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# Utopianism and Plato's *Republic*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper criticises the two prominent interpretations of utopianism in Plato's *Republic*. The traditional argues that it is *mere* utopianism, seriously proposing that Kallipolis is, in fact, the ideal city. The ironic argues that the *Republic* is a critique of the ability for reason to reconstruct human nature and is, therefore, a dire warning against utopian thinking in politics. I oppose these two interpretations and instead argue that the *Republic* implies a paradoxical necessity in the nature of utopianism: The ideal cannot be theorised without itself being conditioned by the politics of theorising, and yet the politics of theorising is immanently motivated by the ideal. I locate this seemingly antonymic dynamic within the education of the learner/citizen in the *Republic*. Although this is centred on the notion of self-governance, it cannot be imposed and instead depends on the philosophical development of one's soul that is inextricably linked to justice in the city. Therefore, the utopianism of the *Republic* ought to be thought of as dialectical, being simultaneously situated and yet normatively transcending.

## 1 | Introduction

Plato's *Republic* is the foundational utopia in the Western philosophical tradition. I say foundational not merely because it is the first but also because it is typically regarded as the most idealistic in its appeal to the Forms. Yet, if we read the *Republic* as a utopian project simply, then we are to be disappointed for two reasons. First, Kallipolis necessarily regresses: It is internally unstable and incapable of achieving the post-political existence characteristic of utopia. Second, the philosopher-rulers are faux-philosophers who wrongly subjugate their own ability to self-govern to the authority of calculative reason. This results in the enslavement of citizens to the authority of philosopher-rulers, which inherently denies them the possibility of the good life. On the other hand, to read the *Republic* merely as a critique of utopia would be to misunderstand its critical, philosophic import. While the possibility of utopia—both in speech and in deed—is criticised, there are reasons to re-think what exactly utopian thinking and practice ought to consist of. This is first and foremost because of the dialectical and educational nature of the critique. Such a conclusion, however, should not warrant

a turn to 'best-possible' or non-ideal theorising. Education in the *Republic* is concerned with radical critique, and such critique is also always situated.

In this paper, I re-think the utopianism of Plato's *Republic* in terms of its immanent paradoxes and internal contradictions. In doing so, I argue that the *Republic* implies a paradoxical necessity in the nature of utopianism: the ideal cannot be theorised without itself being conditioned by the politics of theorising, and yet the politics of theorising is immanently motivated by the ideal. Instead of framing utopianism in terms of ideal versus non-ideal theorising, there is a way to think beyond, although not without, this methodological opposition. In the case of the *Republic*, then, we should think utopianism in terms of the education of the learner/citizen in relation to both the ideal and the situatedness of edification. Although this is centred on the notion of self-governance it cannot be imposed, it instead depends on the philosophical development of one's soul, which is inextricably linked to justice in the city. Therefore, the utopianism of the *Republic* ought to be thought of as dialectical, being simultaneously situated and yet normatively transcending.

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The first section of this paper begins by contextualising my approach. I then attempt to make sense of the utopianism of the *Republic*, and the assumption that Kallipolis is the ideal city, by focusing on the dialectic of city-building. In doing so, I demonstrate that the utopianism of the *Republic* is neither mere utopianism nor ironic. In section two, I look at a new way of reading the *Republic*. Then, in the third section, I argue that, based on this re-reading, we can see that the implied ideal of self-governance in both the soul and the city invokes a situated and yet open-ended utopianism that conditions one another. This means that the concept of utopia and the ideal of the ideal city cannot be fully depicted in mere speech but should be conceptualized in the education of the learner/citizen in relation to both the ideal and the situatedness in which the education occurs. Finally, I suggest that this new understanding of utopianism in the *Republic* should make us re-think the critical normativity of utopia.

Before I begin, I need to clarify that the basic antinomy I critique is that between theory and practice and its methodological reformulation in terms of ideal and non-ideal. Although practice can mean that which is feasible, I think of this term more broadly to refer to any form of activity specified by a system of rules.<sup>1</sup> I understand theory even more broadly to be the engagement in reflective and reflexive thinking, both descriptively and normatively. Relatedly, ideal refers to that object of thought that is unbounded by practice or feasibility concerns, while non-ideal refers to that object of thought that is conditioned by practice and feasibility concerns.<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, however, I often interchange the dichotomy of terms to ideal/real, ideality/feasibility, and transcendent/situated. Different scholars use different terms for a variety of reasons. Therefore, to do justice to their arguments without reducing them to my own purposes, I try to engage with their work on its terms, using their terminology when necessary. For the most part, however, I understand these terms to correspond to the fundamental antinomy of theory and practice.

## 2 | Against the Traditional and Ironic Readings of the *Republic*

The traditional reading of the *Republic* is so common that it often goes unnoticed as an interpretation. This is what you might call the ‘Introduction to Philosophy’ reading that teaches Plato as, more or less, using Socrates as his mouthpiece to argue that Kallipolis is the ideal city, that justice is the minding of one’s own business, and that the political instantiation of justice requires citizens to be subjugated to the rule of philosophers. Thus, this reading thinks Plato assumes we ought to be persuaded by all of Socrates’s arguments and suggestions, including the ideas that poets ought to be banned, the ideal city ought to be founded on a noble lie, there should be three classes justified by the noble lie, family should be held in common, there should be no private property among the guardians, and everyone over the age of 10 ought to be expelled from the city in order to guarantee its founding. The assumption is that Plato is writing prescriptively, seeking to convince the reader that Kallipolis is indeed the ideal city. This means that even though the form of argument is conveyed in written dialogue, its intention is no different than the

more common treatise form of philosophical exposition that we find in Aristotle, for example.

One of the earliest versions of this interpretation is found in Aristotle’s interrogations of the nature of the political community as described in the *Republic* and the realistic possibility of its being founded.<sup>3</sup> We might say, then, that it is in the *Politics* that we find the ‘Ur-traditionalist’ interpretation and the inauguration of, so to speak, the reading of Plato seriously, non-ironically, and non-figuratively. More recent traditional interpretations of the *Republic* are seen in Jonny Thakkar’s *Plato as Critical Theorist* and Christopher Bobonich’s *Plato’s Utopia Recast*.<sup>4</sup> But this view was also understood to be the ‘normal’ view decades before, as seen in Julia Annas’s *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*, for example, wherein she describes the *Republic* as Plato’s ‘manifesto’<sup>5</sup> that articulates his ‘ideally just state’.<sup>6</sup> Such an understanding takes the *Republic* to be Plato’s own conception of utopia since it is not an account of how we can have a fully just society, but rather ‘an implementation of what would be needed, in his view, to make existing cities just’.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps more famously, Karl Popper argues ‘...nobody but Plato himself knew the secret of, and held the key to, true guardianship. But this can mean only one thing. The philosopher king is Plato himself, and the *Republic* is Plato’s own claim for kingly power...’<sup>8</sup> While I do not think most scholars take Kallipolis to be utopia themselves, as Popper certainly did not, they do understand the *Republic* to be an argument for Plato’s utopia.<sup>9</sup>

Thakkar posits that the *Republic* ‘contains not only a theory of the ideal society, Kallipolis, but also... a theory of the nature and purpose of ideal theory itself’.<sup>10</sup> As I will seek to demonstrate throughout this paper, I think Thakkar is undoubtedly right that we can find within the *Republic* the nature and purpose of ideal theory for a critical politics. But what exactly this ideal theory or utopianism consists of is what I will contest. The recent trend of reading Plato’s dialogues as being primarily pedagogical, inviting the readers to question the arguments presented and even wonder beyond the text itself—rather than reading it non-ironically, non-figuratively, or even dogmatically—offers a more critical, self-reflexive, and open-ended perspective with respect to not only Plato’s *Republic* but also the necessary role utopianism must play for a critical politics.<sup>11</sup>

While the term ‘utopia’ did not exist during Plato’s time, it is common in the traditional interpretation to treat Kallipolis as the ideal city, if not utopia itself. Therefore, I must analyse the *Republic* in relation to the concept of utopia. In so doing, I will also distance myself from the reactionary readings which treat the text as being merely ironic. Following Jill Frank’s re-reading of Plato’s *Republic*, I will argue that the ideal of the philosopher-ruler is misunderstood. Instead, they ought to be understood to be faux-philosophers who wrongly subjugate their own ability to self-govern to an external authority, even if that authority is still a form of reason. And as I show, this intentionally undermines the political idealism of the *Republic* while not necessarily undermining the normative ideal of utopia.

The very term ‘utopia’ comes from Thomas More’s combination of the Greek prefix *ou* (no) with *topos* (place) to create a literal translation of ‘No-place’. Yet, More, being playful, says it should be understood as the Greek word ‘Eu-topos’, meaning ‘Good

place', since that is what 'Ou-topos' sounds like when spoken in English.<sup>12</sup> Utopia is widely thought to mean 'a rationally oriented society that aims at social unity or wholeness and individual happiness'.<sup>13</sup> Being both no place and the Good place, utopia signifies a post-political existence, having transcended the kinds of political conflicts that corrupt life, effectively dissolving the need for politics as we understand it. If Kallipolis is to be thought of as a utopia, especially if it is a city in speech, it is intuitive to think of it as post-political in the sense defined.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it seems to aim at this with the institutional and mythological staving off of *stasis*. If this has been transcended, then there will not be decay. But if this utopia fails to properly execute the regulation of desires, something that is key to staving off *stasis*, it will lack this necessary aspect of utopia.

The ultimate fate of Kallipolis is its degeneration.<sup>15</sup> But why does Kallipolis degenerate? As Socrates says, 'since for everything that has come into being there is decay, not even a composition such as this [city in speech] will remain for all time'.<sup>16</sup> Ontologically, if something arises then it is impermanent and will inevitably cease to exist. So it would not make sense for a city, even the ideal city, to exist forever since it is of this world. Another explanation, as Burnyeat argues, is that the generation and decaying of Kallipolis is explained by it being a fact of history, not of metaphysics. This means Kallipolis is not an ideal city that belongs to the world of forms because 'Forms are not fictions, and they have no history to be told. In any case, there is no such Form as the Form of the ideal city'.<sup>17</sup> But if this is correct, then to what extent is Kallipolis ideal—especially considering that it is a city in speech? The ideals of Beauty, Justice, and so on serve specific functions precisely because they are metaphysically ideal: they make possible a movement from speaking of a thing as Many and speaking of it as having a look (*eidos*)<sup>18</sup>, as a One which can be said to resemble and differ from things in a justified way.

How, then, do we make sense of Kallipolis? One way is to distinguish Kallipolis from an ideal of theory proper as Burnyeat does: the ideal that theory proper would posit metaphysically corresponds to the real world (as a fact of material history or metaphysical being) whereas fantasy does not.<sup>19</sup> For there to be utopian philosophy it ought to, in some relevant way, correspond to a transcendent ideal or principle. Thus, Burnyeat thinks Kallipolis is not a philosophical ideal, but a mere fantasy, while justice, as aimed at in Kallipolis, is a philosophical ideal, namely a Form.<sup>20</sup> Kallipolis as an imaginary city is a heuristic device for understanding the Form of justice. But this does not mean we strive to bring it into being.

In a similar vein, Jonny Thakkar categorises Kallipolis as a theoretical model. Such models 'exist in the imagination, whether as the product of deliberate reflection or as the product of acculturation'.<sup>21</sup> Theoretical models ultimately help us to make sense of what he calls 'excellent instances': transcendent goods, such as the Forms, that are of necessary existence.<sup>22</sup> For Thakkar, though, utopias are not theoretical models since they are impossible dreams.<sup>23</sup> Thus, what Burnyeat calls utopia Thakkar calls ideal, but they perform the same heuristic function. What does matter is that even Thakkar constrains the nature of ideals to practical possibility.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps, the most important aspect of utopia is its rational nature as ideal, as seen in the pursuit of the

ideal city in speech. A utopia that performs the heuristic function of a theoretical model necessarily corresponds to metaphysical necessity and is, then, in no way implicated by historical or other contingent circumstances. This is the rational nature of utopia: to be a product of thought alone. Utopia, in this basic sense, is a form of strict idealism.

Perhaps Kallipolis is merely meant to serve as a model as opposed to a metaphysical ideal, as Thakkar argues. A metaphysical ideal is *necessary*. But a model is conventional, even if made in the image of that which is necessary. If, as Thakkar says, Plato is concerned with the way that humans imitate that which is more real because the social and political world is made in the image of that which is more real, then imitations that fail to properly imitate will cause the social and political world to become dysfunctional.<sup>25</sup> But if Kallipolis serves as a model of true value, then humans imitating this value will, through the formation of habit, crystalize a virtuous soul. The value of Kallipolis, then, lies in its usefulness, and this is what, for Thakkar, makes it a theoretical ideal as opposed to what he calls an excellent instance.<sup>26</sup> It is worth briefly noting that Thakkar completely strips any metaphysical ideality from Kallipolis. Even Burnyeat, who argues that Kallipolis is not a Form, still maintains that it is a particular exemplification of justice in the imagination, similar to the ideal human being.<sup>27</sup> But regardless, for it to serve as either a metaphysical ideal or a mere theoretical ideal it must be able to direct the desires of the ruled—and those who would then see the value of Kallipolis and model their own soul in its image—towards 'the right objects arranged in the appropriate order'.<sup>28</sup>

At this point, we must re-familiarize ourselves with the dialectical building of the city in speech for it is in this process that the importance of the desires of the interlocutors begin to play a pivotal role in the illumination of the nature of justice because this process echoes the later purpose of the philosopher-ruler in educating citizens. The first city, The City of Necessity, is based on the principle of self-sufficiency, everything is shared in common, more or less the most basic desires are provided for, conflict (external and internal) is non-existent, and sex is had but never in excess to what is necessary for self-sufficiency. But this is a city unfolding in speech. As Socrates tries to explain the new professions—tradesmen and then wage earners—required by the expanding need for commerce, he is cut off by Glaucon: 'You seem to make these men have their feast without relishes... If you were providing for a city of sows, Socrates, on what else would you fatten them than this?'<sup>29</sup> The lives led in this city are in many ways primitive.<sup>30</sup> It lacks the kind of couches and other goods a cultured Athenian would desire.<sup>31</sup> As a city develops its appetites, desires for conventional goods grow. The first city lacks this and, therefore, is not a city fit for Athenians as they exist, most notably, for Glaucon.

Because of Glaucon's interruption, because Socrates is never able to paint the city of necessity in its totality, justice in these conditions is never known. Obviously, Glaucon's interruption is not accidental since it was intentionally written by Plato. But the point Glaucon makes, questioning whether this is a city fit for humans *as Glaucon knows them*, revises the conditions under which justice will make an appearance. Contrary to some scholars who find this city contributing little or nothing to the question of justice,

Donald Morrison argues the city of necessity presents a false view of human nature where, seemingly, philosophy is not needed because people already act virtuously and, therefore, with moderation.<sup>32</sup> As he puts it, ‘The peaceful, simple life of Socrates’s first city is possible only if people’s wants do not go beyond their needs. But human beings are not like that. It is natural and inevitable that whatever people have, they will desire more.’<sup>33</sup> If we are going to proceed to build a city in the image of Glaucon (and Adeimantus), we ought to understand the city of necessity as being built in the image of Socrates.

Given that Glaucon’s dispositions are in many ways a reflection of Athenian society, I think we should read this as a turn to constructing the ideal city in the image of the Many.<sup>34</sup> This could mean the city of necessity is more practical if we can re-organise our wants to be more in line with our basic needs if we are properly educated. But perhaps this is too fantastical. Socrates is not at all opposed to incorporating Glaucon’s desires into the city in speech he is building. In fact, he acknowledges its usefulness, saying ‘For in considering such a city, too, we could probably see in what way justice and injustice naturally grow in cities. Now, the true city is in my opinion the one we just described—a healthy city, as it were. But if you want to, let’s look at the feverish city, too.’<sup>35</sup> In the movement from the first city to the second, there is an attempt at taking the harmony of the first city as an ideal with the desires of civilised humanity in the second city in order to conceive of a more practically-ideal city that resolves these tensions. The key, however, lies in the method of purging.

The remedy for the luxurious city requires eliminating all that corrupts the soul: regulation and censorship of the poets’ engagement in imitation (*mimesis*)<sup>36</sup> and the founding of the Noble Lie.<sup>37</sup> But when the city is purged, where is Justice? Justice is determined to be the harmony of the three parts working together which is only made possible by each doing their own part without concern for the other. Specifically, Socrates says, ‘... justice is the minding of one’s own business and not being a busybody, this we have heard from many others and have often said ourselves.’<sup>38</sup> Later, he clarifies that justice in the individual is not about external concern but internal concern, because he ‘really sets his own house in good order and rules himself...’<sup>39</sup> Justice in the individual, then, concerns self-rule. If the ideal city is to rule itself virtuously, then it depends on a proper education since this is the only way to condition good-natured souls. Whereas the other arts<sup>40</sup> are concerned with their objects of study from their respective perspectives, and as such focus on the content—as opinion, desire, generation, or composition<sup>41</sup>—it is dialectics, as a path (*hodos*) treats the means equal to the end, focusing solely on the things themselves. Dialectics is, of course, a philosophical discipline. In extremely short order, we have come full circle back to the justification for the rule of philosophers in the beautiful city.<sup>42</sup> As such, it is Kallipolis that is the ideal city.

There are two reasons I think this traditional interpretation is incorrect. First, the teleological criticism: if it is to serve as a model then it would not, as a model, degenerate.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the ideal *polis* (Books 2–7) and the necessary de-evolution of any *polis* (Books 8–9) should be understood separately. Even if so, this would not make sense as a model if the model itself degenerates. We might also ask whether the instantiation of the ideal *polis* necessarily degenerates? But this would mean Kallipolis lacks the post-political

existence characteristic of utopia. If we want to know whether Kallipolis is utopia, the more interesting question, I think, is to what extent the inevitable degeneration of any *polis*, no matter how ideal, implicates not only the ideal *polis* but also the theorization of the ideal *polis*? But surely a model in speech should serve as an aspirational ideal such that even if its application in reality fails to realise the totality of the ideal it still remains more stable than the application itself. An ideal model less stable than its application in practice is normatively incoherent.

Second, the epistemic criticism: it is impossible that non-philosophers—even those ruled by philosopher-rulers—are able to appreciate genuine value and thereby overcome unruly desires. Christopher Bobonich essentially argues that if we are to understand Kallipolis as a model for realising justice then it ought to be able to show that either non-philosophers can appreciate what is of genuine value without a philosophical education or that such an appreciation of genuine value is not possible for living the good life.<sup>44</sup> The ideal city, at least in theory, ought to be able to demonstrate that through the rule of philosophers, non-philosophers can still live the good life. Jonny Thakkar summarises the argument for the rule of philosophers as such<sup>45</sup>:

- P1. The purpose of ruling is to maintain the souls of subjects in good condition.
- P2. The only guardian who can truly guard the souls of subjects is one who can guard themselves.
- P3. Only philosophers, possessing knowledge of and being motivated by the Forms, can guard their own souls and therefore resist the pleonexia that quickly turns into exploitation.
- C. Therefore, philosophers ought to rule.

Of course, this does lead to the paradox of philosopher-rulers: Only a philosopher-ruler can create the just city and yet only the just city provides the conditions for the possibility of the philosopher-ruler.<sup>46</sup>

For Bobonich, the issue of philosopher-rulers is fundamentally epistemological, not ethical, even though the purpose of the philosopher-ruler is to educate the others. Since non-philosophers will not have knowledge of the Good, however, they will be unable to appreciate or be normatively guided by the genuine value of the Good. As he says, ‘The problem of non-philosophers is that merely having true opinion of the nature of things, or being oriented instrumentally to the right kinds of goods is not good enough to bring them happiness. Rather, they fail to recognize, among other things, why virtue is good and fine.’<sup>47</sup> If those ruled by philosophers are unable to have their souls maintained in good condition, since this requires internal, and not even merely external, philosophical commitment, then Kallipolis, as a model, is not useful.

I want to clarify two things. Firstly, Bobonich is not arguing only the philosopher-rulers are happy. The members of the dialogue are said to seek the happiness of the whole, and it is implied this

is established in Kallipolis.<sup>48</sup> But there is a difference between mere happiness and the kind of happiness characteristic of the good life. It is the latter kind of happiness that Bobonich argues that Kallipolis cannot guarantee to anyone but the philosopher-rulers. And secondly, while Bobonich thinks the model of Kallipolis is not useful for realising justice, he does not think this means Kallipolis is not thought to be Plato's utopia. Rather, it is only that the human conditions require a more feasible and, therefore, non-ideal ideal city that he contends Plato attempts to create with the *Laws*.<sup>49</sup>

I want to briefly consider the ironic critique of the *Republic* as a utopian work of philosophy from Leo Strauss and Allan Bloom. I will distance myself from this view. But the basic idea is that the *Republic* should be read ironically rather than prescriptively. Kallipolis and the attempt to realise ideal justice discloses the fundamental and irreconcilable tension between philosophy and politics.<sup>50</sup> At its most fundamental level, ethical and political philosophy is motivated by the idea of the cessation of evil. Yet, in contradistinction, politics is fundamentally concerned with managing the fact that evil exists. As Strauss says, 'It is against nature that rhetoric should have the power ascribed to it: that it should be able to overcome the resistance rooted in men's love of their own and ultimately in the body... the *Republic* repeats, in order to overcome it, the error of the sophists regarding the power of speech'.<sup>51</sup> He further iterates two specific reasons why it is against nature: equality of the sexes and common ownership of property.<sup>52</sup>

Bloom argues Kallipolis is a 'perfect impossibility' for two reasons: First, it has to deny the existence of human nature and, second, its foundation is paradoxical because of the expulsion of everyone over the age of 10.<sup>53</sup> The ideal city, Kallipolis is practically impossible since nature is too strong to overcome, but also because it would require absolute tyranny. However, in speech, Kallipolis is ideal. He writes, 'This was not just any city, but one constructed to meet all the demands of justice. Its impossibility demonstrates the impossibility of the actualization of a just regime and hence moderates the moral indignation a man might experience at the sight of less-than-perfect regimes'.<sup>54</sup> If Bloom is right, then the *Republic* justifies reactionary sentiments and values. If perfect justice is impossible to realise in practice and attempts to absolutely overcome injustice are always fraught with extreme political and moral risk, then, as Bloom argues, moderate reform of actually existing unjust governments is the normative argument of the *Republic*.

There is a lot to be said for this interpretation. The paradox of the philosopher-ruler in the *Republic* makes one wonder how the city could even be accomplished. The fact that the city devolves because strict control of sexual desire was ultimately impossible gives further weight to the idea that the city is impossible because of its overhauling of human nature. Yet, I think Strauss and Bloom have overlooked the critical nature of the *Republic*. It is to this critical nature that I now turn.

### 3 | Re-Reading the *Republic*

We must first understand Kallipolis is not theorised *ex nihilo*. It is a model made in an image. In Book IX, there is a passage where Socrates speaks of the beautiful city as a model:

Glaucon: You mean he will [come to exist] in the city whose foundation we have now gone through, the one that has its place in speeches, since I don't suppose it exists anywhere on earth.

Socrates: "But in heaven," I said, "perhaps a pattern is laid up for the man who wants to see and found a city within himself on the basis of what he sees. It doesn't make any difference whether it is or will be somewhere. For he would mind the things of this city alone, and of no other".<sup>55</sup>

Most take this passage as an admission that the ideal city does not and likely will not ever exist. This normative, Platonic model, for example, is the motivation behind David Estlund's critique of what he calls concessive theory: any theory that qualifies moral principles according to how feasible they are.<sup>56</sup> No matter what political reality may be, no matter how strong human nature is, this bares no weight on the truth or normativity of moral principles, and specifically justice. This same reading is also used to justify the reactionary reading of the *Republic* since, if it does not exist and likely never will, such political idealism could only ever result in tragedy. If we look at this passage with a more critical eye, we notice the one who desires justice internalises the normativity of justice according to that conception of justice *on the basis of what he sees*. The question is, in whose image is Kallipolis constructed? Furthermore, why is the ideal city constructed and pursued in this way?

To better understand these questions and their importance I turn to Jill Frank's re-reading of Plato's *Republic*. The typical reading of Plato's *Republic* is that Socrates is a mouthpiece for Plato, articulating and justifying Plato's own theory of justice and the ideal city. As we have been seeing, this means that *Kallipolis* is the objectively ideal city and therefore we ought to rely on the authority of philosopher-rulers. But in *Poetic Justice* Jill Frank offers a different reading. Instead, she argues that the *Republic* invites a circulation of authority among the dialogue's interlocutors and also between the dialogue and its readers in order to go beyond the authority of philosopher-rulers and other authority figures.<sup>57</sup> This can only occur if the reader becomes self-governing. This reading, compared with the traditional and reactionary, offers a critical account of education, the philosopher, and justice within the *Republic*.

What kind of a city is made in the image of Glaucon and Adeimantus? Beginning with their characters, both brothers are interested in a life of politics. When Thrasymachus argues injustice is better than justice in Book I,<sup>58</sup> the brothers take up the challenge to define justice by seeking the complete opposite of Thrasymachus's definition.<sup>59</sup> We should keep in mind that the motivation of the question about justice from the very beginning of the *Republic* is not philosophically motivated *ex nihilo* or for its own sake. The question of justice is brought by Socrates within the context of the speakers. This includes the character of each interlocutor as well as the initial dynamic between Socrates and Polemarchus. Power is imbued in the question from the beginning with Polemarchus's threat.<sup>60</sup> The characters of Glaucon and Adeimantus, both concerned with ruling first and foremost,

approach justice from the perspective of politics proper: how to master. If injustice is not more desirable than justice, then for the brothers, whatever justice is it must be pure and therefore control the totality of injustice. However, by pursuing justice as the opposite of Thrasymachean justice, the brothers' justice turns out to mirror it in both substance and effect.<sup>61</sup> As we will see, this means interpreting justice as primarily a matter of regulation in the form of *nomos* (law).

Understanding justice in Kallipolis in the form of *nomos* allows us to understand why non-philosophers in Kallipolis are incapable of living the good life: they are forcefully persuaded rather than being convinced through a soul-moving persuasion. Forceful persuasion consists of asymmetrical authority in its distribution of power, while soul-moving persuasion distributes authority across speakers and listeners alike.<sup>62</sup> Thus, whereas the first kind depends on imposition, the second kind depends on active listening and engagement which does not guarantee persuasion. Forceful persuasion is the same kind that Polemarchus invokes in Book I,<sup>63</sup> that motivates Thrasymachus's arguments concerning justice and injustice, and that underlies the Noble Lie. But it is not only non-philosophers who have been forcefully persuaded, it is also the philosopher-rulers. According to Frank, philosophers' souls are led by an *eros* for truth, yet the philosopher-rulers, by sublimating *eros*, are likewise compelled by their own education to pursue philosophy rather than being internally led to do so.<sup>64</sup> This implicates not only their philosophical motivation but also their rule. If these philosopher-rulers are denied *eros*, then they are wrongly motivated to pursue justice, distorting the object of justice itself, and so neither can they guard their own souls or the souls of others.

It is at this point, Frank contends, that we find the *aporia* of the *Republic*: while justice depends on *eros*, *eros* cannot be made safe for either politics or philosophy.<sup>65</sup> To think of politics as involving political courage,<sup>66</sup> as obedience to order and stability, is to understand that *eros* cannot be bound by it. If we think of philosophy as involving the kind of calculative rationality demonstrated by the philosopher-rulers—the kind that operates according to the logic of the law—then *eros* cannot be bound by it.<sup>67</sup> If Frank is right—that passionate, grasping, and productive *eros* is the condition of philosophy<sup>68</sup>—then to purge, and rationalise or naturalise *eros* is to deprive the *Republic*'s philosophy and its associated ethics and politics of their signal motivator.<sup>69</sup> The purging of *eros* stems from the interpretation of justice in the form of *nomos*. But because it cannot ultimately be purged it is rationalised and naturalised as a kind of taming.

Frank thinks of *eros* as a middle that enables the pursuit of justice, although this does not guarantee it can be realised in speech or practice. Specifically, Frank says that 'the being of *eros* and its work as *sunergos* are the same: namely, to be forever in desire in relation to things that can never be fully and entirely possessed'.<sup>70</sup> The notion of 'middle' that Frank uses is taken from the *Symposium* when Diotima, voiced by Socrates, proffers an account of *eros* that is not ignorance or wisdom, is not a matter of possessing or being without, but rather is something in-between.<sup>71</sup> We are given the image of a ladder that the philosopher ascends in order to gain knowledge of the beautiful itself.<sup>72</sup> *Eros* is the in-between that is neither the beginning nor the end of the ascent. Thus, in the *Republic*, *eros* is the positive desire that motivates the concern for justice. The key

point is this: *To purge, rationalise, or naturalise eros is to predetermine the object desired, and thereby distort the desire for justice itself.*

To seek justice in both the city and the soul one must grapple with the fundamental tension between politics, philosophy, and *eros*. This is not acknowledged or done by Glaucon and Adeimantus. If justice cannot be reduced to the rationale of calculative reason, and if justice is pursued in the image of oneself, then what does this mean for any hope of not only theorising justice but also its political possibility? I think it means we must re-think both the notion of the ideal city in the *Republic* and how to think utopia beyond it. Rather than thinking of political philosophy as an enterprise of defining the static, final conditions that enforce the relations within one's soul and others, the ideality of these relations is inextricably linked to the conditions and method of theorization. In the final section, I will begin to unpack what this means and how we see this more explicitly in the *Republic*.

#### 4 | Re-Thinking Utopianism in Plato's *Republic*

The failures of Kallipolis as utopia stem from the mistaken notion that the rule of law is best modelled on the rule of law-like philosophy. Consider Socrates's claim that in theorising the ideal city, we assume we are not just putting a few happy people into the city and claiming it is, then, happy, but instead are concerned with the happiness of the city as a whole.<sup>73</sup> This passage should stand out because, as argued in section two, the exact opposite occurs in Kallipolis. But let us take this idea that the best city—the ideal city, what we want to call utopia—does in fact consist of the happiness of the entire political association as is commonly thought to be a key characteristic of utopia. What does this look like? What is required both philosophically and politically, and how are the two related?

In Socrates's criticism of democracy, he argues that such rule by the people is too erratic.<sup>74</sup> Importantly, this occurs in the context of rebellion against oligarchy. Because oligarchic rule imposes overbearing restrictions on the desires of its citizens, starving them of all goods but the ideal of wealth, democracy defines the good as 'freedom'.<sup>75</sup> Such freedom is not spoken of abstractly. Because their working conception of democracy is a degeneration of oligarchy, it is implicated by the failures of the previous form of rule, and since oligarchy qualifies democracy, freedom is defined as the pursuit of any and all goods without prudential constraint. This conception of democracy, again, is not spoken of abstractly. It is a representation of Athenian democracy. With this context, we can re-interpret Socrates' argument: democracy as the rule by the *demos* simply lacks self-governance. As Socrates says, 'Too much freedom seems to change into nothing but too much slavery, both for private men and city'.<sup>76</sup> The *demos* lack wisdom because they do not think for themselves but instead think under the burden of the opinions of others.

The *demos* of Athens are incapable of self-rule. But is democratic self-rule nonetheless ideal? Frank explains that for as much as the *Republic* is concerned with individual self-rule, there is also a necessary connection to city justice and politics: 'there can be no city justice, at least where citizens rule themselves, if citizens cannot bring about justice in their own souls. And [the *Republic*] is about politics because soul justice is... a matter of

self-government, self-constitution, and self-authorization in and by way of relations with others.<sup>77</sup> There can be no just city where only philosophers rule themselves since their rule depends on forceful persuasion. Justice, then, requires a commitment towards others, to unburden their soul of the opinions of others. But such a political association is extremely unlikely. None of this changes the fact that most, if not all, citizens do not rule themselves. For this to occur, there would need to be active education that is not imposed but motivated from within. This is not inconceivable, but, admittedly, unlikely under current conditions. So, would this not point to the argument that the non-ideal city is to be preferred to the ideal city since it appears only the non-ideal can be normatively guiding? Furthermore, if soul justice and city justice are necessarily connected, then is it not still the case that the *Republic* is a critique of utopia?

I raise both questions because I think they are the typical questions asked, and yet they miss the point. The classical methodological debate between theorising the best city (ideal) and the best-possible city (non-ideal) obfuscates the utopianism of the *Republic*. If we frame utopianism in these terms we run into the same debates about the paradox of philosopher-rulers, or idealist methodology versus empirical methodology, and all the other conceptions of utopian methodology that depend on such antinomies. This framing both reduces the ideal to the practical and undermines the political form of the ideal. If we are to reread the *Republic* as a critical, pedagogical work of philosophy, then we have to think about utopianism in terms of the education of the learner/citizen in relation to both the ideal and the situatedness in which the education occurs. It is my contention that this implies a paradoxical necessity in the nature of utopianism: the ideal political association cannot be theorised without itself being influenced by the politics of theorising, and yet the politics of theorising is immanently motivated by the ideal. This appears counter-intuitive. We either theorise an ideal that is unconstrained by practical concerns, or we frame the ideal according to practical concerns. If either of these methods is mistaken, then, in the pessimistic case, there can be no ideal that is ultimately guiding practical concerns since the ideal is always implicated by the practical. Yet, what I am arguing is that the utopian implication of re-reading the *Republic* is that there is a way to think beyond, although not without, this antinomy.

Consider the situatedness of the pursuit of justice in the dialogue. At the beginning of the dialogue, the participants do not simply discuss the look (*eidos*)<sup>78</sup> of justice as it comes into being according to the limits of reason alone. But the understanding of justice is, at least in part, informed by the conditions that enable the pursuit of justice among the participants. The conversation among members of the speaking party in the *Republic* is *practically* founded when Socrates says ‘it is resolved’.<sup>79</sup> Allan Bloom explains that ‘Socrates uses this word [resolved] as it was used in the political assembly to announce that the sovereign authority had passed a law or decree. It is the expression with which the laws begin. ‘It is resolved by (literally, “it seems to”) the Athenian people...’.<sup>80</sup> To explain this, John Sallis notes that the whole conversation begins by overcoming the threat of force from Polemarchus. Persuasion wins out whereby, in the process of this beginning conflict of the dialogue itself, ‘the outcome of this episode has been the forming of a little community, of a miniature city, now ratified by the vote’.<sup>81</sup> If it were just that

the phrase of the Athenian political assembly was used, then perhaps there is not much that could be made of this. But it is Sallis’s interpretation of seeing this as an acting out of the question raised later about who should rule the city that indicates the phrase’s importance.

The Athenian political assembly phrase used by Socrates invokes the political nature of the participants’ pursuit of justice. Not only do they proceed according to conventional practices of philosophical—or perhaps even in certain instances, sophisticated—conversation, they are thinking in the context of Athenian life. For as much as justice is conditioned by the customs of political agreement in Athenian life—as acted out in their temporary community of speakers—it is also something they seek beyond the conditions itself. What we see is the simultaneous situating of the pursuit of justice and its normative transcendence. The questions they ask and the resulting ideal of justice pursued are as much informed by their circumstances as they seek to transcend them. I have already mentioned other instances where this can be explicitly seen: as in Glaucon’s reframing of the conditions of appropriate city life and the dialectical process of city-building more generally, the Three Waves, the hostility to the Thrasymachean conception of justice as a result of a presupposed *nomos*-like form of justice, and the notion of the image of thought invoked by Socrates.<sup>82</sup>

The situatedness of the pursuit of justice means we cannot know the content of the ideal city in purely idealist terms because purely idealist terms would be begging the question. But even though it is situated, it is an ideal at one and the same time transcending the present and yet qualified by the present. To disregard this ideal because it is extremely unlikely is necessary to dismiss the value of philosophy even outside the context of politics. Just as philosophy is motivated to a certain extent by *eros*, and the motivation of *eros* cannot be reduced to a determinate, rational understanding that de-eroticizes it, the same is true of utopianism. We need not desire utopia for its own sake to be motivated by it. To pursue justice is necessarily also to pursue utopia because self-rule, a characteristic of philosophy, is inextricably linked to city-rule.

I believe the *Republic* moves us to favour a normative utopianism rather than a metaphysical utopianism. The fundamental question is not ‘what is the ideal city?’ It is not even ‘what is ideal justice?’ While both of these questions are important, they wrongly perceive the object of utopian thought to be the ground of concern rather than the imperative itself. This kind of metaphysical utopianism is typically linked to the political movements, wars, oppression, and genocide that occurred throughout the 20th century. Because of this, anti-utopianism or post-utopianism has become the favoured approach to politics. I cannot speak to the rise in anti-utopianism, but will offer a couple of brief remarks regarding post-utopianism and recent attempts to revive utopianism.

Post-utopians think that the good life cannot be guaranteed; instead, we ought to seek the minimally better, and this begins, first and foremost, with the self. If totalitarianism is the other side of the utopian coin, then, ‘paradoxically’, Ryan Balot argues, ‘we might say that the best paradigm for utopia is the best individual, Socrates... Utopia, then, need mean nothing other than

the good individual life'.<sup>83</sup> I cannot, here, interrogate Balot's interpretation of Socrates. But what I have argued in this chapter is that the utopianism of the individual cannot be separated from the utopianism of the city. So, to conclude that the good life cannot be guaranteed is not the same as concluding it is impossible. The mistake for post-utopians like Balot is to turn to a moralising ethics that treats social justice as something separable from soul justice. But, as I have been arguing, the *Republic* teaches us that the two are inextricable since they condition each other. It also teaches us that we cannot but be moved by the utopian imperative for a good place, even if it is nowhere.

However, there have been much needed attempts to revive the role of utopianism in politics. I think they miss the critical and dialectical aspect of utopianism that I have argued is to be found in the *Republic*. Fredric Jameson argues that we ought to understand utopias to offer a radical critique of actually existing society by comparing our own to a proposed ideal, challenging the extent to which we can imagine an alternative form of life. A utopia, however, is an ideological representation of a given perspective within society. But to reduce utopia to ideology would be to miss its critical import. Paradoxically, within the ideological image of utopia, there is also ideology critique: utopias offer a conception of systemic otherness, questioning social and political norms.<sup>84</sup> For Jameson, then, utopianism is simultaneously a form of ideology and ideology critique. Utopianism is not valuable in its own right, since it can offer no legitimate picture of the good life. But it is useful as a tool for disrupting the dominant paradigm which does pave the way for political work in pursuit of the good life.

Similar to Jameson, Rainer Forst emphasises the ability of the utopian image to critique our present society. But this duality is not ideological, as with Jameson, but rather a duality of hyperbole and irony: 'it is a complex mirror that shows that we must leave our world behind but at the same time that it is very difficult to reach another'.<sup>85</sup> Utopia, then, is simultaneously distant and yet present, promising but also revealing of the potential dystopian risks. But its normativity originates in a situated reflection. Lia Ypi, however, departs from Forst's account of the normativity of utopianism and instead argues that 'the normativity of Nowhere does not come from the critical reflection on the existing world enabled by our dreaming of an imagined one... It comes rather from the process of discovering thoughts and aspirations implicit in the ongoing historical struggles of the world that we have'.<sup>86</sup> The difference here is that the critical normativity of utopian thinking would be more a function of politics itself than philosophical reflection, even if such reflection is situated.

While I cannot deny the importance of the picture utopia paints, either because it offers a genuine picture of the good or because of its usefulness in ideology critique, I think this often detracts from the critically normative function of utopianism. To this point here, then, Ypi is correct in her criticism of Forst. But even though she recognises the normative force arising from utopia as a reflection of the politically active situatedness of thought, she still conceptualises the ideal of Nowhere in opposition to the reality of political practice. As I have been trying to argue, however, the *Republic* shows us that this opposition is mistaken. For as much as political theory is concerned with practical

possibility—an immanently political value without which there would be no political theory—it is implicated by the transcendent nature of the ideal that normatively guides it. At one and the same time its theoretical possibility is what renders it practically impossible, yet the ideal of the good is senseless without the situatedness from which it reflects.

The critical utopianism of the *Republic* calls into question whether utopianism must find theory to be primary to practice. It does not question the relation between theory and practice as two separate domains seeking to privilege one over the other. The ideal city is not presented without being situated according to the image of the one pursuing it. In one instance it is Socrates, in another Glaucon. Yet, they are not merely seeking the limits of their own mind and its projections of justice. To philosophically pursue justice is to seek the truth beyond these limitations. But as I have tried to show, this fails in each case and yet this normative impulse remains.

The antinomy of the situatedness of the theorising seen in the *Republic* and its normative transcendence reveals the critical utopianism of the *Republic* in at least two ways. First, the problem of the antinomy between theory and practice is not dismissed but pushed to its limits. It is taken up in the normative theorising of justice without being overcome. And second, the means of theorising justice is done as an image of thought in Socrates and Glaucon implies that the question of justice—both in terms of its content and its practical possibility—is something that goes beyond the text. It is that which is taken up by the reader and the one who is internally motivated by justice. This implies that the ideal of justice and its principles are open-ended. If we reduce our understanding of utopianism to correspond to a dualism of ideality and feasibility, wherein utopianism is aligned with the former, then we will miss its critical and normative import. Furthermore, we will run into the same debates about the paradox of philosopher-rulers, or idealist methodology versus empirical methodology, and all the other conceptions of utopian methodology that depend on such dualistic antinomies.<sup>87</sup>

## 5 | Conclusion

In this paper, I sought to re-think the nature of utopianism in Plato's *Republic*. In the first section, I interrogated the traditional and ironic readings against the dialectical process of city-building in speech undertaken by Socrates and his interlocutors. I argued against both the traditional reading of the *Republic*—that it is purely utopian and that Kallipolis is utopia—and the reactionary reading which interprets it as a critique of utopianism. To fully argue against these readings, I presented Jill Frank's re-reading of Plato's *Republic* in the second section. This showed us that the tensions and inconsistencies in the *Republic* should invoke our own sense of philosophical authority, ultimately aiming at the self-governance of the soul and the city. In the final section, I argued that re-reading the *Republic* requires re-thinking the nature of utopianism. Instead of framing utopianism in terms of ideal versus non-ideal theorising, there is a way to think beyond, although not without, this methodological opposition. I argued for thinking utopianism in the *Republic* in terms of the education of the learner/citizen in relation to both the ideal and the situatedness of edification. This revealed the



paradoxical necessity of the nature of utopianism: that the ideal cannot be theorised without itself being conditioned by the politics of theorising, and yet the politics of theorising seeks its own normative transcendence. Therefore, the utopianism of the *Republic* ought to be thought of as dialectical, being simultaneously situated and yet normatively transcending.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> More fully, Rawls specifies this system of rules as defining ‘offices, roles, moves, penalties, defences, and so on, and which gives the activity its structure... [including] games and rituals, trials and parliaments’ (1999, 20).
- <sup>2</sup> See Valentini (2012).
- <sup>3</sup> See Aristotle (2012), Book II, chapters 1–5.
- <sup>4</sup> Both of which I deal with below. I also consider Myles Burnyeat to engage in the traditional reading since he argues Kallipolis is Plato’s ideal city, even though, as we see below, he does not think Kallipolis is utopia or ideal in the sense akin to the Forms.
- <sup>5</sup> Annas (1981, 1).
- <sup>6</sup> Annas (1981, 101).
- <sup>7</sup> Annas (1981, 171).
- <sup>8</sup> Popper (1966, 153).
- <sup>9</sup> There is also R. C. Cross’s and A. D. Woozley’s commentary on Plato’s *Republic* and Richard Nettleship’s lectures that read the *Republic* in this way, to just name two more. Or even in W. K. C. Guthrie’s *A History of Greek Philosophy* where he explicitly refers to Plato’s utopian scheme. See Cross and Woozley (1971), Nettleship (1955), Guthrie (1975, 535).
- <sup>10</sup> Thakkar (2018, 17).
- <sup>11</sup> Mateo Duque has argued that the dialogues were not taught, as in a lecture, or even acted out but rather read and actively questioned by the students of the Academy. See Duque (2023). William Altman argues Plato’s dialogues, and especially the *Republic*, are written to burst the bounds of the written words. Specifically, Altman refers to what he calls a ‘basanistic element’ that Plato deployed in order for the student to be pointed to something greater than what the teacher has already taught. See Altman (2012, xx–xxi). There is also Frank’s (2018) which I am greatly influenced by and reference in this paper.
- <sup>12</sup> See More (2019, 123).
- <sup>13</sup> Balot (2008, 75). Rainer Forst also speaks of the nature of utopia in this way: ‘the goal of [utopias] is the eradication of the sources of social antagonisms... utopian thinking is truly “perfectionist”: its goal is a perfect society of perfect individuals created by proper social institutions’ (2014, 179). Fredric Jameson also argues that utopias paradoxically suspend the political. See Jameson (2004).
- <sup>14</sup> To clarify, I am not saying that Plato nor anyone who endorses the ideal city thinks it is post-political. I am simply analysing this city in light of the concept of utopia which, as I state, was invented much later than Plato.

- <sup>15</sup> The philosopher-rulers, in their stewardship of the souls of their citizens, try to sublimate more base desires into rational ones which requires the practice of aligning sex with the movement of the celestial bodies. But even though these rulers had been educated in calculative rationality, they could not stop mistakes from occurring. Certain unfit souls will be passed on as more noble ones. When they are not fit for the appropriate education, they will be unable to perform their assigned duties. *Stasis*, civil war—the very thing the auxiliary-guardians are most trained to prevent—is soon to follow. And so with the rise of factions in the ideal city comes the rise of timocratic rule. This is followed by oligarchy, democracy, and finally tyranny. See Plato (1991, 546a–547c). All translations of the *Republic* in this paper are from Allan Bloom’s *The Republic of Plato*, Second Edition (Plato 1991).
- <sup>16</sup> Plato (1991, 546a).
- <sup>17</sup> Burnyeat (2000, 297–298).
- <sup>18</sup> *Eidos* is typically translated as form, shape, and that-which-is-seen. But I am opting to use Allan Bloom’s translation rendering *eidos* to mean ‘look.’
- <sup>19</sup> Burnyeat (2000, 297–298).
- <sup>20</sup> Burnyeat (2000, 298).
- <sup>21</sup> Thakkar (2018, 121).
- <sup>22</sup> Thakkar (2018, 141–142).
- <sup>23</sup> Thakkar (2018, 6).
- <sup>24</sup> Thakkar (2018, 7).
- <sup>25</sup> Thakkar (2018, 122).
- <sup>26</sup> Thakkar (2018, 140).
- <sup>27</sup> Burnyeat (2000, 298).
- <sup>28</sup> Thakkar (2018, 125).
- <sup>29</sup> Plato (1991, 372c–d).
- <sup>30</sup> Burnyeat (1997, 230–231).
- <sup>31</sup> Plato (1991, 373a).
- <sup>32</sup> The idea is that, as I think the following quote illustrates, there is no moral use for philosophy if everyone is already virtuous. But because not everyone is moderate like Socrates, this is not a city fit for humans generally.
- <sup>33</sup> Morrison (2007, 251).
- <sup>34</sup> The ‘Many’ is the amorphous mass-mentality that believes uncritically and is what Socrates gets put to death for trying to undermine. Simply put, the Many live unexamined lives, burdening themselves with the opinions of others.
- <sup>35</sup> Plato (1991, 327e).
- <sup>36</sup> Plato (1991, 398d–401b). In Book III it is poets and others who tell stories of the gods that make them look fallible that are banned. But the full banishment, including artists and imitators in general, does not happen until Book X at 2.373b.
- <sup>37</sup> Plato (1991, 415a–d). As Jill Frank notes, however, Glaucon seems unconvinced that the first generation of philosopher-rulers will be persuaded by the Founding Lie. Although it is not persuasive, it still works as a tool of deception—something key to the foundation of Kallipolis and the soul of Glaucon. See Frank (2018, 119–121).
- <sup>38</sup> Plato (1991, 433b).
- <sup>39</sup> Plato (1991, 433d).
- <sup>40</sup> The arts are broken down into four regiments: gymnastics, music, mathematics, and dialectics.
- <sup>41</sup> Plato (1991, 533b).

- <sup>42</sup> The only time Socrates gives the ideal city a name, Kallipolis (the Beautiful city), he says, to Glaucon, ‘in *your* beautiful city’ (italics are mine). Plato (1991, 527c).
- <sup>43</sup> Perhaps the ideal *polis* (Books 2–7) and the necessary de-evolution of any *polis* (Books 8–9) should be understood separately. Even if so, this would not make sense as a model if the model itself degenerates. The more interesting question is whether the instantiation of the ideal *polis* necessarily degenerates? Perhaps. But even if this is so this would mean Kallipolis lacks the post-political existence characteristic of utopia. The more interesting question, I think, is to what extent the inevitable degeneration of any *polis*, no matter how ideal, implicates not only the ideal *polis* but also the theorization of the ideal *polis*?
- <sup>44</sup> Bobonich (2004, 42).
- <sup>45</sup> Thakkar (2018, 112).
- <sup>46</sup> This is part of the Three Waves. The first wave, the equality of the sexes, occurs at 451c–457c. The second wave, the communalization of the family, occurs at 457c–471e. And the third wave, the problem of the philosopher-ruler, occurs at 472a–541b. Furthermore, as anonymous reviewer points out, Socrates does say that the philosopher can emerge without Kallipolis, with the difference being that these ex-philosophers lack obligation to help rule the city. See 520a–b.
- <sup>47</sup> Bobonich argues that Plato eventually came to see this and so, in the *Laws*, attempted one last time to see if it is theoretically possible for non-philosophers to live the good life. Yet, he maintains, even the *Laws* finds this to be impossible for most non-philosophers. As I will argue below, I do think Bobonich is right about the problem of the *Republic*. But I think Kallipolis intentionally fails. We should rather see it as a play on itself in relation to the souls of, primarily, Glaucon and Adeimantus and then also in relation to the souls of the Many. See Bobonich (2004, 9–10).
- <sup>48</sup> Plato (1991, 420c, 466a).
- <sup>49</sup> Bobonich (2004, 12).
- <sup>50</sup> Strauss (1978, 125).
- <sup>51</sup> Strauss (1978, 127).
- <sup>52</sup> Strauss (1978, 127).
- <sup>53</sup> Bloom (1991a, 409).
- <sup>54</sup> Bloom (1991a, 409).
- <sup>55</sup> Plato (1991, 592a–b).
- <sup>56</sup> Estlund (2020, 120–121).
- <sup>57</sup> Frank (2018, 21).
- <sup>58</sup> Plato (1991), beginning at 343c.
- <sup>59</sup> Frank (2018, 83).
- <sup>60</sup> Plato (1991, 327c).
- <sup>61</sup> Frank (2018, 85).
- <sup>62</sup> Frank (2018, 128, 140).
- <sup>63</sup> Plato (1991, 327c).
- <sup>64</sup> Frank (2018, 146–147).
- <sup>65</sup> Frank (2018, 169).
- <sup>66</sup> Frank (2018, 100).
- <sup>67</sup> If we understand calculative rationality in Kallipolis to work this way, then it is easy to see why the city requires eugenics in both the Noble Lie (414b) and the expulsion of everyone over the age of ten (540e).
- <sup>68</sup> Frank (2018, 145).
- <sup>69</sup> While purge, rationalise, and naturalise are distinct terms, the latter two stem from the impossibility of purging *eros* entirely. Instead, under the form of law, *eros* is rationalised for the philosopher-rules and naturalised—in the by calculating when sex ought to occur—for the auxiliaries and the rest of Kallipolis.
- <sup>70</sup> Frank (2018, 167).
- <sup>71</sup> Plato (1991), *Symposium*, 204a.
- <sup>72</sup> Plato (1991), *Symposium*, 211c.
- <sup>73</sup> Plato (1991, 420c).
- <sup>74</sup> Plato (1991, 559d–e).
- <sup>75</sup> Plato (1991, 562b–c).
- <sup>76</sup> Plato (1991, 564a).
- <sup>77</sup> Frank (2018, 224).
- <sup>78</sup> Plato (1991, 369a). As mentioned above, *eidos* is typically translated as form, shape, and that-which-is-seen. But I am opting to use Allan Bloom’s translation in the context of this passage rendering *eidos* to mean ‘look’.
- <sup>79</sup> Plato (1991, 328b). It is worth noting that this ratification occurs again at 369b when it is agreed that to know justice one must watch a city come into being.
- <sup>80</sup> Bloom (1991b, 441).
- <sup>81</sup> Sallis (1996, 322).
- <sup>82</sup> Plato (1991, 592a–b).
- <sup>83</sup> Balot (2008, 84).
- <sup>84</sup> Jameson (2004, 50–51).
- <sup>85</sup> Forst (2014, 181).
- <sup>86</sup> Ypi (2015, 222).
- <sup>87</sup> I think this also applies to the antinomy found in the recent debates between ideal theory and non-ideal theory. While I do not have the space here to extend my analysis to this debate, I have forthcoming work that does this.

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