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Plato's Theory of Social Justice in Republic II-IV

Edward Nichols Lee
University of California - San Diego, enicholslee@gmail.com

Edward N. Lee San Fran. St
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IN REPUBLIC II-IV

"Actions speak louder than words."

(Old saying)

After his long construction of a "city in speech" throughout Books II-IV of the Republic, Plato finally presents, as his long sought-for definition of social justice, the enigmatic and ambiguous formula, "each one doing his own." My main aim in this paper will be to search out the sense that he has established for that definition: to show how he thinks he has established (by the time he unveils it) that that unlikely formula is in fact a reasonable definition of social justice, and to analyze what it means (Sections I-III). Once we are clear about that, I believe, it will also be clear that Plato's theory of justice has its primary sources in sophistic thinking, and, in particular, in the contractarian approach to political philosophy. The very suggestion may well seem bizarre, since Socrates' entire construction is given as a massive reply precisely to Glaucon's contractarian story early in Republic II, but I shall argue that Plato's theory is an extended development of and from Sophistic contractarian social theory - not a sheer repudiation of it nor an autonomous alternative to it (Section IV). One fringe benefit of this reading will be that it lets us make very clear the force of Plato's distinction between justice and temperance - a distinction that many interpreters have not been able to salvage at all, let alone to make clear (Section V).

Before embarking, I must emphasize the restricted nature of my theme. Much of Plato's theory in Books II-IV was, doubtless, aimed at preparing the way for, or at making contact with, his subsequent, internalized theory of personal justice as psychic harmony - the theory that then bears the burden of his argument that "justice pays." (In Plato's own metaphor, the study of the "large letters" is undertaken for the sake of getting at the "small letters.") True as this is, we cannot explain Books II-IV merely by the end result they aim at achieving. Plato's project in the Republic is rather like someone tunneling through a mountain by drilling in from both sides at once toward a meeting place somewhere in the middle: each side does have to know where the other side is headed, but each must also proceed on its own terms. The theory of social justice developed in Books II-IV must make sense as a theory of

social justice - one that might stand alone even if it were not to be projected subsequently onto the "smaller letters." I shall try to show reason to believe (from the claims Plato makes in the "discovery passage" and especially from the discrepancy between the discovering of justice and the discovering of the other virtues there) that Plato thought his definition of justice had its ground in the role that it had played throughout the entire construction undertaken in Republic II-IV. At any rate, my present concern is solely with the side of Plato's "drilling operation" that sets out his theory of social justice; its relevance to his theory of psychic justice lies outside the present paper's limits.

I

Our argument begins where Plato ends, with his "discovery" of the definition for justice at Rep. 427-434. The imagery of that familiar passage is wonderfully vivid and concrete. Plato urges us to peer at his completed model city and to search out the site of all the virtues in it; much as if it were one of those puzzle pictures where we try to find the faces hidden in the branches of the bushes, we are enjoined to "look" and to try to "find" or "see" just "where," where "in it," each of the virtues that we seek is seated or "resides." The imagery is a most effective expository device - but of course cannot justify the content of the definitions it is used to bring forth. (Neither, it seems to me, does Plato claim any such demonstrative cogency for it; his "method of residues" or the argument by elimination belong to his machinery for discovering - i.e. uncovering or disclosing - his views, and not to the grounds for their justification.) For our present purposes, however, the important fact about Plato's method for disclosing his definitions of the virtues is the way in which it breaks down in the key case of justice. Each of the other three virtues is discovered to reside somewhere "in" the completed city. Each turns out to "reside" there in importantly different ways - some in a specific "part" of the city (428E, 429B, 431E) and temperance diffused throughout the whole (432A) - but the method works for all three: all are features of the city that prove "visible" somewhere in its finished form. But not so justice. To be sure, when Plato comes to the case of justice he continues and even intensifies his metaphor of searching and peering, his urgings to look sharply and not let the prey escape (432B7-C6) and his mock-somber words about the shadowed darkness of its lurking place (C7-9). Yet none of this can mask the fact that he does not, in the end, find justice

to be visible, like the others, in the finished city. Instead, as he abruptly comes to "realize," it is not at all to be found on the same terms as they were: it is not something visible only in the finally completed city, but has been right before them all along, all through the process of constructing the city, "right from the beginning" (432D7, 433A1). My fundamental thesis will be that this discrepancy between the "finding" of justice and the finding of the other political virtues is the key to the Republic's doctrine of political justice. We shall return in due course to an attempt to explain what lies behind this "discrepancy" (in Section IV below), but first we need to look at some details of Plato's exposition in Books II-IV.

When Plato does at last unveil his definition of justice, he gives us the following:

> What we laid down at the start as a general requirement when we were founding the polis, this, or some form of it, is justice. For we did lay down, and often stated, if you recall, that every single individual ought to engage in that single social function for which his own nature is best suited. (433A1-6)

The principle of justice stated here, in these unlikely terms, in fact involves several distinguishable components, and all have indeed been emphasized throughout Plato's earlier account of the city (though, as we shall see, the commentators tend to notice only a portion of its complex content). We shall have to distinguish some further aspects of this principle of justice (see Section III below) but for the present we need mention only three. These I shall dub (A) the Uniqueness Requirement: that each man should do one and only one job; (B) the Fittedness Requirement: that that job should be the one for which each is best naturally suited; and (C) the Service Requirement: that each individual should contribute through his job to the common good of the society as a whole. Most commentators see a reference to the first two in 433A (citing such passages as 370A-C, 395B-C and 397E), but the third one, too, is essential, even if, like so much else in Plato's treatment of justice, it is perhaps so obvious as to escape attention. It is indicated in the very text of 433A by Plato's reference to the "one job" in question for each man as his hen...ton peri ten polin: his "one social service in the state" (Shorey), "one function in the community" (Cornford), or the like. Although it has perhaps not "oftentimes" been referred to earlier, this general principle of service to the polis has indeed been a guiding principle throughout the construction.

It was made forcefully explicit on at least one important occasion, and a close look at an unnoticed detail of that occasion will help shed light upon the principles of justice that have in fact been "right before our eyes from the start." The passage I have in mind is Socrates' well-known reply (at 420B-421C) when Adeimantus complains that no particularly "happy" lot has been contrived for the Guardians of the polis. The basic aim of any polis, Socrates answers, is not the happiness or good of any part within it, but the common good of the whole. His account of that principle need not concern us now. Instead it is important to observe the way that Socrates refers to the principle when raising it in his reply: confronted with Adeimantus' "charges" and asked how he will "defend" himself (420B1; cf. 419A2), he answers that "by following the same path we shall, I think, find what must be said." But by what right does he refer to it as "the same path"? Although some commentators have remarked on the poetic word that Plato uses here for "path," I know of none who have dealt with his reference to the path in question as "the same." Yet it must be the "same" one, obviously enough, as they have been following up to that point - following right from the start. Thus they must all along (so Socrates' remark implies) have been designing a city in which each member's functioning subserves the good of all the others and (thereby) serves the common good of the whole. As far as I have been able to find, this principle of contribution to a common good for the whole city has not in fact been stated explicitly before 420-421. (It is given subsequently, at 466A, and, most importantly and adequately, at 519E-520A, when Plato argues that his philosopher-king should return to the cave to rule - but not before 420-421.) Nonetheless, it can fairly easily be seen to have been one of Plato's basic constructive principles "from the very start." For what already constitutes his "minimal city" of 369B-D as in fact a "city" is the awareness, on the part of each and every one of its members (all four or five of them!), that they are associated with one another in it - each one "calling upon" or "making use of" each other member's roles or skills (369C1-2) - for their mutual advantage: in that "minimal city,"

> each one gives over to each other one (if he does give over anything at all) or takes over from each other one, because each supposes that to do so is better for himself. (369C6-7)

Plato's fundamental point here at the very start of his construction is that each and every member's needs must be advanced by the working together of the

"congregation" (synoikia). What makes their elementary city a "city" is not the mere diversity of the labor collected in it, but rather their sharing of that labor in the shared awareness that so doing is a means to every member's satisfying his, and every other member's, fundamental needs. It is not as though one needed, in order to constitute a city, merely to have different forms of skill and labor gathered together in it - as though what made it a "city" were the mere presence in it of a variety of functions. What is essential to the city, and indeed constitutive of it, is rather the reciprocal inter-relatedness of these diverse functions. The "minimal city" of 369B-D is simply one in which this shared reciprocation is extremely obvious. At the same time, just because it is so very small and simple a city or political whole, it is perhaps at the same time not so obvious that this reciprocity, as a means of achieving a common good for all concerned, is in fact operating as a "constitutive principle" of its wholeness. (The unaided eye can take in groups of four or five as wholes of some kind at a single glance!) Only as the city becomes larger and more complex does this principle emerge into explicitness as a controlling factor in its design and operation. That is what happens at 420B. Socrates is perfectly justified, however, in speaking of the principle that he enunciates there as the "same path" he has been following all along, for it has been, even if only implicitly, a controlling factor of his construction "from the very beginning." By the same token, Plato is quite justified when he claims later on (in the discovery passage at 432D-433A) that the "service requirement" which we found incorporated in his definition of political justice has been in front of the reader "all along - from the very beginning" - even if it has until then "escaped them" (433 E2-3) that it was there all along and was indeed functioning as part of the principle of justice.

We shall soon see how scrupulously Plato follows out that principle or "path" in his evolving construction of the city. It seems well to pause first to emphasize two implications of Plato's little-noticed reference (at 420B2) to the path in question as "the same one." For one, the reference should make it clear - lest any reader be taken in by Socrates' "surprise" about the sudden "turning up" of justice at 432B-E (as if the old man had actually simply let his city "grow" and were peering at the final product, puzzled and yet hopeful, wondering where within it justice might possibly be) - that his entire account of the basic structure of the city was deliberately governed

from the start by definite, although implicit, requirements - the very ones that are to be "discovered" later as the content of justice. Second - and even more important - it should make it clear that those requirements are not confined to his principle of one man-one job (and that one job "his own") but also include the mutual adjustment of these jobs to one another to bring about a shared resultant good. That is, in terms of our earlier itemization of the elements of his definition of justice, his principle of justice requires not only (A) and (B) but also (C). Indeed, this last requirement is essential to reading the Republic as an account of social or political justice at all. Taken alone, the first two principles might conceivably be read as endorsing some radically (even if ridiculously) apolitical or antipolitical program of private personal self-fulfillment. On an adequately narrow view of each one "doing his own," it might look like an invitation to an anarchic dispersal of individual life careers, with everyone "doing his own thing."[1] We would then have individuals setting off in separate search of fulfillment - restricted, let us grant, by the requirement that they not encroach, in seeking their own, on anybody else's seeking his own, but still omitting the requirement that is, on Plato's account, absolutely central to the political character of the quest: that the search be made in concert with others, in and through the institutions of the polis. That requirement is made explicit in the statement of the principle of justice at 433A5-6; for as that statement makes clear, the one thing of each man's "own" that justice stipulates that he "do" is his one

1. The very formula that Plato uses for his definition of justice can refer to totally apolitical behavior. Thus at Rep. 370A4 it means seeing to one's own needs all by oneself and neither giving help to others nor accepting it from them (see also note 4 below on this passage). Again, at 496D6 (the philosopher crouching behind a wall so as to keep a low profile) it means tending to one's own affairs and ignoring everybody else's (D6 ta hautou pratton there contrasting with C8 ta ton poleon prattei). These "isolationist" passages thus prove equivalent to each person's "doing whatever he pleases," in contrast to serving the polis (cf. 520A3-4 and context). In all these cases, to be sure, context provides essential help in bringing out the asocial, anti-political reading of Plato's phrase. Nonetheless, the very possibility of such uses of it helps remind us of the amount of elipsis that Plato's formula involves, and the amount of expansion of it that we may require in order to understand its force. (For further discussion of Plato's use of ta hautou **prattein**, see also A.W.H. Adkins, "Polupragmosune and 'Minding One's Own Business'," Classical Philology, 71 [1976], pp. 301,ff.)

contribution to the social system that he lives in - his hen ton peri ten polin.

To see how scrupulously Plato adheres to the Service principle, it will be useful to make a rapid review of his construction of the city. We have worked backward from the discovery passage at 433-434, following its backward references through 420B right to the beginning of Plato's exposition. We shall now move forward from that beginning to bring into relief the thoroughgoing functional rationale of Plato's city. By this means, the way may be prepared for a clearer grasp of Plato's theory of social justice, and for a clearer reading of the discovery passage.

II

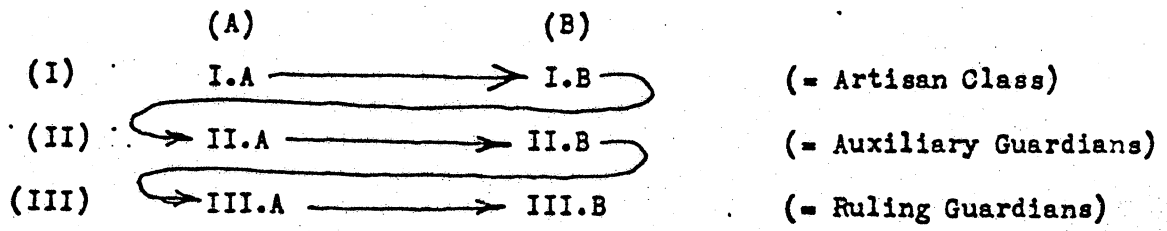
Though the bulk of Plato's lengthy exposition in II-IV is given over to the selection and education of the Guardians, we can best expose the underlying structure of his theory by ignoring most of that and attempting to disclose the structural rationale of the polis as a practical solution to a human problem, locating in his account both the natural components that create the problem (see column A.1 of Figure I on the next page) and those that contribute to its solution (column B.1). Such an analysis shows Plato's view to be that the polis is a kind of human contrivance - the practical solution for a problem caused by certain features of our human nature and our natural environment. It is a solution made possible by certain facts about human nature, but, for all that, Plato's view falls far short - and very carefully falls short - of saying simply that we are "by nature" political animals, or that our nature "necessitates" that we should be so.[2] As we shall see, the various offices of his polis turn out to have both a "functional" and a "natural" ground, and neither one stands alone, though a certain priority attaches to the functional line of justification. Books II-IV of the Republic - despite their leisurely pace and wide-ranging subject matter, and despite

2. Plato's careful avoidance of "necessity"-talk is perhaps part of his sotto voce rebuttal to Glaucon's opening speech, and in particular to his view that life in a just society is chosen hos anankaion all' oukh hos agathon (358C3-4). At the same time, his strategy may also have been intended to avoid the sort of Sophistic employment of necessity-talk that one finds in the Anonymus Iamblichi (cf. DK.II, 402.24-30, and A. T. Cole's discussion of this tract, HSCP, 65 [1961], pp. 127-163).

Figure I: (cf. section II of paper)

	A. PROBLEM		B. SOLUTION	
	1. Natural Basis of Problem	2. Statement of Problem	1. Natural Basis of Solution	2. Statement of Solution
(I)	As mortal and appetitive animals, men have many different needs.	These needs must be satisfied in order for men to survive, let alone flourish.	a) Different men have different talents; b) different jobs impose different schedules; c) labor takes time and skill.	Men pool their talents and labor by reciprocal exchange of goods and services in a context of job specialization (adopted for the sake of efficiency, and excellence of quality).
(II)	Once needs are satisfied, men have wants (also based in their appetitive nature), and these wants have no natural limitations.	Pursuit of satisfaction for these unlimited wants leads to conflicts and thus to war.	Men of spirit are available to specialize in the business of war (offensive and defensive)	Set up a Guardian Class to function both (a) as an army (vs. external enemies) -- for which they must be fierce -- and (b) as a Police force (against internal enemies) -- for which they must be gentle.
(III)	Both fierceness and gentleness are needed in the Guardians (see II.B.2), yet these are opposed characteristics.	To harmonize or reconcile these opposed traits within a stable character structure, very careful education is needed.	Men of special wisdom can supervise such education and thus can save the city (412 A-B).	Set up such men as a ruling element within the Guardian Class. (Later on, but not in Bks. II-IV, they will turn out to be the "Philosopher-Kings.")

n.b. This chart is so structured that reading each line from left to right is meant to force one on to the next line (as solutions to one problem generate another problem, and so on):



the seemingly arbitrary way in which they take up the education of the Guardians in such extensive detail - nonetheless pursue a highly systematic rationale for the polis and achieve a very tight-knit functional coherence in their account of the basic structure of offices or statuses in the polis. To defend this view, I will briefly review Plato's genesis of the city. These matters are extremely familiar, of course, but my hope is that the structural pattern to be exhibited here will make the exercise worthwhile.

(I.A) All humans have, by nature, a complex variety of needs for their survival, needs especially for food, shelter and clothing. Nature provides no automatic satisfactions for these needs (good caves are not so common, clothing does not grow on trees), and work is needed to insure that they are met. (I.B) Since men have different sorts of aptitudes, physiques, and so on and since different jobs require different kinds of skills and of labor and impose different schedules of work, it seems much the most efficient way to satisfy these needs for men to band together, each specializing at the service he is best suited for and all participating in a mutual exchange of goods and services. This is the most efficient solution (notice rhaon at 370A6 and C4), though alternative, perhaps less efficient, ways might also be devised.

(II.A) But satisfying primary needs and securing survival inevitably issues in a tendency toward luxury. Inevitably, because the appetitive part of the soul - that same part whose maintenance is basic to our natural needs for survival - knows no intrinsic limitedness; our pursuit of satisfaction for these appetites proves inseparable from a tendency to excess, and thus, since there is no limitless supply of such luxuries, nor of necessities, provided by nature, it leads inevitably to encroachment on our neighbors' supplies of goods: to grabbiness and pleonexia. This leads to conflicts with other communities and creates the problem of war with them. (II.B) Certain men, however, like certain breeds of dog, are naturally well adapted for fighting, and these men become the Guardians of the city. They are first introduced (373E,ff) for externally directed functions - their aggressive and defensive roles toward other communities - but because the same hankering after luxuries that leads the citizens into conflicts with external neighbors also inclines them toward conflict with each other, Plato gives his Guardians two functions: both their external business and the internal function of policing the state. (III.A) This complex role, however, requires a highly problematic blending of conflicting attributes in the Guardians' character: they must be fierce toward

enemies yet genuinely gentle to their fellow citizens, for they are to be a part of the city, after all, "fellow citizens" of all the others, and not like the savage watch dogs that some businesses turn loose to roam their grounds and keep intruders out while those who work there are away. They need careful training to develop a dependable blend of such opposing tendencies, and an educational program of such difficulty and importance cannot be left to run itself, but needs careful management. Fortunately (III.B), some of the Guardians are especially able to lead the others and to direct the educational system which produces new Guardians. These few must be established as the Masters of the educational system and as rulers of the other Guardians (412A-E). Their good work is needed so that the other Guardians will do their work well, and the latter must function well in order to achieve the basic aim of having any polis at all, that of securing - of securely securing, we might say - the joint satisfaction of the basic needs of all the citizens.[3]

The columns of the schema in Figure I summarize the present account, exhibiting both the tight-knit functional coherence of Plato's social system and the essential distinction between "functional" and "natural" grounds for the various offices encompassed in it. The pattern of this chart makes several key points clear. Plato's polis is, on this account, a system in which all the offices are ultimately justified by showing how they work to secure the members' basic needs (I.A). That is to say, all the offices - the basic design of the entire system - are governed by our earlier Service Requirement. No appeal is made here to a "natural dominion" of Reason over Appetite, nor to any privilege based on "natural superiority." The distributive impact of differing natural aptitudes emerges only in our column B: that is, it is limited throughout to the assigning of men to the role by which they may best serve the interests of the whole. (Our Fittedness Requirement - item [B] in Section I above - is governed throughout by item [C] there, the Service Requirement.) The functional line of justification is thus the operative one

3. Eventually, as the long argument of the Republic unfolds, it will turn out that these rulers of the Guardians are even more different from the other citizens than had earlier appeared: they are philosophers, no less, men and women with all the metaphysical and psychological uniqueness that strange calling entails. Within Books II-IV, however, the functional and natural justification for their role is much more limited, and Plato's definition of political justice is, after all, drawn from his founding of the city in Books II-IV.

for offices - i.e., for the basic structure of the system - while natural aptitude serves rather to justify the choice of individuals to fill each office. As a consequence, notice, and despite the fact that Plato very often speaks of bestowing offices and honors in accordance with appropriate natural endowments (e.g., 415C1-2 or 453E2), it would be quite mistaken to say he holds that de facto differences in physis automatically, or of themselves, establish social privileges de jure. On such a view (a fairly common view of the Republic, I believe), the coexistence of the several classes of the city seems a kind of automatic growth of nature: some sort of "preestablished harmony" among a set of distinct class privileges somewhat on a par with the fact that oil tends to rise above, and float upon, water, nature thus bringing about a stratification which need not make any integrated, systematic sense, but simply exists kata physin. Interpretations which thus treat of Plato's city solely or primarily as a "natural growth" are, so to speak, one-sidedly focused on the right-hand, (B) column of our schema. Such approaches miss the functional significance - the problem-solving sense - behind the interrelated activities or functions of each sector, activities that serve to solve the essential survival-problem facing a city and thus work together for the common good of all its members. That is, they miss the relation of Column B to Column A. But throughout Plato's account, the functional line of justification enjoys a genuine priority: as the consecutive course of our "functional flow chart" shows, the securing of all the members' basic needs remains the fundamental principle of Plato's polis, from the start of its construction at 369B through to its conclusion at 427C.

But it is not just any system that can serve all its members in a manner acceptable to them all. Plato's formula for justice, as we shall now see, covers precisely those features of the system - that set of fundamental or "foundational" constraints on the very design of the system - that are to insure that the city will serve all of its members and will thereby be rationally acceptable to them all.

III

When the discovery passage tells us that the definition of justice has been before us "all along" (although not explicitly as a principle of "justice"), we should be guided, I believe, to look at what Plato has done with that principle in the course of his construction, in order to understand what he takes his principle to mean. When we review Republic II-IV in that way, we

find, I shall argue, five distinguishable senses in which his elliptical formula for justice as "each one doing his own" has been built into the basic fabric of the city. All five of these senses must be satisfied, he seems to be saying, in order for the virtue of justice genuinely to characterize the completed city.

Summarily stated, the five senses of the principle that Plato seems to envision are these:

(1) The Service Requirement on Individuals ("each one doing his job" involves "everyone doing some job," and no one free-loading or benefiting from the labor of others without reciprocating).
(2) The Service Requirement on Offices ("each one doing a job" requires that there be socially relevant, contributory jobs for each to do).
(3) The Fittedness Requirement (each one doing his own job - the job he is best fitted for and best fulfilled by).
(4) The Openness Requirement ("each one doing his job" involves each one getting to do his job: the system must be open enough for individuals to attain the positions they are fitted for).
(5) Uniqueness Requirement ("each one doing his job" involves each doing his own job and only his own job, not encroaching on any other).

I shall briefly take up each of these senses in turn.

(1) The first aspect of the principle that "each one should do his job" is as a Service Requirement applied to individual citizens. Plato's stipulation that each citizen do his own job no doubt focuses attention on each one's doing specifically that job for which he is best suited. More basically still, however, what this aspect of the principle requires is that each one should do something: that each must contribute, in some way or other, to the securing of that common good for which the city basically exists. To capture this very general, fundamental sense of Plato's principle, we might best imagine his formula for justice converted into an inscription over the gates of his city, one addressed to all who enter into it. His formula, ta hautou prattein will then become to son pratte ("Do what is yours to do ," or the like). Even this inscription might, as we noted earlier be misinterpreted as apolitical or purely individualistic. ("Do your own thing.") But Plato's intention is of course quite the reverse. His motto-inscription would stand as an admonishment, reminding all who enter that they must do so in the awareness that justice requires, as a condition of their receiving the benefits of the social system within, that each be prepared to reciprocate by contributing toward the

common good. One can "enter" Plato's city only on the condition of reciprocity with its other members; indeed, accepting that condition is constitutive of each person's "entering" and becoming a member of, or citizen of, the city. The Service Requirement as addressed to individuals is in essence the requirement that every member realize that he is a "member" - a contributing part of an integrated, functioning whole: that he must "pull his own oar" or play his part and not attempt to "free load" or exploit the labors of other members. Perhaps to sum up this aspect of Plato's principle we might best translate our gateway inscription in a slightly different manner: what it means is, "Do your share."[4]

(2) Closely connected to this first sense of the principle is another form of the Service Requirement, this time applied to offices. The principle requires, in this second sense, that the political system can incorporate, and thus legitimate, all and only such offices as conduce to the basic goal of its very existence, the ongoing satisfaction of all its members' needs. (The satisfaction of this principle will be presupposed by all others; for only insofar as an office is itself politically justifiable can any individuals justly be required to perform in it or to respect the work of others who may do so. Any application of the Service Principle to individuals presupposes that there are legitimate positions in which the individuals can be expected to serve.) In this sense, the principle of "each one doing a job" proves

4. Here note particularly the language of sharing (koinon, koinonein, etc.) at 369E2-370A4 and 520A1 (set in contrast to the apolitical reading of ta hautou prattein that was mentioned in note 1 above). This principle of sharing might also be expressed as a principle of reciprocity among the members of the city and in this connection Plato's use of the words metadidonai and allelous takes on a special interest (see 369C6-7, 371B4-6, 372A1-2 and especially 519E2-520A2). In this respect, at least, Plato's theory in the Republic shows affinities with the Pythagorean approach to justice as reciprocity within exchange relations that is discussed by Aristotle in E.N., V.5 (and cf. Rep. 371E12-372A2). That chapter of Aristotle's Ethics has been well characterized as a kind of "commentary" on Republic 369-371 (cf. M.I. Finley, "Aristotle and Economic Analysis," Past and Present, 47 [1970], pp. 1-25, quote at p. 14). Despite some affinities, however, Plato's approach does not stress (as Aristotle does in V.5) the mathematization of exchange values. That is to say, Plato does not "Pythagoreanize" in his approach to the theory of justice. The roots of his own theory lie, as I shall argue, in quite another area of Greek philosophy.

equivalent to the principle of thoroughgoing functionality for the city. Plato conceives of the city precisely as a reciprocally interconnected set of offices that are all justifiable as contributions to the purpose for which the city exists (that of securing its citizens' needs), and the present sense of his principle says that a just city is one that does thus serve its citizens' needs - one which is made up of real jobs (efficacious social contributions, lives of socially meaningful labor) for the citizens to do.

(3) In its third sense, the principle of "each one doing his own" is our earlier Fittedness Requirement: that each should play the role within the polis for which his nature is suited. Taken in this sense, the principle serves not merely to state that the citizen should serve but to identify how he ought to serve. By virtue of this sense, Plato's principle has a certain "self-realization" aspect: each citizen is to do what he is best fitted for and will thus be playing the role through which his nature finds the greatest fulfillment and he, the greatest happiness, that he is capable of attaining (n.b. 421C4-6). However, such individualistic self-realization is of course not fundamental to Plato's theory. The citizens' activities are politically justified, not as self-realizations, but only as contributions to the welfare of the whole. Hence each one's self-realization can and must be limited on every hand: the profit motive of the artisans is checked by imposing limits on accumulations of private wealth; the Guardians' pugnacity and militarism, by a prudently managed foreign policy; and even the Rulers' urge toward abstracted contemplation must be checked (by "forcing" them back into the Cave). Each part can get only so much self-fulfillment as proves consistent with a maximal comparable fulfillment for all other parts of the whole. But that much self-fulfillment, each citizen does have a right to expect from the system, and satisfying even this limited self-realization feature entails important constraints on the city: it must not deny self-realization to any member by "using" him against his nature or by denying him access to an available social role for which his nature suits him. At the same time, of course, this sense of the principle can be read as a competence requirement: that each one should have a role for which he is suited also means that only persons truly qualified for a role should in fact get to play it. (Although the most obvious examples would be Plato's ruling offices, the same holds for all of them: no one physically enfeebled or susceptible to sun-stroke could justifiably be set to plowing open fields cf. 371C5-8;[371E].) We can thus read the present

sense of the principle in two directions: it states what individual members can expect of their roles (that they offer to each such self-realization as he can fairly expect within and through the system), and it states what the role can expect of those assigned to play it (that they be competent for it by virtue of talent, training, and the like).

(4) Both aspects of the previous "Fittedness Requirement" entail still another constraint on the system as a whole: that its offices must be open to anyone qualified to perform them. The requirement that the just city be one with "everyone doing his own job" must, by the same token, be construed as one in which everybody gets to do his own job - i.e., one where careers lie open to talents within the system and where reliable procedures operate to identify and develop individual talents in a dependable way. (The clearest case of such openness in the Republic would no doubt be Plato's scheme for vertical mobility, both into and out of, his governing class [415B-C]. The career chances open to qualified women are still another example of the principle, though one not mentioned until well after the definition of justice has been arrived at.) This openness requirement is partly a functional imperative for the city - the essential means to its providing qualified workers to man all the necessary positions and so most efficiently to get the work of the city done - but it also means that the city must hold forth a fair chance for all its members to realize themselves as fully as they can within the system.

(5) In its fifth and last sense, Plato's principle of justice as "each one doing his own" is our earlier Uniqueness Requirement and stipulates that each citizen do one and only one job in the city - the one he is by nature suited for. For all its importance to the Republic, this sense of the principle stands in a curious relation to the others. It is very close in force to our earlier Fittedness Requirement but is not its equivalent. To generate (5) (the requirement that each one do only one job) from (3) (the requirement that each do a job he is suited for and thus can be fulfilled by doing), we must import the empirical assumption that each citizen has such narrowly determinate natural endowments that he can function only in one way. That extravagant, if not preposterous, assumption would scarcely seem to merit consideration, and the real grounds for this sense of Plato's principle are not easy to discern. Although specialization of labor was first introduced (at 369-372) as a means of maximizing efficiency within the artisan class, later on (at 434A-C) it is more or less shrugged off as a rule for the organization of

labor there and retained only for the "vertical" class distinctions between artisans, Guardians, and Rulers (i.e., not within class I of our schema, but only between classes I, II, and III). That Plato should at least have entertained abandoning it seems appropriate: since it was introduced only as an efficiency measure, it at least deserved consideration whether other measures might prove more efficient, measures such as having the citizens maximize their output by pursuing mastery in as many different areas as they successfully can. When he shrugs off the principle quite so casually as he does, however, it seems difficult to doubt that he does so for other reasons than the alleged ones. I am not concerned at present to identify those reasons - whether they spring from Plato's strong conviction that possessing private interests is necessarily incompatible with attentiveness to public good, from an anticipation of his later metaphysical distinction between philosophers and other types of men,[5] from a desire to preclude democracy as a political system,[6] or from all of the above. What I do wish to emphasize is that this last sense of his principle goes beyond the earlier ones in significant respects. Though it does in a sense grow out of them, it adds further assumptions and should not be permitted to block the others from our view. Thus for instance it would be quite wrong to suppose that only this sense of Plato's principle of justice underlies his argument against pleonexia. The Uniqueness Requirement may well appear to capture, and to appropriate to itself, the case against pleonexia, but it does so only in the very superficial sense that "doing one's own - when understood as doing only one's own and nothing else but that - must trivially, merely numerically, entail not encroaching on what is anybody else's "own." Plato tries to support his definition of justice by emphasizing this implication of not encroaching upon ta allotria (others'

5. See Gregory Vlastos' treatment of this theme in the context of his analysis of Plato's view: "The Theory of Social Justice in the Polis in Plato's Republic," in Helen F. North (ed.), Interpretations of Plato, (Leiden, 1977), pp. 26-34 and passim.

6. Athenian democracy, whatever else it was, at least involved each citizen's doubling, or even tripling his social roles, being active not only as a private person but in the military and in politics. Pericles' "Funeral Oration" puts great stress on both points about Athens: its "easygoing" attitude toward military duties (Thucydides, II.39) - in sharp contrast to Spartan, or Platonic, specialization and askesis - and then (II.40.2) its demand that every citizen should be concerned both with ta politika and with his private affairs.

property or prerogatives) in his judicial example at 433E6-434A1, and by his remarks about polypragmosyne at 433B7, ff (note especially 433D1-3), but in fact the real ground barring pleonexia from his city is not the superficial one expressed in the Uniqueness Requirement (founded as that is on the arbitrary assumption that each person has some unique natural capacity) but the deeper and better one given by our earlier Service Requirement: the fact that the basis of the polis is the mutual pursuit of shared advantage and that this project requires the reciprocity of action we saw enjoined by our gateway inscription, a mutuality that would be disrupted by acts of pleonexia.[7]

IV

In the preceding sections we have tried to unpack the meaning of Plato's formula for justice by interpreting it through what he actually does with it - the various senses in which it guides his construction of the city "from the very beginning." Justice turns out, on this approach, to be that feature (or complex set of features) of the political system in virtue of which it can be expected to deal fairly with all who participate as members in it and will thus be rationally acceptable to them all. Such an approach to the concept of justice is very much in the spirit of contractarian theorists who have approached the analysis of justice in the context of imagined persons who, in some "original position," are conceived of as contracting with one another to initiate a political system.[8] But how, it may well be asked, can any such approach apply to Plato's procedure in the Republic? He does not present his

7. The line of argument suggested here is essentially the Sophistic one against pleonexia. Cf. the argument against it from the need for, and benefits of, eunomia in the Anonymus Iamblichi, Sections 6 and 7 (D.K. II.402-404). A.T. Cole has noted and explored the relations between Plato's procedure (here and elsewhere in the Republic) and that of the Anonymus (HSCP, 65 [1961], pp. 145-149).

8. I have in mind, of course, especially John Rawls' work. I should make it clear, however, that I have no wish to compare Plato's view with the detailed argument of Rawls' recent book. Such comparisons with Rawls as I would make stay at the intuitive level of his original 1958 article, "Justice as Fairness." That article emphasized the idea that the institutions and practices of a social system should be acceptable to all of its members, being understood by them as working to the advantage of every member in it, and I believe that this idea guides Plato's construction in the Republic.

analysis of justice through any contractarian story but in Socrates' solo fabrication of a city in speech. And far from displaying any sympathies with the contractarian approach, Plato starts off Book II by having Glaucon set forth a contractarian theory hand in hand with his attempt to defend the life of injustice, and then has Socrates set about refuting that entire package. Contractarian theory would seem part and parcel of what Plato is opposing in the Republic, so it surely cannot be correct to suggest that his approach to justice has significant affinities with the contractarian approach.

And yet I believe that is exactly what happens in the Republic and that the explanation of this situation is not far to seek: what Plato is opposing in Glaucon and Adeimantus, so far as their theory of justice is concerned, is not their contractarianism but their conventionalism or positivism. On the account which they give in Republic II, societies are brought into existence (for somewhat peculiar specific reasons we need not go into now; see 358E3-359A2) and, once they have been established, the conventions they adopt and the legislation that they enact define what is to count for them as "the lawful and the just" (359A2-3). On this view, the content of a society's notion of justice presupposes the established existence of that society and is a contingent derivative of its activities as a society. On Plato's analysis, however, justice is not defined merely by some established city's decisions, but is instead that feature (or set of features) of a social system that make it rational for its participants to join together in accepting coexistence within that system in the first place. The concept of justice is thus not a derivative, contingent result of some political association's activities but is rather a necessary condition for the rational constituting of that association.[9]

Once this point has been grasped, it is plain that Glaucon does not really advance a contractarian analysis of justice at all. His peculiar employment of the contract myth proves little more than a rhetorical device for setting forth a conventionalist, or positivist, view of justice. His view resolves into a starkly polarized nomos-physis contrast, with justice emerging solely at the level of nomos, as the contingent result of men's associating with one another on the ground of what we might call the frustration of their

9. Note Plato's point at Rep. I.351C-352A, and A. T. Cole's discussion of that passage's close relation to sophistic argumentation ("Anonymus," pp. 160-161, n.43).

physis (i.e., their alleged natural preference for domination of others). On Plato's view, however, justice belongs to the very physis of a polis: it is the fundamental or constitutive attribute of the polis in the sense that only insofar as justice characterizes the polis can it be a workable system - one such that rational men may be willing and able to subscribe to it and thus to constitute themselves as a "city" in and through its framework. In short, Glaucon actually uses the Social Contract device (or, rather, Plato has him use it) quite against the genius of that philosophical theory. He uses it as a simplistic, conventionalist "reduction" of the force of considerations of justice instead of using it as an "essentialist" defense of the absolute force of those considerations.

Taking the present suggestion to its limits, we might even approach Plato's Republic as a kind of contractarian theory in disguise. (An awfully good disguise, I would concede, since certain features of the contractarian approach prove incompatible with many aspects of Plato's political ideal, but I emphasize that my present suggestion is restricted to the thesis about Plato's analysis of the concept of justice.) Fantastic as this may at first appear, it is not very difficult to bring the hidden contractarian myth in Plato's own theory of justice into the open. Consider again Plato's opening remarks about the founding of a city. We are none of us self sufficient but stand in need of many things, and that neediness of ours is the basic principle for founding a city (369B5-7):

> So, then, having these many needs, we gather many people into one place of abode as associates and helpers - each of us calling in all other members, this one for this service, that one for that - and to this dwelling together we apply the name of a "polis" (369C1-4).

But each of us "calls in" the help of all the others how? How else but by reciprocating assurances that each of them may "call on" our help in return for their help to us? What Plato sketches so briefly in 369C must surely be envisaged as a social contract entered into by a group of rational egoists of varying aptitudes and talents, each one pursuing his own self-interest through participation in the polis - i.e., acting, as Plato himself remarks, "because each supposes this [exchange] to be better for himself" (369C7). As Plato's construction of the city continues, justice emerges (as we have now seen) as that set of constraints on the system of offices and roles within which these men will live that is, in due course, understood to make the system a "rightly

founded" one (427E7), one rationally acceptable to each and all of them as the setting for, and the means for, the mutual satisfaction of their basic needs. Thus Plato's own account of justice - noncontractarian and even anticontractarian as it may appear - in point of fact establishes against Glaucon's so-called contractarian - but, in reality, merely conventionalistic - thesis about justice, a theory of justice surprisingly similar in inspiration to that which later forms of contract theory have been used to justify!

To explore in depth what lies behind this strategy of Plato's would take us too far beyond the scope of the present paper. I myself believe, along with Cole and Guthrie and others, that the Sophists had developed the pragmatic contractarian approach to society that Plato relies upon here. A hostile reader of Plato might charge him with surreptitiously co-opting the insights of the Sophistic approach while trying to pervert it into the service of an archaic hierarchical and organicist social code. More sympathetically, I think, it could be said that Plato was convinced that when one tries to think through the sophistic program of pragmatic social design, one has to recognize the importance of considerations about the efficient division of labor and the impact of facts about differing individual capacities upon the social enterprise: i.e., one finds oneself driven, in the very course of following out the Sophistic approach, to constructing the sort of successive "functional flow chart" that we traced out in Section II above. Whether he was right to believe that the contractarian approach would lead one down that path - and if not, just why he was not - is too large an issue to embark on here, so close to the end of this mainly exegetical project. Again, whether or not one happens to be sympathetic with the hidden strategy of Plato's use of contractarian social theory, it might be noted that his larger purposes in the Republic rather forced him to deal with the concept of justice in the way he did: he had to compress the extremely complex role(s) of justice into the enigmatic and multiply ambiguous formula "each one doing his own" in order to project that formula forward for the sake of his subsequent analysis of psychic "justice" as the healthy internal organization of the composite human soul. It may have been for such reasons of large-scale, lively, and even suspenseful literary design, rather than out of any wish to conceal his surreptitious "borrowings" from Sophistic theory, that Plato so artfully postpones until the discovery passage his disclosure of the principle of justice that in fact has been in action from the very beginning of his construction of the polis.

V

Plato believed that he had clearly differentiated the concept of justice from the concept of temperance (sophrosyne) through his long construction of the city in Republic II-IV. Many commentators have felt that, quite to the contrary, the two remain virtually indistinguishable on his account of them.[10] Since our present approach has made so much of the discrepancy between the way that he "discovers" his definitions of justice and those of the other virtues, it may also enable us to see more clearly what he took the difference between the virtues of justice and temperance to be. The degree of success in differentiating these two seems an important test of the adequacy of any reading of the Republic, and it may help to elucidate, as well as to defend, the present reading if we consider that distinction here.

Temperance comes to be visible in the completed city, whereas justice stood before us from the very start. To grasp what Plato is conveying by that contrast, let us first transpose his distinction to a nonpolitical context. Consider a musical chorus - a standard four-part SATB group (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), along with their expert conductor. What "temperance" would mean for such a group would be the mutual adjustment of all five parts' performing activities to one another. All four of the singing sections will agree in following the conductor's lead and in seeking to blend their voices so as best to produce a unified choral effect. (None of the individual singers seek to "stand out" from the chorus, and no one section seeks to out-sing the others, or to "run away with the beat," setting its own tempos or dynamics, unmindful of the conductor's guidance.) And the conductor, for his part, conducts so as to bring out the best performance of the music from his chorus (not so as to focus audience attention on himself, or to "lord it" over the singers, or whatever). When all the participants in the chorus blend their performing skills in this way, they will be a "temperate" chorus, and their performances will manifest this temperance and be "temperate" ones, too. - More precisely,

10. For recent discussion, and many references to earlier accounts, see C.J. Rowe, "Justice and Temperance in Republic IV," in Glen W. Bowersock et al. (edd.), Arktouros: Hellenic studies presented to Bernard M.W. Knox, (Berlin, New York, 1979), pp. 336-344. Rowe's own discussion, however, is restricted to individual or psychic justice, a matter we have not addressed at all in the present paper. Even if we can succeed in defining a difference between justice and temperance in the polis, the problem remains of distinguishing between them in the individual.

to be sure, the choral analogue of Platonic temperance would be all the members' genuine conviction that their several performances should blend together in the way described, that inner disposition of theirs to coordinate their performances to produce a unified choral result. But these inner convictions are of course assumed to be efficacious ones: they are not mere hopes or good intentions that are forgotten under the pressure of actual performance. Therefore even though on Plato's account the chorus members' "virtue" of temperance lies not in their actions but in the inner, psychic structure of motivation and conviction that is manifested in such actions, nonetheless this virtue is one manifested precisely in and through performance.

And what of justice in our analogy? It will consist in the fact that all participants in the chorus have the positions that they have for good and proper reasons. For instance, the persons singing in the soprano section will be those who are "by nature" sopranos (not, for instance, basses who are forced to sing in falsetto or castrati made to order for the role), and similarly for the other sections: all will sing the parts their (vocal) nature suits them for. And the conductor, too, must have his position and his authority within the chorus for the right reasons: not because he or his family have been heavy backers of the chorus, but for such genuine musical abilities as his knowledge and understanding of music, his ability to keep the beat and to communicate it clearly to the chorus, to conduct rehearsals and prepare performances that bring out the best from his singers, and so forth. When positions within the chorus are so distributed that every member is "doing his own" - each one contributing to the shared goal of performing beautiful music in a beautiful way and doing so in the manner that he/she is truly best suited for - then the chorus will be a "just" one. Whether the performances of the chorus could be said to manifest that virtue of justice seems to me a problematic question, and one that perhaps illuminates the discrepancy between the discovery of justice and of the other virtues: The reason why justice is not "visible" in the completed city - or perceptible in our chorus performances - is not because it is not there at all to be perceived, but because it is "there" in a different manner. The other virtues are precisely "performance virtues," which manifest themselves in actions. But justice is a more abstract

virtue, one that provides for the gathering together of the acting components into a unified whole but is not itself perceptible as a component of performances. We might perhaps call it a "foundational" or "constitutional" as distinct from a "performance" virtue.

With the help of this analogy, we can perhaps make clear the difference, and the relation, between justice and temperance on Plato's theory. The virtue of justice is presupposed by that of temperance; it is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for it. The virtue of justice consists, for the city, as for our chorus, in the fact that every person in it is assigned the right role for the right reasons, and that is what makes it rational and proper for each person to be content with his role, dedicated to it in the stable conviction that he should be doing what he does and the others, doing what they do. The virtue of temperance consists merely in the members' having these convictions and adjusting their actions or performances to one another so as to produce a unified result. But justice is presupposed by it as the condition for their having these convictions and thus acting dependably in this way, not as a result of force or drugs or trickery but for good and proper reasons. Justice is that virtue of the system that makes it rational and proper for each member to accept his place within the system and to find fulfillment for himself (or herself) in and through that place. It is the virtue that enables temperance to "make sense" (as a reasonable virtue or way of life), and that is why it has to be on the scene before the virtue of temperance can emerge into view.

Our analogy with a musical chorus may help to explain a part of Plato's theory of the political virtues, but that is not to say that a chorus is a good analogy for a polis, or that Plato's theory of the political virtues is an adequate theory. One might say that just the reverse holds true - that the disanalogies between a chorus and a city help to suggest what goes wrong with Plato's theory. For instance, the members of a chorus may all be assumed to enter into it voluntarily, antecedently committed to the specific goal of making music together and antecedently aware that their various individual musical talents must mesh effectively with those of others for the sake of achieving this end. Their natural musical endowments can fairly plausibly restrict them to one of the familiar parts or roles within the chorus; it is extremely difficult to sing both bass and soprano, and even more so to do both at the same time. What is more, in the case of a chorus it can easily be assumed that all the members who enter will antecedently, and quite nonproblematically, be

aware what part within the chorus will be "theirs" to play: subtle distinctions (or large voice-changes) apart, people tend to know whether or not they are basses, sopranos, or whatever. But a polis is lacking in all these features. People do not enter into it voluntarily, nor for any limited, antecedently agreed upon purposes, but exist within and through it as the locus for the maintenance and very definition of their lives. This often involves their choosing between competing goals or, perhaps, introducing new goals, and given such indeterminacy about the actual goals of the group, it remains unclear how any member could rationally accept his "natural endowments" as justifiably determining his assignment or restriction to some specific role or part within the city. Even more fundamentally, it is totally unclear how anyone could realistically hope to discover what his determinate "natural endowments" are supposed to <u>be</u>. I think these disanalogies between a chorus and a polis could be developed (in less figurative language, of course[11]), and that Plato's theory of justice would prove vulnerable to a line of criticism based precisely on its violent departures from that very contractarian approach to justice from which, as I have argued in this paper, his theory took its rise. But that is a task for another occasion. My present concern has not been to question whether Plato's theory was a good one or not, but only to advance some suggestions as to what his theory <u>was</u>.

EDWARD N. LEE

Department of Philosophy
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, California 92093

11. The essential point is that the limited and antecedently agreed upon purposes and clearly defined roles within a chorus all make possible the nonproblematic satisfaction of the five components of justice cited in Section III above - both senses of the Service Requirement, the Fittedness and Openness Requirements, and even (perhaps especially) the Uniqueness Requirement. But things are not nearly so clear in the complex, innovative and indeterminate actualities of living in a polis.