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JUSTICE AND PSYCHIC HARMONY IN THE *REPUBLIC**

I

1. Late in Book IV we come across the following definition:

. . . in the case of each one of us, whosoever is such that each of the three [psychic elements] in him *does its own*, he is a just man (441E12-442A1).

The italicized phrase, translated in this baldly literal way, makes awkward English.¹ But this is not an unmixed evil. It will serve as a

* This is a sequel to "The Argument in the *Republic* that 'Justice Pays'," this JOURNAL, LXV, 21 (Nov. 7, 1968): 665-674, to which I shall refer hereafter by the abbreviation 'JP'. Its purpose is to make certain corrections (cf. especially fns 21 and 33 below) and to add textual documentation (which was omitted from JP because of the space limitations imposed by the Program Committee of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, at whose invitation JP was prepared). It should be read as a companion piece to JP. For valuable criticisms of JP which have led me to correct mistakes and to make other improvements, I am much indebted to Richard Kraut and Andrew Robison, graduate students at Princeton; to Stanley Rosen and John Cooper, fellow symposiasts at the meeting at which JP was presented; and to A. D. Woozley. I should also acknowledge an earlier debt to Richard Kraut and Jerry Neu (both members of my Plato seminar at Princeton in 1966) and David Wiggins; the argument owes something to each of them. I am also indebted to the following recent discussions of the topic: D. Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*," *Philosophical Review*, LXXII, 2 (April 1963): 141-158; R. Demos, "A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*?" *ibid.* LXXIII, 3 (July 1964): 395-398; R. Weingartner, "Vulgar Justice and Platonic Justice," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, xxv, 2 (December 1964): 248-262; and J. Schiller, "Just Men and Just Acts in Plato's *Republic*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vi, 4 (October 1968): 1-14.

¹ It goes over well enough into German as 'das Seinige tun' (so translated in O. Apelt's translation (Leipzig, 1916; Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1961). So far as I know Laslo Versenyi [*Socratic Humanism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1963), 94 ff], is the only writer to conserve in English the unaugmented Greek phrase. The usual practice is to render it by 'doing one's own business' [Paul Shorey, *Plato: The Republic*, vol. 1 (London: W. Heinemann, 1930)] or 'minding one's own business' [F. M. Cornford, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Oxford, 1945), following A. D. Lindsay, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Dutton, 1935)]. Léon Robin, *Platon, Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: F. Alcan, 1950) translates "faire la tache qui est la nôtre."

constant reminder that what we get in the original is an idiomatic, formulaic expression that is expected to suggest, rather than state in full, what is in Plato's mind.² If he had wanted to be more explicit he would have filled out 'its own' with *ergon* ("work" or "function"), a term introduced in Book I, and explained as follows: the *ergon* of anything (of a tool, like a pruning knife, or of a bodily organ, like an eye or an ear) is that activity which can be "performed either exclusively by that thing or else more excellently (*κάλλιστα*) by it than by anything else" (353A)—i.e., the activity in which that thing gets its best chance to realize the excellence (*ἀρετή*) proper to its own specific nature³ and to contribute to the excellence of other things associated with it.⁴ The things the definition has in view are the components of the soul disclosed in the tripartite analysis of the soul: *logistikon*, *thymos*, *epithymia*—the reasoning, spirited, and appetitive parts of the soul. One is a *just* man, the definition tells us, if each of these three parts functions optimally, and there results that state of inner peace, amity, and concord described in 443C-E, which I called "psychic harmony" in JP. This is the condition in which the soul is healthy,⁵ beautiful,⁶ and in the ontologically correct, hierarchic,⁷ inner order.

² The Greek phrase, *τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν*, is elliptical, and could mean different things in different contexts. In *Charmides* 161B it is cited as a definition of *sōphrosynē*; it is again associated with *sōphrosynē* in the *Timaeus* (72A). Only in the *Republic* is it cited as a definiens of *dikaiosynē*, and here only with grave qualifications.

³ Cf. H. S. Thayer, "Plato: The Theory and Language of Function," *Philosophical Quarterly*, xiv, 57 (October 1964): 303–318, sec. 1.

⁴ It is a standing assumption in Plato that if *x* and *y* are associated, *y* is bound to benefit if *x* does his own *ergon* and realizes his own goodness: "To injure is not the *ergon* of the good, but of his opposite. . . . Then neither is to injure the *ergon* of the just man, but of his opposite" (335D).

⁵ 444C-D; 591B-C [by implication; justice is the condition in which the soul "returns to its nature at its best" (Shorey, for *εἰς τὴν βελτίστην φύσιν καθισταμένη*), which is for it what "health and strength" are to the body]; 609B-610E (injustice destroys the soul as disease the body; justice makes one "alive," *ζωτικόν*, 610E). And cf. *Gorgias* 504B-D, 512A-B.

⁶ *Kallos* (444E1); *euschēmosynē* (588A9). The same implications in the very notion of psychic *harmony* and its description in terms of musical consonance and concord (443D-E). Cf. *Gorgias* 503D ff., where the notion that the morally good (just and *sōphron*) soul is that soul which has the beautiful order (*kosmos*) of a work of art, where all the parts are fitted together in a harmonious composition, first comes into Plato's work (this being its first recorded expression in Greek thought); cf. Helen North, *Sōphrosyne* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell, 1966), pp. 162–163, and Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, vol. II, Gilbert Highet, trans. (New York: Oxford, 1947), p. 146.

⁷ The "natural" and "fitting" order in which the part that is rational, "divine," and "superior by nature," rules the parts that are irrational, corporeal, and "inferior by nature": 444B1-5, 444D3-11; 590C3-D6 (cf. 577D3-5); 591B1-7. Cf. *Phaedo* 79E-80A and *Laws* 726-728B); M. B. Foster, "On Plato's Conception of Justice in the Republic," *Philosophical Quarterly*, I (1950/51): 206–217; and my "Slavery in Plato's Thought," *Philosophical Review*, L, 3 (May 1941): 289–304 at 294 ff.

2. Two things about this definition are most perplexing:

i. It presents no discernible link with ordinary usage. What people commonly understood by *'dikaiosynē'* we know from a wide variety of sources, including Aristotle's splendid analysis in the opening paragraphs of Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The word could carry a sense broad enough to cover all virtuous conduct toward others, though for the most part it was used in a more specific sense to mean refraining from *pleonexia*,⁸ i.e., from gaining some advantage for oneself by grabbing what belongs to another—his property, his wife, his office, and the like—or by denying him what is (morally or legally) due him—fulfillment of promises made to him, repayment of monies owed to him, respect for his good name and reputation, and so forth. What holds these two senses together is that *dikaiosynē* is the preeminently *social* virtue⁹: it stands for right dealings between persons. And this is precisely what is missing in the Platonic definition, which purports to define a man's justice in terms of the order that prevails within his psyche.¹⁰ This is odd, and altogether without parallel in the Platonic corpus. Though Plato sometimes redefines Greek words, his formulas manage to keep good contact with the usual meaning—contact enough to enable one to tell instantly from the formula what the word is it purports to define. Not so here. If a contemporary had been told that there is an enviable state of the soul, characterized by proper functioning of every one of its parts,

⁸ I despair of an adequate English translation. Its occurrence in 359C5 is rendered by 'self-advantage' in Shorey, but by 'la convoitise' in Robin, by 'Habgier' in Apelt; Cornford's 'self-interest' is intolerably loose: only when self-interest is sought at the expense of others and in contravention of *lóōrys* (equity, fairness) would the Greeks speak of *pleonexia*. W. E. Ross and M. Ostwald translate *πλεονέκτης* in *Nicomachean Ethics* V.1 and 3 by 'grasping', J. A. K. Thompson by 'covetous'. In Glaucon's great speech *pleonexia* is illustrated by the Gyges story and by "going to the market-place to take whatever he pleases, entering houses and sleeping with anyone he pleases, killing [any person] or freeing from bonds [any prisoner] he pleases" (360B-C). Aristotle explains it (*loc. cit.*) as immoral action from "gain"; though the gain of which he speaks is mainly pecuniary, it is clear from this and other contexts that any advantage gained at the expense of *lóōrys* would count: *pleonexia* "is concerned with honour or money or safety, or that which includes all these, if we had a single name for it" (1120B2-3); he speaks of *πλεονεκτήειν* 'glory or good *simpliciter*' (1136B22) and even "gratitude or revenge" (1137A1): 'greed' or 'covetousness' would seem to fit best in most of these contexts, though neither of these would be exactly right.

⁹ As Aristotle insists (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1129B26-1130B5) it is "virtue in relation to another."

¹⁰ Cf. E. Barker's complaint that Plato's "representation of justice in the individual (as a relation of the parts of the soul which issues in harmony . . .) . . . hardly accords with the *social* quality inherent in the term" [*Greek Political Theory*, 3d ed. (London: Methuen, 1947), p. 212, fn 1]; and Demos: "What is odd about Plato's platonic justice is its seemingly striking departure from ordinary usage. Customarily, justice indicates the relation of a given person to other persons; it is a virtue which operates in social contexts. But platonic justice is a personal virtue defined purely in terms of the agent" (p. 396, *op. cit.*).

only by accident could he have guessed that this is supposed to be the moral attribute of *justice*.

ii. It is stranger still that Plato should want to offer such a definition in just this context. For what is his mouthpiece, Socrates, trying to accomplish? To convince Glaucon that "justice pays." And by 'justice' Glaucon, like everyone else, understands observance of the constraints of morality and law in one's social conduct.¹¹ How could Socrates have expected to prove to Glaucon that it pays "to keep hands off from what belongs to others" (360B6) by proving to him that it pays to have a well-ordered, harmonious, soul, choosing to call *this* "justice"? Unless we are to suppose that on this occasion Plato lapsed into flagrantly illogical and thoroughly uncharacteristic conduct, we must assume that he will be undertaking to prove that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, having that kind of soul is what "being a just man" means. I submit that Plato has an explicit argument to prove this.¹² But before proceeding to it we must consider his account of the "justice" of the polis.

II

1. Long before that definition of the "just" soul had been presented, another definition of 'justice' had been stated which did not make the remotest allusion to the inner structure of the soul:

What we laid down at the start as a general requirement when we were founding the polis¹³ this, or some form of it, is justice. We did lay down, and often stated, if you recall,¹⁴ that every single person ought to engage in the social function [literally: that function which concerns the polis] for which his own nature is best fitted.—We did say this.—And indeed that to do one's own and not to be meddlesome

¹¹ If there were any doubt of this, another look at his speech would resolve it. Cf. the citation from 360B-C in fn 8 above.

¹² 441C ff., to be analyzed and criticized below (iv2 and 3). It is almost incredible, but true, that those very commentators who saw quite clearly the discrepancy between Plato's redefinition of justice in psychological terms and the common signification of the word failed to take notice of the argument by which Plato undertakes to *demonstrate* his definition. Thus neither Barker nor Demos pays the slightest attention to what happens in 441C ff. From their comments one would get the impression that Plato just *assumed* that this is what a person's "justice" means.

¹³ Here and hereafter I shall use 'polis' instead of 'state' or 'city' since neither answers precisely to the sense that *polis* carries in many of its uses. That the ideal polis described in the *Republic* is meant to have all the attributes of a state (including supreme control over the use of physical coercion in a given territorial area and maintenance of a legal order in that area) is clear. But though these are sufficient conditions for the existence of a polis, they are apparently not necessary for Plato; else he would not have called the primitive community in 369 ff. which clearly antecedes the existence of a state (no provision for governmental functions) a "polis."

¹⁴ The back reference is to such passages as 370A-C; 374A-D; 395B-C; 397E.

is justice, this we have often heard from many others and have often said ourselves.—We have said it.—This then, my friend, if taken in a certain way, appears to be justice: to do one's own (433A-B).

The defining formula is imprecise, and is meant to be: that is the force of the qualifying phrases, "this, or some form of it, is justice"; "this . . . if taken in a certain way, is justice."¹⁵ Plato refers to the very start of the investigation of the nature of justice in Book II (368D ff.), where he had presented the division of labor and production for the market as the generative principle of a polis (369A ff.). He understands this principle to mean that a polis arises when and only when men come to direct their individual energies with a view to the needs of others no less than their own,¹⁶ each of them pursuing a line of work that will best mesh in with those of others to their joint benefit. Plato then proceeds to generalize this principle, so that it will apply not only to economic activity but to all the forms of associated living that go on within a polis.¹⁷ And he gives it a normative twist, making of it an imperative addressed to every person in a polis: Keep to that line of social conduct by which, given your natural endowments and acquired skills, you can contribute maximally to the happiness and excellence of your polis.¹⁸ He seizes on the catch phrase, 'to do one's own', as a convenient stand-in for this maxim.

2. Though not many of Plato's contemporaries would have agreed with this definition of *'dikaiosynē'*, I submit that none would have

¹⁵ It cannot be emphasized too strongly that if 'doing one's own' meant only the "one man, one trade" principle, Plato would never have thought of using it as a definiens of 'justice'; hence the qualification "this, or some form of it" at the start of the citation, warning the reader that the principle of functional specialization in the division of labor has to be further qualified before it can be taken in all seriousness as the essence of justice. When endorsed without this qualification (*Laws* 846D-847A) the principle is *not* taken as a defining formula of justice.

¹⁶ The basis of the polis is human interdependence (369B5-C4); if each man were self-sufficient, each able to meet his individual needs by "himself doing his own for himself" (*αὐτὸν δι' αὐτὸν τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν*, 370A4), there would be no polis.

¹⁷ The first generalization is at 374B ff.: the principle is invoked to justify a professional soldiery at this point; a subclass of these "guardians" is then selected (412C ff.) for the still higher task of government. In a broader sense the principle is expected to hold even of the activities of children and slaves (433D).

¹⁸ I get this by putting together the following: 374B9-C2 (we assigned to each person that one *ergon* for which "he is fitted by nature," done best only when practiced on a full-time basis); 412D9-E2 (for guardians select those who "will be most eager to do whatever they think is for the best interest of the polis"): 420D4-5 (as in a work of art, what we do for a part will depend on whether or not we can thereby maximize the excellence of the whole); 421B3-C6 (greatest possible happiness not for any one class, but for the whole polis; hence "the auxiliaries and the guardians are to be compelled and persuaded to do what will make them the most excellent craftsmen of their own *ergon*, and similarly all others"); 465E4-466A6 (back reference to 420B-421C, reaffirming its principle); 519E1-520A4 (another back reference to the same, adding that "the law" requires of the citizens "to contribute to another that by which each is able to benefit the community").

failed to see that it has good links with common usage, since on this definition, as on any other, justice would involve refraining from *pleonexia*. That Plato is counting on instant agreement on this point shows up best in the second of the three arguments by which Socrates seeks to persuade Glaucon that this is a good definition of 'justice'. Pointing to judicial justice as bearing out his definition, he asks,

Will they [the guardians] not aim at this above all when judging law-suits: that *no one shall have what belongs to others or be deprived of his own*?—at nothing but this.—Because that is just?—Yes.—So in this way too it would have to be admitted that the having and the doing (ἐξῆς τε καὶ πράξις) of what belongs to one and is one's own is justice? (433E6-434A1)

The phrase I have italicized strikes at the very core of *dikaïosynē* in its most specific sense (cf. 11 above).¹⁹ For since *pleonexia* is "having more," i.e., more than what is rightfully one's own ("what belongs to one"), to "have what belongs to others" would be to perpetrate *pleonexia*, and to "be deprived of one's own" would be to suffer it.²⁰ In this argument Plato proceeds on the assumption that having all

¹⁹ Cf. the definition in Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1366B9-11; "justice is the virtue because of which all have their own (τὰ αὐτῶν . . . ἔχουσι) and in conformity with the law; injustice, that by which they have what belongs to others (τὰ ἀλλότρια) and contrary to the law." Aristotle adds the reference to the law to make explicit the special ethicojuridical sense (cf. fn 28 below) in which the expressions 'one's own' and 'another's' are used in contexts in which they are associated with justice. Ulpian adds '*jus*' to '*suum*' to make the same point in his famous definition: "justice is the constant and unremitting will to render to everyone his own right (*jus suum cuique tribuere*)." As the Aristotelian definition shows, the scope of τὰ αὐτῶν and τὰ ἀλλότρια in such contexts is broad enough to cover everything to which persons would be morally or legally entitled. H. L. A. Hart ["Are There Natural Rights?" *Philosophical Review* LXIV, 2 (April 1955): 175-191, at 176, fn 4] gives no evidence for his opinion that these and the roughly equivalent expression 'what is due to one' (δφειλόμενα) (cf. the popular definition of justice ascribed to Simonides in 331E, 335E) "are confined to property or debts": why so, if a man could claim so much more as "his own" and his "due"?

²⁰ One could hardly overstress the normative load carried in the above argument, as in the Aristotelian definition cited in the preceding note and in innumerable other contexts in Greek prose, by expressions like 'one's own' (τὰ αὐτοῦ) and 'that of others' (ἀλλότρια), which I translated "what belongs to others" in its occurrence in 433E7 and in the Aristotelian definition). Cf. also the use of the latter in 360B6, ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλλοτρίων, καὶ μὴ ἀπτεσθαι (which I translated "to keep hands off from what belongs to others" in II 2ii above) and the import of the fact that σφετερίζω (literally, "to make mine what is theirs") comes to mean commonly "to misappropriate, to usurp." If one misses this special accent that is put on the 'one's own' in the "doing one's own" and "having one's own" formulas in the above argument, it will seem, as it does to Karl Popper, "nothing but a crude juggle with the meaning of the term 'one's own,'" and "about as sound as the argument: 'It is just to keep and practice what is one's own. This plan of stealing your money is my own. Thus it is just for me to keep my plan, and to put it into practice, i.e., steal your money'" [*The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. I, 4th ed. (Princeton, N. J.: University Press, 1963), p. 97].

and only what "belongs to one" is biconditionally related to "doing one's own." If this is not obvious at first sight, let me rephrase the argument, abbreviating to make the essential point more perspicuous:

That each shall have his own is what judges should aim for.

What judges should aim for is justice.

Therefore, that each shall have his own and that each shall do his own is justice.

The premise speaks only of each "having his own" and says nothing of each "doing his own." How then did the latter get into the conclusion? And get there it must, since the whole point of this argument is to defend that phrase as a definiens of 'justice'. So unless we are to suppose that Plato's powers of reasoning have failed completely at this juncture, we must assume that the above argument is elliptical, carrying a suppressed premise,

Each shall have his own iff each does his own . . . (S)

Intercalating the missing steps—(S), and a further, obviously implied step, (T) below—to get the complete argument, this is what Plato is maintaining:

That each shall have his own is what judges should aim for.

What judges should aim for is justice.

[*Therefore*, that each shall have his own is justice . . . (T)

But each shall have his own iff each does his own . . . (S)]

Therefore, that each shall have his own and that each shall do his own is justice.

That Plato should thus rely on (S) as an unstated premise in this argument shows how confident he feels that the link between "doing one's own" and the common conception of justice would be fully apparent to his readers: he is counting on them to understand his definition to imply that in any community in which everyone lived up to the maxim "do your own," there would be no *pleonexia*.

III

1. The two definitions of 'justice' in Book IV I call respectively the "psychological" (sec. I above) and the "social" (sec. II above) definitions. They occur in separate passages: the psychological one in 441C-443B, where the virtues of the individual are defined, the social one in the preceding (427B-434C) discussion of the virtues of the polis. At the end of that discussion it had been made clear that 'doing one's own' was not meant to constitute a definition of the justice of an individual person²¹: Socrates tells Glaucon (434D-E)

²¹ As I had erroneously maintained in JP, misled by the deceptively elliptical form in which the definition is stated in 433A-B. On the face of it, the definiendum

they must now look beyond the polis to the individual and find out if "there too" (i.e., in the case of the individual as well as in the case of the polis) the same "character" (i.e., the disposition to do one's own) is justice. He would not have said this if he had understood 'doing one's own' as a definiens of the justice of the individual. However, though this formula is not meant to serve as a *definition* of the justice of the individual, it is still meant to be a true *description* of it: it is not hard to show that for Plato every just man must have the disposition named by the "doing one's own" formula. For he declares that "the same [moral] characters and dispositions (εἶδη τε καὶ ἥθη) which exist in the polis exist in each one of us: they could not, surely, have come to it from any other source" (435E; cf. 544D-E). So he holds as a fundamental principle (one which "it is most necessary to admit," *loc. cit.*) that

P(I) A moral attribute is predicable of a given polis only when, and exactly because,²² it is predicable of the persons who compose that polis.

It follows directly from P(I) that if a polis is just, it is so only in so far as its people are just persons: only their justice could make it just. And it follows tautologously from the social definition of justice that what makes the polis just is the disposition of these same persons "to do their own."²³ Thus from the social definition and Plato's adherence to P(I) we get unavoidably a specification of the justice of the individual persons who compose a polis: each of them is just iff he "does his own."²⁴

is 'justice' and the definiens 'doing one's own'. In fact, the definiendum is "[the] justice [of a polis]" and the definiens "[the] doing of one's own [by each of the individuals and classes which compose a polis]."

²² To say no more than "only when" would not do justice to Plato's insistence that a given character "comes to" (ἀφίκεται) and "arises in" (ἐγγεγονέναι) the polis "from the individuals" (ἐκ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν) (*loc. cit.*). It is the fact that the (appropriate set of) individuals who make up a polis are *F* that makes the polis *F*, not the other way round.

²³ The declaration in 437C7-10 and 435B4-7 (still operative in 441D8-10) that it is the "doing one's own" by each of the three classes that constitutes the justice of each class and makes the polis just is no objection. By P(I), as by ordinary common sense, the "doing one's own" disposition and the character "justice" could be ascribed to social classes only if, and because, they were ascribable to their members in the first place.

²⁴ To my knowledge, this simple deduction has never been drawn in the scholarly literature. Had it been drawn, it would surely have been noticed that this description of the individual's justice, so patently different from that provided by the psychological definition, is in urgent need of being tied by logical argument with the latter; then the significance of the argument in 441C ff. (iv2 below), as providing just this tie, could hardly have been missed.

2. How much of a person's conduct would this specification cover? Clearly, all of it which affects the justice of the polis, hence, to begin with, everything the citizens are called upon to do in the line of public duty. Since their vocational activities *are* construed as public duties in this ultraprofessional society, all on-the-job conduct would obviously count. What then of their private life? Would this be exempt? Surely not: for Plato vocational excellence is unthinkable without personal virtue. Thus his rulers, who "are to be consummate craftsmen of the liberty of the polis, must practice nothing which does not conduce to this."²⁵ To attain perfection in their work they must have morally exemplary dispositions. Their manifold technical qualifications—that they are to be clever legislators, shrewd economic planners, efficient bureaucrats, expert eugenic breeders—are taken for granted. All the emphasis falls on their philosophic wisdom, on the one hand, and on their virtue, on the other. The latter is under constant surveillance: up to the age of fifty they are being "tested to see if they will stand firm against all seductions" (540A): moral perfection is built directly into their job. And there are further indications in the text that the justice specified in the "do your own" formula extends over the whole of a person's conduct, public, and private, in the polis:

i. The formula is applied even to slaves²⁶ who, not being citizens, could hardly be thought of as having civic duties; also to children, who as yet have no civic duties (433D2-3).

ii. Things people do in private contexts—the play of children, the respect shown the old by the young, the clothes and shoes people wear, even haircuts—have the gravest consequences for the whole of society (424A ff.); thus if "lawless" pastimes are permitted the "laws and the constitution" will eventually be overturned (424D-E).²⁷

iii. If the scope of the "doing one's own" formula were not broad enough to cover refraining from all kinds of *pleonexia*, public or

²⁵ Whence it is inferred that, from childhood up, they must never "imitate" characters of low moral quality in dramatic productions, 395B-C.

²⁶ Some scholars have sought to explain away this reference, suggesting that at this point Plato may be thinking no longer of the ideal state but of the contemporary world. I have argued against this suggestion in "Does Slavery Exist in Plato's *Republic*?" [*Classical Philology*, 63 (1968): 291-295, at 294-295]. However, the force of the above remark would not be blunted even if that suggestion were correct.

²⁷ The passage is worth quoting in full: Lawlessness (*paranomia*) in pastimes would be harmless "were it not that, establishing itself bit by bit, it flows gently under the surface into dispositions and practices, and from there it emerges bigger in men's contractual dealings with one another, and from these it attacks laws and constitutions with great insolence, Socrates, until it finally overturns everything, private and public" [424D7-E2; the translation owes much to Allan Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).]

private, the biconditional, "each shall have his own iff each does his own,"²⁸ would fail. So I can see no escape from the conclusion that everything in one's social conduct within the polis—all one's dealings with other persons in the context of the only form of social life considered in the *Republic*—would come directly or indirectly within the scope of justice as specified by the "doing one's own" formula.

3. Why is it then that Plato does not accept the formula as an alternative definition of the justice of the individual, coordinate with and complementary to the psychological definition? The answer can only be guessed at. I, for one, would find the clue in the terms in which Plato contrasts the "doing of one's own" by a person with the "doing of their own" by the parts of his soul in 443C: he calls the former "a kind of image" of justice, and goes on to add:

The truth of the matter, it seems, was that justice was that sort of thing (τοιούτον τι) not in regard to one's external action,²⁹ but in regard to the internal action which concerns truly one's own self and what is one's very own.

What a man does for Plato is only an "image" of what he is; his "external" conduct is only a manifestation of his "inner" life which is the life of the "real" man, the soul.³⁰ Hence, when he asks himself what it is that a man's justice "truly" consists in, he feels constrained to look to what goes on inside a man, in a man's soul; and since he thinks of a definition of *F* as a statement of what *F* "really is," he could count only the psychological formula as the true definition of an individual's justice.

IV

1. However, after fully conceding this privileged status of the psychological formula for the definition of the individual's justice, we are left with the undeniable fact that each of Plato's definitions of 'justice' lays down conditions that every person in a polis will meet iff he is just. From the social definition we learn what a just person's "external" activity will be like: he will obey the "do your own" maxim in his dealings with others in the polis. From the psychological definition we learn what the just person's "inner" life will be like: each of the elements of his soul will be "doing its own," and psychic harmony will result. These two specifications are entirely

²⁸ Proposition (S) in 112 above.

²⁹ Literally, "the external action of what is in one," i.e., of one's reason, *thymos*, and appetite.

³⁰ In Plato's metaphysics this is the "really real" man (τὸν ὄντα ἡμῶν ἑκαστον ὄντως); the body is only a "similitude" or "image" of the soul (*Laws* 959B).

distinct—so much so that if both were correct and we³¹ knew only the former, we would be able to determine that a man satisfies it without our knowing, or even suspecting, that he satisfies the latter also, and vice versa. How then do we know that the two must always be satisfied together? This is what Plato has to show us; else the whole of Socrates' argument against Glaucon would come to naught (cf. 12ii above): to show Glaucon that it pays to have the "justice" of a harmonious psyche would do nothing to show him that "justice pays" unless it were proved that whoever has this "inner" disposition *will* have too the "outer" disposition to deal justly with his fellows. Plato is not blind to this. The demonstrandum of his argument in 441C-E reads

. . . in the case of each one of us, whosoever is such that each of the three kinds [of elements] in him does its own, he is a just man *and a man who does his own* (441D-E).³²

I have italicized the terminal phrase. This is what makes it clear that the new definition advanced here is meant to connect with the earlier definition of 'justice' in 433A ff., and to connect with it so that anyone who instantiates the new definition *will* meet the specifications of the individual's justice implied by the social definition. This is what Plato thinks his argument in 441C-E has established. Has it? Let us run through it.³³

2. First the isomorphic structure of state and soul, a carryover from the preceding discussion,³⁴ is acknowledged:

(A) We have agreed with good reason that the same three kinds [of elements] exist in the polis, on the one hand, and in the soul of each of us, on the other (441C5-7).

Socrates then asks,

(B) Must it not follow at once that the individual will be wise in the way (ὡς) and through that element (ἐφ') by which the polis is wise? (C9-10)

³¹ Where the 'we' refers to nonplatonists. On Plato's assumptions, to know either specification one would have to know the Form of justice, and this would disclose both specifications.

³² Cited, without the terminal phrase, in 11 above. Cited in full as (G) below.

³³ The present account of the argument in 441C ff. is meant to supersede completely the account in JP IV1. This employed unforgivably strong-armed methods in restating Plato's argument and, moreover, failed to take explicit account of the role of the premise laid down earlier (435A5-7) on which, as I have since come to see, the reasoning directly depends.

³⁴ 435D-441C: the tripartite analysis of the soul, interlarded between the social and the psychological definitions of 'justice'.

From what is this supposed to follow? From a premise laid down back in 435A5-7: "If two things, one greater, the other smaller, are called the same, will they be similar or dissimilar in the respect in which they are called the same?" This is a fundamental Platonic principle.³⁵ Let me restate it a little more formally:

P(II) If the same predicate is predicable of any two things, then, however they may differ in other ways, they must be exactly alike³⁶ in the respect in which it is predicable of each.

Given P(II) and (A), (B) would indeed follow. If 'wise' is predicated of a polis³⁷ in virtue of the fact that one of its elements has a certain character, then it must be predicated of a person in virtue of the fact that an analogous element in him has the *identical* character. Were this not so, polis and person would not be "exactly alike" in the respect in which 'wise' is predicable of each. Socrates proceeds:

(C) And must it not also follow that after the same manner in which the individual was brave, and in virtue of that [element], after that manner and in virtue of that [element], the polis will be brave . . . ? (D1-2)

Here from the same premises the same inference (*mutatis mutandis*)³⁸ is drawn for 'brave' as for 'wise' at (B). Thereupon³⁹ Socrates gen-

³⁵ Taken over uncritically from Socrates, whose search for definitions is guided by the explicit assumption that all the things correctly called "*F*" have an identical character, *F*, and that each of them is so called only because each has this self-identical character: *Euthyphro* 5D1-5, 6D9-E6; *Meno* 72A ff.

³⁶ That "exactly alike" is what Plato does mean is clear from the inference he draws from the cited statement: "Hence the just man *will not differ in any way* (*οὐδὲν διαφέρει*) from the just polis in respect of the very character of justice, but will be like it" (435B1-2). Cf. Socrates' insistence that any two things that are called "*F*" "will not differ" in respect of being *F*: *Meno* 72B5, C2-3; E6-73A3.

³⁷ I am putting (B) into the formal mode to bring it into line with P(II); the difference between the formal and the material mode is systematically ignored in Plato and would, in any case, make no difference to the reasoning in this argument.

³⁸ Except for the fact that, whereas in (B) the reasoning moved from polis to person, in (C) it reverses, moving from person to polis; but this difference is irrelevant to the reasoning, for the similarity relation is symmetrical.

³⁹ That Socrates should not deal with the case of temperance, after that of wisdom and courage, before drawing the generalization, may cause surprise. But this is easily explicable from expository considerations: In the present argument Socrates draws out the implications of P(II) for wisdom and courage, without taking the time to state the definitions of either and to identify the elements in polis and person that have each of these virtues. These omissions are repaired in the sequel (441E-442D) which parallels the present argument, adding information omitted in this one. In that sequel the case of temperance is treated as fully as that of wisdom and courage. Moreover, the essential identity of temperance in polis and person had been anticipated (430D-432A) in the earlier section on the virtues of the state, where the nature of each had been explained at considerable length. To have reaf-

eralizes:

- (D) . . . and must it not follow that polis and person will possess in the same way anything which pertains to virtue [i.e., any moral quality whatsoever]? (D2-3)⁴⁰

He applies this at once to the case of justice:

- (E) And we shall say, o Glaucon, that a man is just in the same way⁴¹ in which the polis is just. (D5-6)

Confident that all has gone well so far, Socrates proceeds to get the conclusion he wants in two more steps:

- (F) And surely we have not forgotten that it (the polis) was just in virtue of each of the three kinds [of elements] in it doing its own? (D8-10)

- (G) Therefore, let us bear in mind that also in the case of each one of us, whosoever is such that each of the three kinds [of elements] in him does its own, he is a just man and a man who does his own (D5-E2).

3. The simplest way to spot the error in this argument is to notice the equivocation to which I called attention in JP: In its primary signification 'just' is a relational predicate; to speak of a person as having this property is to think of the way in which he habitually relates himself to persons⁴² or groups of persons in his conduct. This is all too plainly true on the popular notion of justice (12 (i) above), both in its generalized sense of "virtuous conduct toward another" and the narrower sense of refraining from *pleonexia*. It would be no less

firmed this identity in 441C-E would have involved more repetition than Plato cares to allow himself in an argument whose premises are kept as trim as possible so that the weight of the composition may fall on its concluding portion (E), (F), and (G) below.

⁴⁰ This is a proposition of such extreme plausibility that even Aristotle subscribes to it, asserting it as a self-evident truth: "the courage, justice, and wisdom of a polis have the same meaning and form as those (virtues) by whose possession each individual man is called 'just' and 'wise' and 'temperate,'" *Politics* 1323B33-36. This is in Book VII of the *Politics*, one of his earlier political writings, possibly composed before he had developed his doctrine of "focal meaning" (cf. fn 47 below). But there is no indication that Aristotle ever rejected or modified the proposition he asserts here in the light of his new semantic doctrine.

⁴¹ τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ. For the use of the same locution to express the same thought—that when 'F' is correctly predicated of *a* and *b*, *a* is *F* "in the same way" as *b*, i.e., has the identical character—see *Meno* 73BC1-1: "Hence all men are good in the same way."

⁴² Not necessarily to persons other than himself; the relation may be reflexive. Aristotle's formula for justice in its most general sense, "virtue toward another," misses this point, but only because of the (purely technical) failure to notice that a relation need not be aliorelative.

true on the conception of the individual's justice implied by Plato's social definition: "to do one's own" is an obligation one has *to* one's polis and *to* the other persons with whom one has to deal. But it so happens that among the derivative uses of 'just' there is one use in which it functions as a one-place group predicate, predicable of groups as such, on condition that their members, or subgroups composed of their members, are just in the primary sense, i.e., behave justly to one another. Using 'just₁' for the primary, 'just₂' for the secondary sense, let us apply the distinction to Plato's argument, starting with (E), where 'just' makes its appearance: "a man is just in the same way in which the polis is just." In its first occurrence, we would expect 'just' to carry its natural sense when applied to an individual. So it would have to mean 'just₁' here, unless some warning to the contrary had been given, as none is. What of its second occurrence? Here 'just₂' would be the natural sense, since it is applied to a polis; and this is quite clearly the sense Plato had in mind when defining the justice of the polis in 433A ff., since he explained it by the "doing of one's own" in the mutual relations of the persons who compose it (433D1-5) or of its classes (434C7-10), *not* by "the doing of *its* own" in its relation to other poleis.⁴³ Hence in its second occurrence 'just' must indeed mean 'just₂'. Let us rewrite (E) with this notation to resolve the ambiguity:

And we shall say, o Glaucon, that a man is just₁ in the same way in which the polis is just₂.

And when we do this it becomes evident that (E) is quite false: person and polis are not just "in the same way," but in the very different ways represented by 'just₁' and 'just₂'.⁴⁴ And with (E) false, the deduction of (G)⁴⁵ is worthless; the demonstration has collapsed.

⁴³ The use of the "doing one's own" formula to elucidate the notion of a polis that is just in its external relations would have been only an embarrassment to Plato: the central notion in this formula—making the best contribution one's nature allows one to make to and in one's community (II1 above)—is inapplicable to a state in its foreign relations; the notion of a community of poleis is not mooted in the *Republic*.

⁴⁴ If anyone is made uncomfortable by the fact that 'in the same way' could mean any number of different things in this context, he might be reminded that as Plato uses that slippery expression, to find a man who is "exactly like" a just₂ polis we would have to find a just₂ man, i.e., one whose psychic components "do their own" inside him as the social components of the state "do their own" inside it; a just₁ man would be "exactly like" (in the relevant respect) a just₁, not a just₂, polis.

⁴⁵ Where the equivocation that vitiates (E) recurs to mislead Plato in another way: having failed to sort out the difference between 'just₁' and 'just₂', he fails to realize that the definiens laid out here could *only* be the definiens of 'just₂' and cannot be assumed to be also the definiens of 'just₁', as it would have to be if the addendum, "and a man who does his own," were to be warranted by the reasoning.

VI

If the foregoing diagnosis of the error in the argument in 441C-F is correct, the mistake is neither inexplicable nor irreparable.

1. *Not inexplicable.* Plato is misled by two things: First, by his P(II). Like Socrates, he takes this for an axiomatic truth. Seeing that this holds in the standard cases—if we are to call two specimens “bees” (Socrates’ example in the *Meno*)⁴⁶ they must indeed be “exactly alike” in respect of being bees, though they may differ in a hundred other ways—he infers that it is true in all cases, making no provision for those in which the predicate applies to some things in a primary sense, and to others in derivative senses, materially different from the primary one, though formally so related to it as to be definable in terms of it. Had Plato seen (to turn now to an example in Aristotle)⁴⁷ how absurd it would be to expect that a man, a complexion, a habitat, and a diet must be “exactly alike” in the respect in which the predicate ‘healthy’ applies to each,⁴⁸ he could scarcely have failed to see how little his P(II) would cover the case of a predicate like ‘just’.

Secondly, he is misled by the false analogy on which he relies in generalizing from the cases of ‘wise’ in (B) and ‘brave’ in (C) to *all* moral predicates in (D), including ‘just’. Not that (D) is true without qualification even in the case of the former: ‘wise’ and ‘brave’ hardly apply to polis and person in the same way in all respects. However, each does apply to both alike in the way that is vital for Plato’s argument; when predicated of persons or of poleis, they function as *one-place predicates* in both cases. And this is precisely what is false in the case of ‘just’, which, as we have seen, is a one-place predicate only in its secondary sense, while in its primary sense it must be a

⁴⁶ 72B-C: the example that he thinks shows that any two persons are exactly alike in respect of being virtuous.

⁴⁷ *Metaphysics* 1002A34-B1 and 1060536-106147; *Topics* 106B33-37. The linguistic phenomenon Aristotle illustrates by ‘healthy’ and by ‘medical’ in these contexts is not precisely the same as that exemplified in the difference between ‘just₁’ and ‘just₂’: the derivative senses of ‘healthy’ and ‘medical’ to which he refers do not differ from the primary one as would a one-place term predicable of groups from a two-place term predicable of individuals (this specific difference is not noticed by Aristotle, to my knowledge). But the two phenomena are so closely related—in both cases we have a logically primary sense, and one or more derivative senses definable in terms of the primary one—that if Plato had anticipated Aristotle’s investigations of “focal meaning” [G. E. L. Owen’s felicitous rubric for what Aristotle calls “πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν λεγόμενα”: “Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle,” in I. Düring and G. E. L. Owen, eds. *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century* (Goteborg, 1960), pp. 163–190, at 169], he would have seen that his P(II) cries out for qualification, and then he could scarcely have made the error in (E).

⁴⁸ If they were “exactly alike” a healthy complexion would have, like a healthy man, a well-functioning heart and liver, and so would a healthy climate and healthy food.

relational predicate, since justice is the social virtue per excellence. Plato has often been criticized for his use of the polis-soul analogy. I trust it will now be clear that this is not, of itself, the source of his error. The analogy is, of course, loose; but it is not the less illuminating on that account. That a man, no less than a polis, can, and should be, just₂ is a memorable insight, which need not have caused logical error, and would not, if the difference between this new sense in which a man might be called "just" and the usual sense had been kept straight.⁴⁹

2. And the mistake is *not irreparable*. Plato has all the materials required to construct an alternative argument for the same thesis, i.e., that a man is just₂ iff he is just₁, which would be completely free of this error. I adumbrated this alternative argument in JP, and it would be pointless to repeat that summary here. What would have point—but would call for another paper—would be to flesh out that argument, showing how the incredibly rich psychological and sociopolitical observations scattered through Books VIII and IX of the *Republic* could be marshalled in support of the following Platonic tenet: a stable, harmonious organization of passion and appetite in the psyche—the supreme psychological condition of happiness—can only be achieved by internalizing those social norms of good conduct that are covered by the idea of *dikaiosynē*. Plato is prepared to argue that the warring impulses within us cannot be brought to live in friendly concord with one another except under the dominance of practical reason—a reason which is not only calculative (as his term, *logistikón*, might unfortunately suggest) but passionate; for what one knows or believes⁵⁰ about justice and goodness is for Plato emotively charged,

⁴⁹ One could still object to the form in which Plato casts the new insight, taking upon himself to say that the word 'just' should now be used in a drastically different way (we are to "deem and name 'just' that action which preserves and promotes this disposition," *sc.* the psychic harmony which results when all three components of the soul are "doing their own work," 443E6-7). Such linguistic innovations are dubious business, and I have no wish to defend Plato on this score. But I would still insist that, even so, no logical error would have been incurred if the linguistic legislation had been grounded on a clear understanding of the just₁-just₂ distinction.

⁵⁰ For Plato in the *Republic* the practical reason, whose "doing its own" is required for the achievement of justice₂, does not need to operate at the level of (philosophic) knowledge. One does not need to be a philosopher to run through practical syllogisms whose major premises are true beliefs. True belief is quite sufficient for virtue in the *Republic*; thus the distinctive virtue of the auxiliaries, their courage, is defined (429B-430B) in terms of belief (*doxa*)—not in terms of knowledge (*epistēmē*, *sophia*), as had been done in the Socratic dialogues (*Laches* 194E-195, *Protagoras* 360D). Note that the courage of the auxiliaries in the *Republic*, which is founded on belief, not knowledge, is contrasted sharply with another disposition, which is guided by the same true beliefs (τὴν ὁρθὴν δόξαν περὶ τῶν

it engages the heart no less than the intellect, it involves *love* for ideals of conduct which one knows or believes to be morally sound. Viewed in this way the dictates of justice₁ are not an "alien good" (ἀλλότριον ἀγαθόν); they correspond to our deepest personal needs, for only in loving obedience to them can we escape the anarchic chaos within ourselves that results when we are motivated by nothing higher than sensual gratification, material wealth, or prestige. Justice₂ represents that condition of soul in which all its diverse components function harmoniously because, and only because, they are all controlled by allegiance to the Ideas of Justice and Goodness in which the norms of decent conduct toward our fellows (the norms of justice₁) are comprehended.

3. If the interpretation of the argument of Book IV of the *Republic* offered here and in JP is correct, Plato is completely exonerated of the charge leveled against him in recent years: that he committed the colossal *ignoratio elenchi* that would be involved in undertaking to prove that *justice* (i.e., justice₁) pays by merely proving that psychic harmony (the resultant of justice₂) pays. On my interpretation Plato offers in 443C-E a definite argumentative bridge between justice₂ and justice₁; if this bridge had been sound, he *would* have proved that justice₁ pays iff justice₂ pays and would thus have fully met Glaucon's challenge. And if he had detected the structural flaw in the argument in 443C-E, the discovery would not have been a shattering one. This is one of the many cases in the history of thought in which a great philosopher, realizing that he had made a mistake in logic, would have seen that he could repair the damage without giving up a single one of his substantive tenets.⁵¹

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ἀντὶ τούτων) but "should be called anything but 'courage'," because it has "not been engendered by *paideia*, and its brutish and slavish" (430B6-10). As I explained in JP VIII, *paideia* is for Plato a process that not only instills the true beliefs, but puts the required emotive charges on them, so that a product of *paideia* loves the qualities of character and modes of action that he has been taught to call "just"; he finds them attractive and appealing on their own account and, hence, has nonutilitarian motives for obeying the corresponding norms. It is a grave error (from which even Helen North's chapter on Plato in her excellent book, cited in fn 6 above, is not free) to conflate the moral virtues of nonphilosophers in the ideal state of the *Republic* with the bogus virtues denounced in *Phaedo* (68D-69B), as well as in the *Republic* (430B) and the description of the oligarchic man, 554A-E): the latter are "false" (a "delusive facade . . . [with] no truth in [them]"; *Phaedo* 69B; same implication in *Republic* 430B10) and "slavish" (*loc. cit.*), neither of which would be said of the former.

⁵¹ Even the error in 443C-E could have been acknowledged and corrected without any radical overhauling of Plato's ontology. So far as I can see, it is caused by a gap in Plato's semantic theory (rather than by any ontological feature of the