on one's happiness but as continuous with and intrinsic to the pursuit of personal well-being. This is the truly transformative power of living justly for Plato, which I have claimed is motivated by Adeimantus's challenge. It is also the only genuine expression of one's solidarity with others that deserves the name.⁴⁹

Finally, let us observe how the concerns Adeimantus raises in the *Republic* lead naturally to the epistemological and metaphysical questions that occupy Plato in books 5–7 of the text. On the one hand, Adeimantus's challenge indicates the tentativeness of our cognitive grasp of the world: the human psyche is not an impenetrable fortress and we are vulnerable to outside influences. Even if we have the right convictions, we may still be subject to conventional narratives and forms of temptation that shape our perceptions in ways that pull us in different directions. All of these issues connect directly with Plato's inquiry into the nature of the philosophical soul type and its pursuit of knowledge in the middle books of the *Republic*, along with his interest in types of unreflective and prereflective cognition in the analogy of the divided line in book 6 and the cave allegory in book 7.

On the other hand, Adeimantus's challenge also provokes important questions about the nature of reality. If stories and images and other sociopolitical influences have such a formative effect on our beliefs and desires, what does this imply about the world itself and the role of culture in producing it? Is the world only a reflection of the stories we tell about it, or is there a deeper reality that exists independently of our narratives? Most of us are familiar with Plato's answers to these questions, but it would be a mistake to infer that the deeper reality he believes we must seek demands the repudiation of images. I have contended instead that the exact opposite is the case. Cultural influences like poetry for Plato serve as both indicators of our vulnerability to external forces and contributors to human knowledge: as we learn in the cave allegory, the work of our lives—the work of a proper education—depends on seeing “each image for what it is and also that of which it is an image” (520c4–5). Far from renouncing the world of appearances, then, Plato provides us in the *Republic* with a powerful reminder of the value of engaging with images attentively and

49 See 462b4–e2: in the just city, Socrates affirms, “all the citizens rejoice and are pained by the same successes and failures ... whenever anything good or bad happens to a single one of its citizens, such a city above all others will say that the affected part is its own and will share in the pleasure or pain as a whole.” Kraut (1973) argues that Plato for this reason should not be viewed as an ethical egoist. See also Annas (2008) in response to Hurka (2001) for a rebuttal of the claim that flourishing-based theories of virtue are objectionably egoistic.

reflectively, an engagement that generates a better sense of ourselves, of the world, and of our place in the world.⁵⁰

Appendix: Outline of Adeimantus's and Glaucon's Exchanges with Socrates in *Republic* 2–10

- ADEIM. 2. 367e–372d: establishment of the simple city
- GLAUC. 2. 372d–376d: establishment of the luxurious city; the need for (and nature of) guardians
- ADEIM. 2–3. 376d–398c: discussion of the education of the guardian class
- GLAUC. 3. 398c–417b: the formation of different soul types with different character traits and psychological dispositions; establishment of the (complete) guardian class (414b); the myth of the metals (414b–415d)
- ADEIM. 4. 419a–427d: further discussion of the education of the guardian class and civic legislation
- GLAUC. 4–5. 427d–445e: analysis of civic virtues; tripartite division of the soul; analysis of personal virtues concluding with an account of justice; introduction to four kinds of unjust constitution
- ADEIM. 5. 449a–d: prompted by Polemarchus, Adeimantus asks about domestic arrangements and child rearing; the problem of whether these proposals are possible and/or best (450a–451b)
- GLAUC. 5–6. 451c–487a: first wave (abolition of civic gender roles, 451d–457b); second wave (establishment of civic solidarity and international relations, 457c–471b); third wave (establishment of philosopher-rulers and putting the just city into practice, 471c–473e); defining the philosopher and the philosophical soul type (474b–487a)
- ADEIM. 6. 487b–506d: the problem of vicious and useless philosophers; Socrates' appeal to images (487e); ship of state analogy on the uselessness of philosophers (488a–489c); summary of the nature of the true philosopher (489e–490d) followed by (i) the ways in which those with a nascent philosophical nature can get corrupted (490e–495b), (ii) the illegitimate offspring of bad philosophy (495b–496a), and (iii) the philosopher in

⁵⁰ I would like to thank the BACAP committee for the invitation to present this paper as part of their colloquium series, Derek Duplessie for his insightful comments, Dan Maher and colleagues at Assumption University for graciously hosting me, and Max Wade for editorial assistance. I am also grateful to the audience members at a conference celebrating the work of Richard Kraut at Northwestern University for their helpful feedback on the paper, particularly my respondents, Susan Bencomo and Annie Corbitt.

exile (496b–e); the need for a city to nurture philosophical soul types (497b–498c); how to persuade the majority (498d–502c), including a restatement of the need for philosophy and politics to coincide (499a–d) and how the philosopher imitates and implements the rational order of the forms (500b–d); recap of previous points and the conduciveness of the philosophical soul type to ruling (502d–503e); the longer road and the significance of the form of the good (504a–506c)

GLAUC. 6–8. 506d–548b: sun analogy (506d–509c), divided line analogy (509d–511e), cave allegory (514a–521b); the education of the philosopher: arithmetic, geometry, stereometry, astronomy, harmonics (521b–531d); the song of dialectic (531d–534e); distribution of studies according to age group (535a–541a); return to the topic of book 4 and discussion of four kinds of unjust constitution (543c–544e); timocracy as constitution (545a–548c)

ADEIM. 8–9. 548d–576b: timocracy as soul type (548d–550c); oligarchy as constitution (550c–552e) vs. soul type (553a–555b); democracy as constitution (555b–558c) vs. soul type (558c–561e); tyranny as constitution (561e–569c) vs. soul type (569c–576b)

GLAUC. 9–10. 576b–614a: the misery of the tyrannical soul type (576b–580a); two more proofs for the goodness of the just life based on (i) the pleasures enjoyed by the three parts of the soul (580d–583b) and (ii) the objects of (true) pleasure enjoyed by the rational part of the soul (583b–588a); another image of the just life in words (588b–592b); critique of poetry and mimetic practices on metaphysical grounds (595a–608b); discussion of the soul's true nature (608b–612b); restoration of the rewards of the just life (612b–614a)