

Re-examining the 'Compulsion Problem' in Plato's *Republic*

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have made several attempts to understand the 'compulsion problem' in the *Republic*, namely, why Plato compels the philosopher-rulers to descend into the cave to rule. These attempts, however, fail to properly incorporate two other main instances of compulsion in the dialogue into the discussion: first, the compulsion in Plato's concept of philosophical rulership, which requires that one can be a ruler in Kallipolis if and only if one is a product of the coincidence of philosophy and politics; second, the instances of compulsion in the future philosopher-rulers' education. My main aim in this paper is to re-examine the 'compulsion problem'. I argue that the just law that compels the philosopher-rulers to rule corroborates Plato's concept of education to achieve the product of his concept of philosophical rulership, i.e. rulers who despise ruling.

Keywords: compulsion, governance, guardians, rulership, education

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the *Republic*, Plato nurtures philosopher-rulers who—he tells us—must be compelled to rule; he thinks that the best rulers are those who, paradoxically, despise (καταφρονοῦντα) ruling.¹ This famous ruling paradox is what I refer to in this paper as the ‘compulsion problem’. Several scholarly attempts have been made to understand this problem, and the leading question has been why Plato compels the philosopher-rulers to return to the cave. Two main solutions have been offered as answers to this question.² First, some scholars, including Buckels and Brown, agree with Socrates that the philosophers are just people. Consequently, philosophers, *qua* just people, will accept being commanded to rule because they will not disobey the command to rule; disobedience to the just command will corrupt their souls. Buckels goes further to attempt to exonerate Plato’s Socrates – the educator and lawgiver – of the criticism that he is committing an injustice against the philosophers. Other scholars, including Vasiliou and Sheffield, argue that the philosophers, through their education and habituation, will be morally motivated to rule.^{3,4}

However, despite the enviable erudition by which these scholars come to their conclusions, it seems to me that their proposed solutions do not properly accommodate other ‘standard’ senses of compulsion that can comprehensibly explain the instance of the compulsion requiring the philosophers to return to rule.⁵ One such instance is found in Plato’s concept of philosophical rulership in Book V, which requires that one can be a ruler in Kallipolis if and only if one is a product of the coincidence of philosophy and politics. I understand this to mean that the only option the ruler in Kallipolis has is the following: philosophise and rule or forfeit the opportunity to philosophise

in Kallipolis. The other instances of a standard sense of compulsion are found in the future philosopher-rulers’ education, which points out how Plato intends to achieve the product of his concept of philosophical rulership. Accordingly, I argue that the law which compels the philosophers to rule corroborates Plato’s concept of education to achieve the product of his ideal political leaders, i.e., rulers who despise ruling. Suffice to say that Plato uses the law and education as means to generate his ideal political leaders: rulers who despise ruling (*Rep.*, 521b1-2). I acknowledge that each of these instances of compulsion can be considered separately and examined in its context. Nonetheless, I think that what seems to unite them is Plato’s aim of demonstrating the relevance of philosophy in tackling concrete political problems.

Thus, I show that the instance of the compulsion in Plato’s concept of philosophical rulership appears to me to explain *why* Plato conceives of political leaders who despise ruling: the best ruler is the one whose psychic harmony is directly beneficial for the stability of the polis, given that the greatest evil in a polis is political instability (*Rep.*, 462a-465d). And the instances of the compulsion in the future guardians’ education explain *how* Plato intends to generate such leaders: leaders whose souls have been nurtured under stringent conditions to be harmonious in such a way to guarantee the stability of the polis. That is, I shall show that the instances of the compulsion associated with the philosopher-rulers’ education are conceptually linked with the instance of the compulsion in Plato’s concept of philosophical rulership, and both instances explain, to a larger extent, why Plato compels the philosophers to return to rule. In essence, by tracing the reason why Plato compels his philosopher-rulers to return to rule from his concept

of philosophical rulership and education, I wish to offer a relatively comprehensive account of the role of compulsion in his political thought and education.

2. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE ‘COMPULSION PROBLEM’

Buckels rightly suggests that Plato’s frequent usage of the forms ἀναγκάζειν (i.e. to force or to compel) and ἀνάγκη (i.e. compulsion or necessity) should discourage any reading of the compulsion which tends to diminish its importance.⁶ Buckels is equally right to have observed that “This repeated mention of compulsion is quite excessive and misleading if Plato merely intends to give philosophers a friendly reminder that it is time to rule.”⁷ If Plato is serious about his usage of compulsion, what could he possibly mean by the term? To answer this question, let us consider this passage. In Book VII, Socrates asks Glaucon:

T1: Observe, then, Glaucon, that we won’t be doing an injustice to those who’ve become philosophers in our city and that what we’ll say to them, when we compel them to guard and care for the others, will be just. We’ll say: “When people like you come to be in other cities, they’ll be justified in not sharing in their city’s labours, for they’ve grown there spontaneously, against the will of the constitution. But what grows of its own accord and owes no debt for its upbringing has justice on its side when it isn’t keen to pay anyone for that upbringing. But we’ve made you kings in our city and leaders of the swarm, as it were, both for yourselves and for the rest of the city. You’re better and more completely educated than the others

and are better able to share in both types of life. Therefore each of you in turn must go down to live in the common dwelling place of the others and grow accustomed to seeing in the dark...”⁸

[Socrates then queries Glaucon] Then do you think that those we’ve nurtured will disobey us and refuse to share the labours of the city, each in turn, while living the greater part of their time with one another in the pure realm? It isn’t possible, for we’ll be giving just orders to just people. Each of them will certainly go to rule as to something compulsory, however, which is exactly the opposite of what’s done by those who now rule in each city (*Rep.*, 520a5-e3).

Two points are noteworthy in passage T1. First, Socrates seems to say that it is mainly for the sake of the benefit of the polis that the philosophers are educated at its expense. Can we say, then, that the wellbeing of the polis seems to have priority over that of the philosophers? Socrates’ answer is straightforward: “Each of them will spend most of his time with philosophy, but, when his turn comes, he must labour in politics and rule for the city’s sake, not as if he were doing something fine, but rather as something that has to be done” (*Rep.*, 540b1-4). Hence, it is not that the philosophers are completely denied the opportunity to philosophise. Does Socrates’ offer here suffice to exonerate him from the criticism that he commits injustice against the philosophers by compelling them to rule? I will return to this question in our subsequent discussion. At this point, I can only suggest that Plato is utilitarian in outlook in his political engineering, including his treatment of philosophy from the standpoint of its social benefits. By this statement, I mean that Plato

cares more about what the philosophers can do for society than what they prefer to do for themselves. Second, Socrates says that they will be giving just command to just people. It is crucial to note that it is one thing to say that the command is just because Socrates and his co-lawgivers say so and another to say that the rulers will accept such a command to be just. I shall return to these two points later. Meantime, let us suggest a working definition of compulsion that perhaps captures the sense in which Plato uses ἀνάγκη.

Now, in agreement with Buckels that Plato uses compulsion in the strong sense, I suggest that by compulsion (ἀνάγκη) Plato has in mind the following definition or something close to it:

Compulsion involves coercing, forcing, or bending the will of someone to undertake something they will not do naturally or freely.

In this sense, the fact that Plato says his philosophers despise ruling makes it clear that the meaning of ἀνάγκη here cannot be understood in a non-standard sense. Instances of a standard sense of compulsion include where one, for instance, is held up at gun-point by armed robbers and told to either hand over one's purse or be killed; where a government compels us either to pay taxes and wear seatbelts or pay monetary penalties or serve jail terms or both. In this 'either...or' situation, one does not have freedom of choice over what one prefers. In the robbery case, the compelled object wants to have both his purse and life, but neither of the options offered by the robbers allows this. One can object, however, that the robbers provide a choice. But the victim is not willing to *both* obey the demand of the robbers and keep his life and property. In the

light of these considerations, and if we are to believe Buckels that Plato's compulsion language is excessively strong, then I think that Plato's usage of ἀνάγκη plausibly captures the following essence of a standard sense of compulsion (which is the thesis I defend):

If *X* does *A* under a standard sense of compulsion, *X* is compelled to do *A*, and *X* lacks the freedom of choice to reject doing *A*. This is grounded in the compelling agent's belief that *X* prefers to do something other than *A* or, in some situations, *X* does not want to act at all. This means that "no motive of personal gains" is an important part of what motivates *X* to do *A*.⁹ In context, philosophers, according to Plato, want to only philosophise and *not* rule. But the only option they are given is that either they philosophise *and* rule or forfeit the opportunity to philosophise (we can call this the 'either...or condition'). Therefore, if the philosophers despise ruling and are coerced into doing so, then the lawgiver seeks to work against their will.

Several solutions offered to the 'compulsion problem' will challenge my position. For instance, Annas argues that the philosophers will obey the just order to rule because they transcend their personal good. Thus, philosophers "know what is really good, not relative to the interests or situation of anyone. And it demands their return; so they go. Their motivation is thus very abstract. They are not seeking their own happiness. Nor are they seeking that of others. They are simply doing what is impersonally best. They make an impersonal response to an impersonal demand".¹⁰ An obvious problem with Annas' submission is that if the philosophers care neither about

their happiness nor that of others and simply do what is ‘impersonally best’, then it is hard to know whether the considerations that constitute the philosophers’ reasons for decisions or actions are prudential or moral. Socrates is specific that the true philosophers are those who love the sight of truth (*Rep.*, 475e2-4), and this desire is a sustaining commitment they are unwilling to compromise. Prudentially, their motivation is not all that abstract: they want to dwell in the Isles of the Blessed and also aim to get the epistemic benefits that grasping the Good begets, including understanding (*Rep.*, 519c4-5; *Rep.*, 490a1-b7). The idea here is to suggest that we can say the philosophers are prudential in their epistemic journey to grasp the Good: they have the motivation to philosophise. Moreover, the desire to philosophise sustains even after their education. Recall that they will spend most of their time philosophising in Kallipolis while they rule only as something necessary. Therefore, since their only option is to philosophise *and* rule, as I shall argue, it is plausible that they will rule just so they can continue to philosophise. Hence, I deny Annas’ claim that the philosophers lack any sense of obligation to advance their personal interest.¹¹

On the other hand, I agree with Annas that the philosophers lack a commitment to rule such that by accepting to rule as something necessary, they will be doing something impersonally best. Why must it matter if they rule as something impersonally best? To answer this, I want to modify Annas’ ‘impersonally best’ thesis to capture the sense of Plato’s ideal political leadership, i.e. generating political leaders who despise ruling. In Book II, Socrates accepts the challenge to prove that justice is preferable to injustice. Socrates argues that justice is doing what one is naturally and intellectually fit to do. This definition of

justice is social justice: the polis exists on the principle of mutual interdependence, with each member doing what he or she can physically and intellectually do best.¹² But the attitude of the philosophers towards ruling seems to indicate a counterexample to Socrates’ social justice. However, if they develop this kind of attitude toward ruling, it can only mean that Plato has succeeded in achieving the products of his ideal political leadership, i.e. rulers who deride ruling. Thus, I am inclined to believe that the image of the philosopher Plato depicts in the *Republic* appears to be like the philosophers in the *Phaedo*, who are “essentially detached contemplators of reality” and are estranged from politics and social service.¹³

This image is starkly different from the *Apology*’s Socrates who never despised social and political life and was willing to sacrifice his wellbeing and that of his family to implore others to live the philosophic life. In particular, the *Apology*’s Socrates never despised political leadership and it is not true that philosophers generally despise ruling (*Apol.* 28a10-29a; 32a9-b). Socrates, *qua* the quintessential philosopher, is a moralist who is committed to virtues that promote the wellbeing of others, because a central feature of morality is the awareness of the possible implications of one’s decisions and choices, judgement or action, not only for one’s wellbeing but that of others. But one thing is common among the philosophers in the *Apology*, the *Republic*, and the *Phaedo*: they all despise material acquisitions or inducements.¹⁵ Therefore, it seems to me that two reasons may explain what Plato means when he says his philosophers despise ruling: (1) ruling will conflict with their time with philosophy; (2) the material honours and pleasures that come along with ruling the perceptible world contribute nothing to their happiness.

But Plato, I think, is primarily concerned with reason (2); and this is explicitly demonstrated in his repeated comparison of his philosopher-rulers with those who love to rule. Plato wants to generate rulers who despise material acquisition and honours. His foremost reason is that individuals who naturally love ruling are those who fight over it. Such people usually happen to be those whose lives are impoverished and devoid of personal satisfaction but who hope to snatch some compensation for their material inadequacy from a political career; such needy people fight for power, which results in civil and domestic conflicts that ruin both themselves and the polis (*Rep.*, 521a3-7). He says that his best rulers are “those who have the best understanding of what matters for good government (φρονιμώτατοι δι’ ὧν ἄριστα πόλις οἰκεῖται) and who have other honours than political ones, and a better life as well...” (*Rep.*, 521b7-9). He concludes Book VII on a note that Kallipolis can come about only “when one or more philosophers come to power in a city, who despise (καταφρονήσωσιν) present honours, thinking them slavish and worthless, and who prize what is right and the honours that come with it above everything, and regard justice as the most important and most essential thing, serving it and increasing it as they set the city in order” (*Rep.*, 540d1-e3). Hence, from the perspective of Socrates, the philosopher-rulers become worthy candidates to rule Kallipolis at least for two reasons.

First, in terms of Plato’s psychology, the philosopher aims at the fulfilments of goods that have some eternality about them: truth, knowledge, and wisdom. These fulfilments are guaranteed by the greatest of all goods, i.e. the Good. Second, knowing the Good is worthwhile not merely as a means to action but because in coming to know it we develop our capacity to reason.¹⁵ In other words, the

philosopher’s aim of developing his rational capacity to see the Good is a commitment that steers him away from pursuing other goods that can only guarantee ephemeral satisfaction (see *Rep.*, 581c3-e4). Plato thinks that the philosopher is the best candidate to rule partly because the objects of his erotic desire differ starkly and significantly from those of individuals who love to rule and partly because they always act justly. In essence, Plato requires them to rule because of their commitment to grasp the Good and their being and acting justly. Hence, I propose that Plato compels the philosophers to rule not necessarily because they consider the polis and its citizens as objects of love (their only objects of love are the Good and the Forms) but because their actions are going to benefit these entities. I think this plausibly fits Annas’ impersonally best thesis. And it is in this context that it may be said that Plato cares more about what the philosophers will do to cure the polis of its feverishness than what they seek to do for themselves.

Apart from Annas, some scholars, including Brickhouse, Smith, Buckels, and Brown, variously argue that the philosophers will accept to rule because ruling—supposing it is just—must in some way be conducive to sustaining the just condition of the ruler’s soul. It is important to note here that my understanding of the just law is starkly different from these scholars’ seemingly unanimous position. To reiterate, I am urging that the law compelling the philosophers can rightly be just if it is understood in the context of the polis’ social justice and not in terms of morality. I shall show the difficulties with the moral understanding soon.

Now, Buckles argues that whatever Annas means by ‘impersonal’ “conflicts with Socrates’ aim of showing how justice is in the

agent's own personal interest, not merely that it is impersonally beneficial."¹⁶ Buckels then tries to account for why the philosophers will return in a way that will exonerate Socrates of the criticism that he is committing injustice against them. Buckels explores the 'ruling as a requirement of justice' thesis by analysing what Socrates means by 'just order' or 'just law'. In agreement with Eric Brown, Buckels argues that the lawgivers enact a just law commanding philosophers to rule and then specify that this law is just but not required by justice.¹⁷ Buckels then distinguishes between a general requirement of justice itself and the specific demand of a just law to argue that: "if we accept that it is a general requirement of justice that philosophers rule the city, then 1) they would be reluctant to do what justice itself requires, and 2) justice itself would require them to accept an inferior life."¹⁸ Buckels concludes that: "On the hypothesis that justice demands that one obey just laws, philosophers must rule Kallipolis because a just law demands it. Thus, it is not *justice* that compels the philosopher to accept an inferior life, but the law."¹⁹ Buckels believes this proposal saves Socrates' project of defending justice as eudemonistic. But I think Buckels seems unconvincing for at least three reasons.

In the first place, it is Platonically unwelcoming to say, metaphysically, that it is the 'just law' which compels the philosophers rather than justice itself (the Form Justice) if the just law instantiates as a sortal kind, a particular, of justice itself. One can legitimately assert that justice itself will *indirectly* prescribe the inferior kind of life. By *indirectly*, I wish to suggest that justice itself is conceived at a high level of generality and abstraction and it manifests itself in the form of the law or order in this case, that philosophers who owe a debt to the polis for their nurturing ought to repay

it by taking political command in Kallipolis. I owe this point to Sheffield. This means that it is both justice itself and its manifestation in the form of a specific law or order which are compelling the philosophers to rule. This allows for the fact that justice itself will not *always* compel philosophers to rule, because the specific manifestation of justice in this context will not always apply, for instance, to spontaneously generated philosophers who owe no debt for their education and upbringing.

Second, Buckels believes that "the philosophers will obey the requirements of justice, no matter what they may prescribe, since to act justly is to act so as to harmonise one's soul, and philosophers always act so as to do just that." Buckles op. cit., 77. Thus, although ruling may be inferior for the philosopher compared to philosophising, once it is a requirement of justice he will not disobey but accept it; otherwise, the philosopher causes disharmony in his soul. Buckels rightly believes that acting justly—practical justice—is beneficial to the agent, and it always comes along with psychic justice, i.e. being just.²² This is a welcome thesis. True philosophers always act justly to promote the wellbeing of the soul. This point does not elude Socrates: he says his fully-fledged philosophers are just people, and it is one of the reasons why they become the ideal candidates to govern Kallipolis. However, what Buckels and Brown fail to question is whether the philosophers will consider the command as just (I promised to return to the understanding of the just command from a moral perspective). The philosophers never spoke in the dialogue, save the few objections Glaucon and Adeimantus raised on their behalf, especially about their happiness. But we should remember that they are told many lies during their education. Hence, it is entirely possible, for instance, that they may later re-

alise that their supposed superiority among the other citizens is not divinely inspired, contrary to what they were made to believe about the autochthony during their childhood education (*Rep.*, 414d-415c6). Perhaps, they may also later realise that their whole education is a façade to get them to share their time spent philosophising with something else (*Rep.*, 415d1-3). The potentiality of such an epiphanic moment explains Socrates' uneasiness and great caution in introducing dialectics into their education (*Rep.*, 537d8-539d7). Hence, we cannot simply assume that they will consider the command as just. If one insists that the philosophers will accept the command because the lawgiver says it is just, it raises the question as to whether they accept anything without argument (cf. *Rep.*, 582d). Therefore, even if they are willing to go down to the cave to rule on a presumption that it is something that will conduce to the wellbeing of their soul, it does not shelve the fact that where there is non-compliance on their part they will be coerced into doing so. Another important point that challenges the 'care for the soul' thesis is that even though Socrates says they are just people, he legislates that they must be compelled. Does Socrates trust the moral discretion of the philosophers to do what the law requires them to do? As stated above, Buckels acknowledges the seriousness of the instance of compulsion requiring the philosophers to rule. But his explanation, as I have shown, is not inductively forceful to capture the full force of what the compulsion demands.

For his part, Vasiliou also acknowledges that "the compulsion language... is very strong." He argues strongly that knowledge of the Good does not motivate the philosophers to return to rule. Vasiliou then argues that the philosophers will be morally motivated

to accept to rule. If the compulsion language is very strong,²³ like how I have conceived it above, then it raises the question as to why Vasiliou thinks that the philosophers' moral motivation, borne out of their education and habituation, does anything to answer the compulsion question. More importantly, if philosophers naturally despise ruling, then their education must do less to motivate them to agree to rule. As Smith observes: "It makes no sense to speak so often of compulsion if those being compelled are already independently fully motivated to do what they are compelled to do" Smith 2010, 88. In essence, the moral motivation scholarship mitigates the full force of the law commanding the philosophers to return. In a similar line of reason, Sheffield agrees with Vasiliou, Brown and Buckels that the philosophers will be morally motivated to rule due to their education and habituation. Sheffield agrees with Vasiliou to argue that "Plato, like Aristotle, understands moral motivation as arising from proper education and habituation." Sheffield extends the domain of moral motivation to include *philia* motivation, which emphasises the principle of reciprocity: "talk of the philosopher being compelled is made intelligible and unobjectionable because they *owe* it to the ruled, within a *philia* of reciprocal benefits". Here, I agree with Sheffield that the philosophers owe their upbringing to the polis in the context of the principle of mutual interdependence – a principle which grounds the polis' social justice. But I am sceptical as to whether the compulsion to rule can be explained by *philia* motivation. If the philosophers accept being commanded to rule out of filial motivation, it implies that they, at least, have a reason to rule, and that seems to mean that the law and education fail to assist Plato in generating his ideal political leaders, i.e. leaders who despise ruling.²⁵

However, if the compulsion language is very strong, as I agree with Buckels and Vasiliou that it is, then we must be willing to draw its implication more forcefully. To draw such an implication, suppose the philosophers decide not to care for their soul. Suppose further that their education fails to morally motivate them or imbue in them *philial* sentiments. What happens to them in Kallipolis? The answer I am going to defend is that they will be barred from practising philosophy in Kallipolis. Thus their only option is to choose between philosophising and ruling or completely losing the opportunity to philosophise in Kallipolis. As promised above, I defend this thesis in the sections that follow.

3. THE COMPULSION AND THE COINCIDENCE OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

To get to the root of my claim, that the philosophers are to choose between philosophising *and* ruling or forfeiting the opportunity to philosophise in Kallipolis, it is worth looking carefully at how Plato conceives of philosophical rulership in this very famous passage in Book V:

T2: Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so (τῶν δὲ νῦν πορευομένων χωρὶς ἐφ' ἑκάτερον αἱ πολλὰ φύσεις ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἀποκλεισθῶσιν), cities will have no rest from evils. And, until this happens, the [polis] we've been describing in

[speech] will never be born to the fullest extent possible or see the light of the sun (*Rep.*, 473c10-e2).²⁶

Socrates likens this passage to one of the greatest waves of laughter, which is that women should be made guardians. Truthfully, Glaucon takes Socrates' proposal with great scorn, and challenges Socrates to put up a defence to explain it, as otherwise he will pay the penalty of great derision. Glaucon and Adeimantus object that in practice philosophers are either useless (ὁ ἐπιεικέστατοι ἄχρηστοι) or vicious. Socrates admits that there are charlatan philosophers and that the philosophic nature can be corrupted in a society that promotes the wrong values and attitudes (*Rep.*, 489c8-494a8). Socrates' defence spans from *Rep.*, 474c in Book V to the end of Book VII. It shows the relevance of T2 in appreciating Plato's conception of philosophical rulership. To convince Glaucon, Socrates, however, wants to make a case that in a society where the appropriate values are promoted, the relevance of philosophy and its practitioners will be fully appreciated. He assures Glaucon that if they are to escape great derision, they need to define for the sceptics who the philosophers are that he dares say they must rule. And once that is clear, "we need to defend ourselves by showing that the people we mean are fitted by nature both to engage in philosophy and to rule a city..." (*Rep.*, 474b2-c2). Socrates defines the philosopher as one who loves learning in its completeness and all its various manifestations, and it is for this reason Socrates says at the beginning of Book VI that the philosopher must be the one to rule (*Rep.*, 484b).

A detailed examination of Socrates' defence is not relevant for our purpose. What we need to pay attention to are the two *provisos* in T2:

first, Socrates says “the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively must forcibly (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) be prevented from doing so.” Socrates is unambiguous about what this condition means: political power and philosophy must be vested in the same person such that neither a philosopher nor a politician is to be made ruler in a polis. Second, Socrates says until the coincidence happens, Kallipolis will never be born to the fullest extent possible or even see the light of the sun. The question is why Plato proposes that two different natures with two different desires and motivation—philosophy and politics—must completely coincide. The answer is straightforwardly suggested in **T2**: Socrates aims to generate the best leaders to end the evils in polities. This, again, suggests to me that Plato wants to show the utility of philosophy for the active political life. Recall that the need for guardianship followed after the fevered polis was discovered in Book II. I suggest, therefore, that Plato conceives philosophical rulership as a conceptual response to tackling concrete political problems.

And so, by the expression ἐξ ἀνάγκης in **T2** Plato, I think, understands and uses compulsion in the sense of our working definition for the following three main reasons. (a₁) Whosoever becomes a ruler in Kallipolis cannot be exclusively a politician or a philosopher; he must be identified as both, i.e. a philosopher-ruler. That is, if one is a ruler in Kallipolis, then one is a product of the coincidence of philosophy and politics. This is precisely the reason why think that the demand of the just law or order has priority over the moral conviction of the philosophers as to whether or not they must return to the cave. That is, if the first proviso holds, then we can observe closely that the either...or condition of our working definition of compulsion is

applicable here: either one agrees to rule and philosophise or one does not philosophise at all. This means that no simultaneously generated philosopher can emerge, or be allowed to practise philosophy in Kallipolis. We now get a plausible response to why Socrates thinks the spontaneously generated philosophers grow against the will of the constitution: once they owe nothing to the polis for their upbringing, the community may not derive any benefit from them.

Nor can the current crop of leaders without philosophic knowledge be permitted to rule Kallipolis. Before the discussion of the coincidence from Books V-VII, the future philosopher-rulers are first identified as guardians of the polis in Book II. The guardians are later divided into the auxiliaries and the best guardians based on who can protect the conviction never to harm the polis (*Rep.*, 412b-414b). But, as Molchanov argues, the distinction between the auxiliaries and the best guardians seems to have less to do with philosophy.²⁷ The auxiliary class represents the spirited part of the soul, and courage (ἀνδρείαν) is their characteristic nature, and the aim of educating them is to transform their savage courage into political courage (ἀνδρείαν πολιτικήν) (*Rep.*, 430a2-c2). This means that if the best guardians are better at protecting the polis than the auxiliaries are, it presupposes that the former are more courageous and patriotic than the latter. Moreover, the best guardians care for the polis but not because they love philosophical wisdom; even if they did, this wisdom is not philosophical wisdom but political.²⁸ If this holds, does it not contradict our initial claim that the philosopher-rulers lack the motivation to rule? My response is that there is no contradiction here if we strike a distinction between the best guardians *before* and *after*

Book V. The best guardians are not permitted to rule unless they have philosophical wisdom. In Book VI, Socrates is specific that “those who are to be made our guardians in the most exact sense of the term must be philosophers” (*Rep.*, 503b3-5). I shall argue in the next section in educating the future rulers, Socrates, qua the educator, aims to blunt the ruling desires of the potential rulers: the appetitive part is tamed and the spirited part is suppressed. The second reason is that (b₁) since philosophy and politics consist of different types of knowledge, whoever becomes a ruler in Kallipolis must acquire both types of knowledge, namely, knowledge of the Good and practical knowledge and experience about politics. Hence, (c₁) the instance of compulsion in T2 is not only about coercing or bending the will of the philosopher to accept a life he does not want, but also to pursue knowledge and studies knowledge and studies, including practical training, he will not freely choose to undertake. Given reasons (a₁)-(c₁), I share the view of Vasiliou that “[in] a situation where justice did not demand that the philosophers rule (e.g. in some situation where they did not owe their education and training to the city...it is plausible to think that this practical training would be unnecessary to them qua philosophers.”²⁹

Now, in connection with the second proviso, Socrates says at *Rep.*, 519c4-7 that without some sort of compulsion the founding of Kallipolis will be a hopeless aspiration because the philosophers “will not act, thinking that they had settled while still alive in the faraway Isles of the Blessed.”³⁰ The next passage which follows is that when the philosophers are able to reach the intelligible realm and can grasp the Good, “we mustn’t allow them to do what they’re allowed to do today,” i.e. philosophise (*Rep.*, 519c9-d1). The imperative language

used in this last passage corroborates what Socrates says in T2. From the foregoing, we have reasons to believe that the only option the philosophers have is either they rule and philosophise or forfeit the opportunity to philosophise. We should remind ourselves that while this condition works against the philosophers, it is a way Plato desires to generate his ideal political leaders, i.e. rulers who despise ruling.

To summarise this section, recall that Plato wants to demonstrate the utility of philosophy for the active political life, and passage T2 strongly supports this view: the best guardians in Book III do not qualify to rule until they gain philosophic wisdom; without philosophic wisdom, they may not be different from ordinary politicians who love to rule for the sake of the acquisition of material wealth and honours. At the end of Book III, Socrates legislates to prevent the best guardians from acquiring private property beyond what is wholly necessary (*Rep.*, 416d3-417b7). Certainly, Plato believes that political problems are essentially moral problems, and thus tackling them requires moral solutions. One such moral solution is to promote the philosophic life. Thus, in defending his proposal in T2, one of Plato’s conclusions is that his rulers are “those who have other honours than political ones, and a better life as well” (*Rep.*, 521b7-9). Plato’s repetition of this at *Rep.*, 540d3-e3 is his way of drawing our attention to the novelty of his proposal that the philosophic life can guarantee a fevered polis true happiness. In the last section, I try to show that the education of the potential philosopher-rulers is mainly to achieve the product of the coincidence; that the compulsion in the conception of philosophical rulership explains comprehensively the compulsion in the education required for it.

4. ACHIEVING THE PRODUCT OF THE COINCIDENCE

As we saw in Section 2, Vasiliou attempts to argue that the philosophers will be morally motivated to rule given their education and habituation. Vasiliou rightly denies that knowledge of the Good does anything to motivate the rulers to philosophise. While I agree with him on this point, I disagree that the guardians' educational system does anything to morally motivate them to rule. I have argued for this claim above. In this section, my goal is to show that Plato conceives the guardians' education to achieve the products of the coincidence of philosophy and politics. Against Vasiliou's position, I hope to demonstrate that instead of the future guardians' education generating rulers who are morally motivated to rule, it rather does the opposite.

Now, Plato looks out for two main natural qualities in children who are over the age of ten years: philosophical temperament and public-spiritedness. The traits of a philosophical temperament include a love for learning to the highest level, telling the truth, a good memory, and youthful passion (*Rep.*, 485a4-487a; 503c2-d4), and public-spiritedness requires that the potential philosopher-rulers must be those who appear to us on observation to be most likely to devote their lives to the service of the polis, and who are never prepared to act against the polis (*Rep.*, 413c2-d3). I observe that the two main natural qualities are consistent with the demand of the first proviso in **T2**: nurturing public-spiritedness and a philosophical nature to attain the product of the coincidence. To understand how Socrates seeks to nurture rulers who despise ruling, let us pay close attention to Plato's psychology. Consider this passage in Book XI:

T3: ...when the entire soul follows the philosophic part, and there is no civil war (στασιαζούσης) in it, each part does its own work exclusively and is just, and in particular, it enjoys its own pleasures, the best and truest pleasure possible for it. But when one of the other parts gains control, it won't be able to secure its own pleasure and will compel the other (ἀναγκάζειν ἄλλοτριαν) parts to pursue an alien and untrue pleasure. And aren't the parts that are most distant from philosophy and reason the ones most likely to do this sort of compelling? [Glaucon] They are more likely (*Rep.*, 586e3-587a8).

The essential idea here is that for Plato psychic happiness is psychic health. That is, there is an inherent conflict among the parts of the soul such that the entire soul's happiness supervenes on the competitive strength of the philosophic part to dominate the competitive strengths of the spirited and appetitive parts (see also *Rep.*, 444b-445b5). In Book IV, the appetitive part is said to be the rebellious part and "is by nature suited to be a slave" (*Rep.*, 444b1-7); it coerces the spirited part to engage in flattery and become a slave, accustoming it from youth on to being insulted for the sake of the money needed to satisfy its insatiable desires (*Rep.*, 590b4-10). So, in discussing the instance of compulsion in Plato's concept of education, we are particularly interested in how the educator hopes to secure the alliance between the philosophic part and the spirited part against the appetitive part in the potential philosopher-rulers in conditions of the standard sense of compulsion. I discuss this in the light of the anabatic and the katabatic phases of the future philosopher-rulers' education.

4.1 COMPELLED TO ASCEND: THE ANABASIS

I observe that the future philosopher-rulers' education is two-phased: the anabatic phase and the katabatic phase. I use the anabatic phase to mean the intellectual journey toward grasping the Good and all subjects that aid in this enterprise. This phase encompasses preliminary, scientific, and dialectic studies. The preliminary studies include literature, music, arts, and gymnastics. Socrates says education is "not a matter of tossing a coin, but turning a soul from a day that is a kind of night to the true day—the ascent to what is (τοῦ ὄντος οὕσαν ἐπάνοδον), which we say is true philosophy...just as some are said to have gone up (ἀνάξει) from Hades to the gods" (*Rep.*, 521b10-c6). This phase is primarily meant to nurture the rational part, with the help of the spirited part, to rule the entire soul. In describing their alliance, Socrates and Glaucon agree on the following:

T4: A mixture of music and poetry, on the one hand, and physical training, on the other, makes the two parts harmonious, stretching and nurturing the rational part with fine words and learning, relaxing the spirited part through soothing stories, and making it gentle by means of harmony and rhythm. And these two parts, having been nurtured in this way, and having truly learned their own roles and been educated in them, will govern the appetitive part, which is the largest part in each person's soul and is by nature the most insatiable for money. They will watch over it to see that it isn't filled with the so-called pleasures of the body and that it doesn't become too big and strong that it no longer does its own work but at-

tempts to enslave and rule over the classes it isn't fitted to rule, thereby overturning everyone's whole life... And it is because of the spirited part, I suppose, that we call a single person courageous, namely, when it preserves through pains and pleasures the declarations of reason about what is to be feared and what isn't (*Rep.*, 441e7-442b2; cf. *Rep.*, 429b-c).

Harmony (ἁρμονία) between the two parts is fundamental for the unity of the soul and its strength of existence. It is important to bear in mind that this harmony is achieved in conditions of compulsion. Consider these other two passages:

T5: It is our task as founders, then, to compel (ἀναγκάσαι) the best natures to reach the study we said before is the most important, namely, to make the ascent and see the good. But when they've made it and looked sufficiently enough, we mustn't allow them to do as they're allowed to do today [i.e.] to stay there and refuse to go down again (πάλιν καταβαίνειν) to the prisoners in the cave and share their labours and honours, whether they are of less worth or of greater (*Rep.*, 519c6-d5).

Socrates repeats the prescription, this time putting great emphasis on surviving tests in practical matters:

T6: Then, at the age of fifty, those who've survived the tests and been successful both in practical matters and in the sciences must be led to the goal and compelled (ἀναγκαστέον) to lift up the radiant light of their souls to what itself provides light for everything [the Good].

And once they’ve seen the good itself, they must each, in turn, put the city, its citizens, and themselves in order, using it as their model (*Rep.*, 540a3-b4).

Now, the crucial question is this: if philosophers have the prior motivation to philosophise, why are they being compelled to grasp the Good? I suggest the following answer: I think that the instances of compulsion in **T5** and **T6** fall under the domain of non-standard compulsion, relative to the education of the philosophic part. As repeatedly mentioned, the educator aims to nurture the philosophic part to be in a position to take a leading role among the parts of the soul. In doing so, the educator nurtures a potential philosopher but thereby also a future political leader. If the philosopher has the prior motivation to philosophise, then the educator will not be working against this existing motivation to grasp the Good, but will rather be helping it to take full effect. In that case, the would-be philosophers will not disapprove of being compelled to grasp the Good. We can observe a non-standard sense of compulsion as applicable here: the would-be philosophers with prior motivation to philosophise will not object to their being compelled by their educators. Notice that grasping the Good as such involves painful intellectual modus and motivation may not be enough to propel the would-be philosopher (see below). However, the non-standard senses of compulsion in **T5** and **T6** do not pose any serious threat to the potential philosopher.

On the contrary, I think the real victims of a standard sense of compulsion during the anabatic phase are the appetitive and spirited parts. For instance, the gains of both psychic parts are compromised if any of them becomes the victor and directs the entire soul to rule either for the sake of honour and glory or

the material benefits, which was traditionally measured in terms of the precious loot or spoils one could grab in a war in Greek culture. We saw earlier that the best guardians, in whom public-spiritedness is more forceful, are prevented from ruling. The spirited part is coerced to serve the philosophic part in terms of preserving through pains and pleasures the declarations of reason about what is to be feared and what is not. Its role involves ensuring that the entire soul does not become a “victim of compulsion”, namely, “those whom pain or suffering causes to change their mind”. The victims of compulsion are compared to “victims of magic...who change their mind because they are under the spell of pleasure or fear” (*Rep.*, 413b1-d5). Socrates describes this at length:

T7: We must subject them to labours, pains, and contests in which we can watch for these traits. Then we must also set up a competition for the third way in which people are deprived of their convictions, namely, magic. Like those who lead colts into noise and tumult to see if they’re afraid, we must expose our young people to fears and pleasures, testing them more thoroughly than gold is tested by fire. If someone is hard to put under a spell, is apparently gracious in everything, is a good guardian of himself and the music and poetry he has learned, and if he always shows himself to be rhythmical and harmonious, then he is the best person both for himself and for the city. Anyone who is tested in this way as a child, youth, and adult, and always comes out of it untainted, is to be made a ruler as well as a guardian.... But anyone who fails to prove himself in this way is to be rejected. (*Rep.*, 413c5-414a).³¹

This indicates clearly that those who are genuinely courageous are those who will survive the tests. In other words, the survivors of the tests are those who cannot be forced to change their conviction to pursue pleasures other than those which promote the wellbeing of their entire soul and the polis. That is, the strong alliance between the spirited and the philosophic parts makes the entire soul incoercible to the pursuit of pleasures that lead it into destruction. We now know that in the potential philosopher-rulers the erotic desire of the appetitive part is tamed: it must not be able to coerce and benumb both the spirited and philosophic parts to lead them to destruction (*Rep.*, 589d4-590a2); the spirited part is equally suppressed and cannot align with the appetitive part to pursue reputational goods at the expense of the entire soul. Socrates says that one who is committed to satisfying the desires of the spirited part becomes envious so much so that his love of victory makes him violent so that he pursues the satisfaction of his anger and his desires for honours and victories without calculation and understanding (*Rep.*, 586c5-d2). The philosophic part has been sharpened to take control of the entire soul.

So far, I have tried to show that it is the spirited part that must endure unwelcoming pains under this phase to support the convictions of the philosophic part. We also noted, that even if the philosophic part has the prior motivation to grasp the Good, and the intellectual pleasure of this pursuit is self-edifying, it equally endures pain during this phase, as I mentioned earlier. The cave allegory provides a semblance of the pain. Socrates describes it:

T8: When one of them was freed and suddenly compelled (ἀναγκαστέον) to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up toward the light, he'd be pained and dazzled

and unable to see the things whose shadows he'd seen before.... And if someone compelled him to look at the light itself, wouldn't his eyes hurt, and wouldn't he turn round and flee towards the things he's able to see...? And if someone dragged him away from there by force, up the rough, steep path, and didn't let him go until he had dragged him into the sunlight, wouldn't he be pained and irritated at being treated that way? And when he came into the light, with the sun filling his eyes, wouldn't he be unable to see a single one of the things now said to be true? (*Rep.*, 515c6-e)

As far as I know, there is no justification in the *Republic* for claiming that Plato identifies dialectics with the Socratic elenchus. Nonetheless, even if the pains associated with both ways of acquiring philosophical knowledge are not identical, they seem similar. For instance, in the *Theaetetus*, the followers of Socrates “suffer the pains of labour and are filled day and night with distress” (*Tht.* 151a). Unlike the midwife, Socrates claims that with his art he can assuage the pains. Similarly, Socrates secures the assent of Adeimantus that it is the nature of the real lover of learning to struggle toward what is; the process involves bearing pain. And the lover is “relieved from the pains of giving birth” after the soul has had intercourse with that which is and begotten understanding and truth and is intellectually nourished (*Rep.*, 490b). Thus, release from the pains of labour does come to the philosopher, but not until the end of the anabatic process, where he is in touch with the true being or the Good itself. But we have seen that both the spirited and philosophic parts endure pain and other inconveniences, but the chief difference is that the pain the latter goes

through is something peculiar to the nature of philosophy, and it is worth bearing; it is the spirited part which is coerced into enduring pain and assisting in studies which are downright irrelevant to its desire.

4.2 COMPELLED TO DESCEND: THE KATABASIS

The situation is completely different for the philosophic part during the katabatic phase. I use the katabatic phase to refer roughly to all the subjects pursued to acquire practical knowledge and experience in the cave.³² As I mentioned earlier, the anabatic phase involves subjects that are of practical purposes, including music and gymnastics. But the key point is that the anabatic phase aims at theoretical knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the Good. In the katabatic phase, they are compelled to return to continue with their practical education before they cannot become fully-fledged philosopher-rulers. They are to acquire practical knowledge and experience to be able to rule. Consider this passage:

T9: [After] someone continuously, strenuously, and exclusively devotes himself to participation in arguments, exercising himself in them just as he did in the bodily physical training...you must make them go down (καταβιβαστέοι) into the cave again (πάλιν), and compel (ἀναγκαστέοι) them to take command in matters of war and occupy the other offices suitable to young people, so that they won’t be inferior to the others in experience (ἐμπειρία). But in this, too, they must be tested to see whether they’ll remain steadfast when they’re pulled this way or that or shift their ground (*Rep.*, 539d8-540a1).

Here, I agree with scholars, including Klosko, Smith, and Vasilious, who observe that the future philosopher-rulers do not return to the cave directly to rule.³³ Instead, they must, first, continue to acquire practical knowledge and experience in political matters for fifteen years before, second, they are allowed to rule in Kallipolis. Under this phase, it is the philosophical part that is compelled to pursue studies it will not willingly prefer to study. Not only is the philosophical part compelled to study courses it does not naturally prefer, but also it must endure other inconveniences in the cave. We are told that the liberated prisoner is received in the cave under conditions of insecurity and violence. From *Rep.*, 5163e3-517a6, Socrates chronicles the fate of the liberated prisoner in the cave: upon his return, he must recover his eyesight while his vision remains dim, and the adjustment would not be quick. Consequently, he will be ridiculed by the shackled prisoners for ruining his eyes in his journey upward. Second, he may be put to death should he try to free them and lead them upward. Compelling the philosophers to study subjects they will not freely study and the inconveniences they will face in the cave, including the fact that they may be put to death, specify some of the reasons they will be unwilling to share in the labour of ruling.

5. CONCLUSION AND SOME REFLECTIONS

Suggested solutions to the ‘compulsion problem’ include the claim that the philosophers care for the wellbeing of their souls and they will not do anything to corrupt it; hence, they will accept being commanded to rule. Others have also suggested that the

philosophers will be morally motivated to rule, given their education and habituation. Any of these solutions, I have argued, seems to undermine the full force of the just law. In my interpretation, I have shown that Plato uses education and the law to generate rulers who despise ruling; that the law only corroborates the effort of the guardians' education to generate such leaders. To show this, I examined the instances of the compulsion in Plato's concept of philosophical rulership and the education required for it. I then argued that there is a strong conceptual link among the instances of the compulsion in Plato's concept of philosophical rulership, education for the guardians, and the demands of the just law. Plato's concept of political leadership presupposes his use of coercion to generate his ideal political leaders, i.e. leaders who despise ruling. Philosophers become the plausible candidates, given their prior commitment to pursuing metaphysical intelligibles. The coercion is evinced in how the philosophers are compelled to return to the cave to pursue studies they will not freely undertake and, more importantly, take up leadership role, something they despise. Accordingly, I think that the just law is an additional supervisory and regulatory mechanism to ensure that the philosophers undertake something they despise. In essence, the just law stands in relation with Plato's concept of philosophical rulership and the education required for it to generate his ideal political leaders.

This returns us to the question as to whether Socrates commits injustice against the philosophers by compelling them to return to the cave to continue studying politics and rule subsequently.

We may be cautious to accuse Socrates of committing injustice against the philosophers by compelling them to rule. Socrates

does not deny them the opportunity to philosophise: they will spend most of their time with philosophy and rule only as something necessary. Getting the ample time to philosophise is precisely what Socrates means when he says that he has found a better life than ruling for the philosopher-rulers (*Rep.*, 520d-521a3). If so, can we absolve Socrates of the criticism that he commits an injustice against the philosophers? I doubt. If it were enough for Socrates that the philosophers are morally motivated to rule or that they care about the purity of their souls, and so they will obey the just command to rule, he would not have repeatedly mentioned that they must be compelled to rule. The offshoot is that he does not count on their obedience so much; otherwise, the philosophers could decline to rule and decide to dwell in the Isles of the Blessed while living in Kallipolis. But they lack the autonomy to make such a decision: they will simply be barred from practising philosophy in Kallipolis. Plato's strong stance on the compulsion is ostensibly consistent with the notion of compulsion, together with its essential condition, I imputed to him.

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Notes

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¹ Translations from the *Republic* are based on Grube in Cooper 1997, and the Greek text is the edition of Slings 2003 and Burnet 1902.

² A sample of scholarship on the ‘compulsion problem’ includes Buckels 2012; Vernezze 1992; Smith 2010; Brown 2000; Vasilioiu 2015. Other contributions include Reeve 2007; Barney 2008; Shields 2007; Annas 1981; and Brickhouse 1981. For the details of other contributions, see Buckels (in his work cited here).

³ Vasilioiu 2015; Sheffield (forthcoming). My paper benefits greatly from Vasilioiu’s work, and I share some of his conclusions about this problem. However, I disagree with his definite solution to the problem.

⁴ I shall offer a detailed analysis of these proposed solutions to the ‘compulsion problem’ in Section 2.

⁵ What I mean by a standard sense of compulsion will be explained in the next section. Examples of a non-standard sense of compulsion are the following: I certainly would not go for dental treatment and would avoid all that it entails unless I regard receiving such treatment as necessary. But my going to the dentist does not entail that my free will has in any way been impaired. Also, and to use Audi’s example, a particular worker might think that it would be good for his too lenient employer to threaten him with dismissal just so he will feel compelled to finish a given project; if the employer does so, the employee might not disapprove of it (Audi 1974, 7).

⁶ The four main senses of the substantive ἀνάγκη in Liddell and Scott’s *A Greek-English Lexicon* are ‘force’, ‘constraint’, ‘necessity’, and ‘compulsion exerted by a superior’.

⁷ Buckels op. cit., 66 (n. 12).

⁸ Few lines after passage T1, Socrates asks: “Can you name any life that despises political rule besides that of the true philosopher?” And Glaucon answers in the negative: “No, by god, I can’t.” Socrates further

elaborates that “But surely it is those who are not lovers of ruling who must rule, for if they don’t, the lovers of it, who are rivals, will fight over it” (*Rep.*, 521b1-6). The priority Socrates gives to the polis over the philosophers’ interest seeks to undermine this further reason. That is, here Socrates creates the impression that it will benefit the philosophers to rule for their own sake. I find this reason unconvincing.

⁹ See Audi op. cit., 7-8.

¹⁰ Annas 1981, 267.

¹¹ This is not to say that knowledge of the Good necessarily motivates them to accept to rule. On this, I share Vasiliou’s view that “given that the one thing that knowledge of the Forms does motivate one to do is to *continue* to contemplate them, knowledge of the Forms motivates the philosophers *not* to rule.” Vasiliou op. cit., 42. Cf. Cooper 1977, Irwin 1977, and Kraut 1992. For a discussion of whether or not the philosophers will sacrifice their self-interest for justice, see Mahoney 1992.

¹² Sheffield defends this position more forcefully.

¹³ Vernezze 1992:331. For a discussion of the differences in the philosophers’ orientation, see Trabattani 2016:265-266 and also Vasiliou (in the work cited here).

¹⁴ For a discussion of the differences in the philosophers’ orientation, see Trabattani 2016, 265-266 and also Vasiliou (in the work cited here)

¹⁵ Despite Socrates’ political and military career, as well as his philosophical evangelism, he became materially poor. In the *Apology*, Socrates admits that his divine mission “has kept me too busy to do much either in politics or in my own affairs”, and he asks his fellow-Athenians whether it seems “human that I should have neglected my own affairs and endured the humiliation of allowing my family to be neglected for these years, while I busied myself all the time on your behalf...?” (*Apol.*, 23a9-c2; 31b1-4). Kraut 1992:318.

¹⁶ Buckels op. cit. 4

¹⁷ As cited in Buckels, *Ibid.* 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 16.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 17.

²⁰ I owe this point to Sheffield.

²¹ Buckels op. cit., 77.

²² *Ibid.* 68.

²³ Vasiliou op. cit., 50.

²⁴ Smith 2010, 88.

²⁵ Vasiliou 2015, 66-67.

²⁶ Sheffield *ibid.*, 34.

²⁷ I thank the reviewer for pointing out this passage to me.

²⁸ Molchanov (unpublished)

²⁹ *Ibid.* 8.

³⁰ Vasiliou op. cit., 51.

³¹ On this point, I share the following view of Vasiliou op. cit., 48: “we should understand ‘will not act’ quite literally: they will not be interested in or

care about doing anything in the ordinary world... Although Socrates is being playful, the point of the Isles of the Blessed” remark is quite serious; as far as the philosophers (knowers of the Forms) are concerned, they have arrived at their final destination: knowledge. And now the only thing left to ‘do’, in a sense, is to contemplate. Socrates is accusing these philosophers of having made a mistake, which is indeed caused by the fact that they have achieved knowledge of the Forms. They are confused about where they are; they think they are ‘dead’ and have gone to the afterlife, although they are in fact still embodied and alive.”

³² Vasiliou derives the source of his moral motivation thesis from this passage. He writes: “The passage makes it clear that what determines how successful this training is—i.e. how strong their moral motivation remains—is their ‘nature and upbringing’. The topic under consideration is justifiably considered *moral motivation*, for the beliefs that have been inculcated are true beliefs about right and wrong, virtuous and ‘vicious’ (i.e. contrary to virtue) actions” Vasiliou op. cit., p. 65. Vasiliou anticipates the objection that one worry is that this passage is about ‘civic’ courage, and “[once] the philosophers are in the picture, it is they who will have genuine courage (via their knowledge of the Forms), and so, one might think, the sort of habituation and testing for the ‘preservation’ of beliefs will no longer be necessary.” *Ibid.* I have two worries here. First, I find it hard to believe that knowledge of the Good makes the philosophers courageous. There is no textual evidence to support it. I have argued in Section 3 that the distinction between the auxiliary and the best guardians is precisely based on who can protect the polis; that the best guardians are courageous before they become philosophers. Second, I do not deny that the education of the philosophers will contribute to their moral rectitude. But passage T7 is more about how the spirited part is coerced into serving the rational part than how the future rulers will become morally motivated to rule. Since the desire to rule the material world is peculiar to the spirited and appetitive parts, especially given its material rewards and honours, the passage appears to me to show how Plato intends to blunt such spirited and appetitive impulses.

³³ Vernezze is among the few scholars who pay attention to this phase of the future philosopher-rulers’ education, arguing that the compulsion of the katabatic phase at least is “a planned stage of their development (1992:347 (n.25)). The details of my exposition of this phase, however, differ from that of Vernezze.

³⁴ See Klosko 2006, 174-175; Smith 2000, 157; Vasiliou op. cit., 64-65.

