Polemarchus in Plato's *Republic*

1. Introduction: Ethos, Doxa, and Dialectic

In Plato's *Phaedrus* (257b3-4) Socrates asserts that Polemarchus (in contrast to his brother Lysias, the subsequently famous speechwriter) has been converted to philosophy. Polemarchus only ever appears in the *Republic*, where his conversation with Socrates produces an alliance between the two, and discussion subsequently extends to a prospect upon the profundity of philosophy. Accordingly the *Republic* should be taken to depict Polemarchus' reported conversion. The peculiarity of this conversion is indicated by two facts. Firstly, Polemarchus is a metic, a resident alien in Athens, and does not share in the responsibilities of government; secondly, while a central achievement of the Republic is the postulate that philosophers are uniquely fitted to govern the just polis, their peculiar qualification for office, according to Socrates, is precisely that they would rather not rule (517c-d, 519c-521b; cf. 347a-d). The practice of philosophy, particularly in Polemarchus' case, would seem to exclude a concern with politics. Then why does the conversion of Polemarchus to philosophy take place in conjunction with a discussion of the just polis?

Discussion of Platonic dialogues frequently underestimates the significance of the sometimes ample characterisation. The assumed ground is normally that the arguments and positions examined and

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1 ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν δὲ, ὡσπερ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ Πολέμαρχος τέτραπται (cf. R. 518d, though addressed primarily to Glaucon, and not Polemarchus). The rhetorician Thrasymachus also is prominent in R. I and only named elsewhere by Plato in *Phdr.*, which concerns a speech by Polemarchus' brother Lysias and the nature of rhetoric; there are three references to Thrasymachus (266c1-5, 267c7-d1, 269d6-8), in the last of which his art is identified with that of Lysias.

2 For the documentation see below, with notes 8 and 10.
espoused have a kind of intellectual autonomy, despite their frequent dialectical dependence upon the speakers' assumptions, and Socrates' professedly practical concern with the soul. I shall make three related observations regarding my approach here. First, the Socratic principles that virtue is knowledge and vice ignorance must be the limiting cases of a more general identity, that of moral character (ethos), and belief (doxa). Accordingly any degree or deficiency of moral character (cf. Arist. Poet. 2, 1448a2-4) should reveal, or be revealed by, a degree or deficiency of moral understanding. Applied to the Platonic dialogues this interpretive principle suggests that indications of character will form integral elements of their meaning.

Secondly, Aristotle's explains dramatic ethos in the Poetics as what reveals a character's moral commitments (τὴν προαίρεσιν, 1450b9). In dialectic this consists primarily in the choices made in answering questions. Moreover the reported dialogue form of the Republic, narrated by Socrates, is structurally akin to both epic and the messenger speeches in tragedy, where narrated actions of characters

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3 Thus even Julia Annas' attempt to evaluate the types of Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus in her An Introduction to Plato's Republic (Oxford, 1981) 18-57, esp. 20-21, 29-30 and 34, treats the characterisation only as incidental illustration of the kinds of people who might happen to hold the beliefs about justice disposed of in Bk I. Clear evidence of the lack of esteem in which the scholarly establishment holds serious consideration of characterisation in Plato is provided by the severe response by C.C.W. Taylor in the introduction added to the second edition of his Plato's Protagoras (Oxford, 1991), esp. xiv-xviii, to Michael Stokes' interpretation of dialectical arguments as ad hominem in Plato's Socratic Conversations: Drama and Dialectic in Three Dialogues (London, 1986), see esp. ch. 1.

4 Contrary of course to the case, at least sometimes, for tragedy, according to Arist., Poet. 6, 1450a23-29; similarly H.D.F. Kitto, Form and Meaning in Drama (London, 1956) 201-5, and also A.M. Dale (ed.) Euripides' Alcestis (Oxford, 1954) xxiv-v; Aristotle argues for the priority of mythos in tragedy, whereas its rôle in philosophy is much more ambiguous; when made authoritative in moral life, as the case of Cephalus indicates below, poetic mythos excludes philosophy.

5 Cf. R. 392d-98b; see recently D.M. Halperin, Plato and the Erotics of Narrativity', in J.C. Klagge and N.D. Smith (eds.), Methods of Interpreting
and the manner of their description by the narrator may also contribute to the revelation of moral commitments (cf. Arist. Poet. 24, 1460a5-11). Taken with my former point this implies that the evidence of a dialogue’s dramatic action is also relevant to the participants’ beliefs, and so, unless in particular cases we suspect deliberate dissimulation,6 we should expect both speech to reveal character, and deeds belief.

Thirdly, in Republic II-III Socrates and his interlocutors agree that ethos is a product of civic status, the life for which a soul is naturally fitted, as influenced by education and environment for better or worse. Accordingly, particular care is to be taken with the education of a guardian class in the just polis. The basic principle is that the young absorb and mimic all cultural influences uncritically (401b-d), so that such influences must be controlled in order to mould character. We can then expect some correspondence in the personae of the dialogues too between social and political status with the corresponding formative influences, on the one hand, and character and belief, on the other. Applied to Polemarchus this principle suggests that his non-citizen status together with the defining features of his life, and the setting of the dialogue in his family environment located in the Peiraeus, should provide important keys and a significant context for identifying the meaning of his words and deeds in the Republic and for interpreting his relation to Socrates, to philosophy, and to justice.7


6 This caveat refers not only to the potential for dissimulation within a conversation, but also in its narrated report, another subsequent conversation. See below, Section 5.

7 Polemarchus’ metic status is overlooked by some of the few who do treat Platonic characterisation as thematically significant. L. Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago, 1964) 73, infers from Polemarchus’ conventional definition of justice as helping friends and harming enemies in the Republic (332d7-8) that, given that friends are fellow citizens, Polemarchus represents a concern for the common good of the city. Similarly A. Bloom, The Republic of Plato (New York and London, 1968), ‘Interpretive Essay’, describes Polemarchus instead as a ‘gentleman’ (311, 317, 320-21, 325).
Fundamentally, a metic in classical Athens is excluded from full participation in the common good and its responsibilities, that is, from the exercise of mature political and judicial judgment. He is restricted to military and financial obligations and to a private 'public' life of commerce and industry, the benefits of which are primarily economic and constitute and maintain his private oikos, or family household and estate. The status of metic emphasises the distinction between loyalties to oikos and polis, the struggle between which is decided so completely in the Republic in favour of the polis, that the class of guardians will have no private oikoi.

Polemarchus' very name seems significant in this regard, being the title of an Athenian official who administered justice to metics and other foreigners, and performed certain religious rites (Arist. Ath. 58); this office had originally been that of supreme military commander (Arist. Ath. 3), as the etymology of the name indicates,

too C. Page, 'The Unjust Treatment of Polemarchus' History of Philosophy Quarterly 7 (1990) 243-67 (see 248, 255). Yet the Republic itself warns of the danger in a democracy μέτοικον...ἀστώ καὶ ἄστον μετοίκῳ ἐξισοδοθαι (563a). Moreover R. I begins by distinguishing 'the locals' parade' from 'the one the Thracians put on' (327a4) at the festival of Bendis, departing from which Socrates and Glauccon immediately encounter Polemarchus. While politeness prevents Socrates from mentioning Polemarchus' status, the family's disaster in 404 and Lysias' failure to secure the grant of citizenship thereafter would have made their circumstances notorious (see further notes 10 and 12).


9 A.R.W. Harrison, The Law of Athens Vol.1: The Family and Property (Oxford, 1968) 237 n.3 reports that Lysias xii 'certainly shows Lysias and his brother Polemarchus to have been owners of three houses in Athens, and they were ίοστελεῖς. ...we may conjecture that L. and P. had been given ἐγκτησια specifically.' The concession of these private privileges, as opposed to the public political rights of citizens, is consistent with the following account of Polemarchus' rôle in the dialogue.
signifying responsibility for war. Moreover Polemarchus and his brother Lysias were well-known as the sons of the wealthy shield manufacturer Cephalus who had been invited by Pericles to move from Syracuse and live in Attica as a resident alien, where he settled in the Peiraeus. The sons at some stage left to become citizens in Thurii but subsequently lost or gave up their citizenship and returned to Athens to help run the family shield business.¹⁰ I shall discuss below how defensiveness enters into Polemarchus’ motivation and beliefs. He was subsequently put to death by the

¹⁰ For the family history, see Lysias xii.4-22, Dion. Hal. Lysias (i.8.2-17), and [Plutarch] Vita Lysiae (835b-836d); the latter two and the derivative Suda article are collected in A. Westermann (ed.), Vitarum Scriptores Graeci Minores (Brunswig: G. Westermann, 1835) 240-45. These biographies assert that Lysias was born in 459/58 (Dion. i.8.3-5, Vita 835c6-7), left Athens in 444/43 for the foundation of Thurii (Dion. i.8.3-6, Vita 835c9-10) with his older brother Polemarchus (Vita 835c10-11) and returned to Athens in 412/11 when expelled from Thurii with the three hundred democratic activists following the oligarchic revolution after the Athenian defeat in Sicily (Dion. i.8.7-11, Vita 835d17-e22). The Vita further claims that Cephalus was already dead when Lysias and Polemarchus went to Thurii (835d12), which is difficult to reconcile with the Republic, unless it is set before their departure, and that was actually much later than 444/43. Perhaps both Dion. and the Vita’s author wrongly inferred that since Lysias was a citizen in Thurii (Dion. i.8.6-7, Vita 835d15-16), he must have gone there at the foundation. K.J. Dover, Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), ch. 3 ‘Chronology’, 28-46 introduces new evidence casting doubt on all the dates in the biographies. SEG xiii.17.12 (and cf. Andocides i.15) shows that the dramatic date of Plato’s Phaedrus (where Lysias is resident in the city, 227b2-5) should be before 415, but no earlier than the late 420s, since Isocrates (born c. 438-35) is called a youth (278e4-79b3). As Lysias is portrayed as at most a decade older, he was not born before the 440s, and was present in Athens for at least at some time between about 422 and 415. The same would be true for the Republic, where Lysias is present (328b4), and which is set not long before the Phaedrus; this is confirmed in R. II, 368a, where Adeimantus and Glaucon the elder brothers of Plato (b. 428/27) have already fought in battle, while Glaucon is still young enough to have a lover. Polemarchus is their contemporary; (cf. 328a9 and 328d5, where the dative νεανίσκοις F D Stobaeus: νεανίσις A M) cannot mean those from Athens, contra J. Adam [ed.], The Republic of Plato [Cambridge, 1902] Vol.1 ad loc.). Older than Lysias, Polemarchus would be at least in his late twenties by 415, suggesting an earlier dramatic date within the period. D.J. Allan, Plato: Republic Bk I²
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thirty tyrants (404), although Lysias escaped. Note that it is not my purpose here to deny that a metic might develop quite sophisticated insights into the operation of a polis, for which perhaps the subsequent life of Lysias, and certainly that of Aristotle, is evidence. The question rather has to do with the way the metic as a type is in principle excluded from a practical familiarity with the perspective of a citizen, and experience of the distinct motivations such an upbringing and self-perception can provide.

(London, 1944) 20, following A.E. Taylor, proposes 421 b.c. following the end of the Archidamian war. (For difficulties in using the inscriptive evidence for the institution of the festival of Bendis see Dover 31 n.3). Dover also uses P. Oxy. 1606 fr. 6 col. iii (the final two hundred lines of Lysias’ ‘Against Hippotherses’), suggesting that here Lysias portrayed his departure from Thurii as evidence of his democratic loyalties, and a biographer mistakenly inferred that he was expelled with the three hundred in 412/11; Dover speculates with little evidence that Lysias left in the late 420s as a result of pressure and suspicion against those with Athenian connections, and that the brothers first went to Thurii in 430/29 when the family patron Pericles was in disgrace, but he has at least shown an irreconcilable inconsistency among (a) the biographies of Lysias, (b) the facts of Phaedrus’ exile, and (c) the dramatic circumstances of the Phaedrus and Republic, and reason to suspect the biographies. On this view Lysias and Polemarchus were citizens in Thurii for only about eight, not thirty two, years, were not necessarily politically active, and relatively freely relinquished citizenship and risk in Thurii for security and family wealth back in Athens.

11 Lysias xii.6-7 accuses the thirty of greed in picking on wealthy metics and confiscating their estates. Peter Krentz, The Thirty at Athens (Ithaca and London, 1982) 80-81, points out that while all other ancient sources agree on this, the real motive was probably defensive. Yet the contemporary perception is what counts in relation to Polemarchus’ rôle in the Republic.

12 The thirty tyrants made Lysias their enemy, and hence he sided with the democrats who regained control of the state the following year, but as Dover notes (51, cf. 47-48) the family’s wealth and previous connections with Pericles imply precisely nothing for his (or for that matter Polemarchus’) political views prior to 404. The probable source for their association with the democrats in Thurii (the speech Against Hippotherses) is ‘evidence tainted by advocacy’ (Dover loc. cit., and see n. 10 above). Similarly indications of political ethos in later Lysian speeches, addressed to democratic audiences, can provide no evidence of the writer’s own beliefs or motivations (see Dover 54-5; the whole of ch. 4, ‘Ideology and Political Association’ is significant).
2. The First Encounter

Polemarchus first catches sight of Socrates accidentally in the Peiraeus but manages to add the philosopher to his companions, hoping to enjoy his conversation during a festival (328a8-9). He is perhaps only moved to do so because Socrates is accompanied by the young Glaucion, whose brother Adeimantus is already with Polemarchus (327c1). We shortly discover that Socrates is a somewhat remote acquaintance of Cephas, Polemarchus’ father (328b9-c1, c5-d1). It is actually Glaucion who repeatedly accedes when Polemarchus imperiously sends a slave to order them to wait, mock-threatens the weight of numbers to force them to stay, refusing to hear persuasion, and adds to Adeimantus’ list of the pleasures of the evening to come.

The distance between Socrates and Polemarchus is accordingly mediated by mutual friends. That the mutual friends are brothers, and brothers of Plato, immediately introduces the theme of family into the Republic. In the light of the course of the dialogue as a whole it might seem Socrates assents (328b3) only for the sake of moderating the effect the attractions of Polemarchus’ company would have on Glaucion and his brother. That Socrates will later teach Polemarchus something about justice suggests the latter is unjustly named, since it would be Socrates who, like an Athenian polemarch, delivers justice to the foreigner. Friendship does not yet clearly link these two directly.

Yet Polemarchus’ initial appearance might at first seem to suggest the legitimate military leadership his name had originally denoted prior to the Athenian democracy. The relaying of his command to Glaucion and Socrates and their response is narrated by the latter in a highly organised system of chiastic repetition and alliterative vocabulary suggesting the outward looking defensive posture of an ordered military formation in foreign territory (327b2-8). But Polemarchus is

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13 Note (a) the alliterative pattern ἑκέευε...περιμέναι κελεύει...Πολέμαρχος (b) the chiastic word-order and repetitions in Πολέμαρχος...ἐκέευε...περιμέναι κελεύει...Πολέμαρχος περιμέναι...ἀλλὰ περιμένετε...Ἀλλὰ περιμένομεν (c) the corresponding hyperbolic κατιδὼν...Πολέμαρχος and μου...τοῦ ἰματίου (d) the terms of local reference and relation πόρρωθεν...διοθετον...μετατράφην...διοθετον.
quite at home in the Peiraeus, the entry point of the new and foreign, at the first festival of an imported cult. In contrast to his name's ancestral associations the metic is a product of the recent Periclean past's embrace of radical democracy and unfettered commerce. The Peiraeus was in fact the stronghold of the democracy, most notably later in opposing the thirty tyrants. Socrates emphasises this, since in addition to Polemarchus and Adeimantus he only names from their group Niceratus, who like Polemarchus was one of the tyrants' prominent victims. On the other hand, as Cephalus soon informs us (328c6-7), Socrates is indeed in foreign territory. Perhaps then Polemarchus the Peiraean pro-democrat would seem, in stopping Socrates who had been associated with the later tyrants Critias and Charmides, to act like a local polemarch dealing justly with the foreigner from the city.

In fact the implicit opposition between democracy and tyranny turns out to be illusory. When the pro-democrat Polemarchus jokingly resorts to the principle of numbers and refuses to listen to reasons, forcing Socrates and Glaucon to stay, the democratic principle that the majority should rule is parodied. This suggests not only the necessity for institutions of rational persuasion in legitimate compulsion as opposed to tyranny, but also the tyrannical potential of even such democratic institutions, of which the death of Socrates reminds us. Further, the illegitimacy of Polemarchus' pseudo-military role when he appeals to larger numbers as a measure of force here looks forward to Socrates' proof later in Bk I (351b-52a) that power derives from internal unity, and so relies on justice and loyalty, which there refutes Thrasymachus' endorsement of the value of competitive grasping for a larger amount (pleonexia) unlimited by justice. When derived from multiplicity rather than unity, force is a symptom of internal disorder, and unstable.

The reduction of numbers to a measure of force indicates that its proponent Polemarchus has only an illusory connection with the public face of democracy, where considerations of common interest are meant to hold sway, and individual citizens participate in power as equal members of the community with speaking rights. Himself a metic with no political rights, Polemarchus signifies his failure to

14 For references see Krentz 79 n.34.
grasp the dependence of political unity upon logos, when he deprives
Socrates of speaking rights. Athenian democracy was government by
all who were qualified to be heads of citizen households, and
Polemarchus rather represents the equally real but private aspect of
democratic society, that is, the principle of commitment to family and
private property.

Here the governing principle is not communal reflective
deliberation and freedom but rather the private demands of our
bodily condition. Our instinct to protect and enhance this with the
institutions of family and private property generates compelling
attachments, pre-reflective and prone to issue in the use of force in
defending against interference what we value as our private and
separate own. Since Polemarchus is a metic with civil
responsibilities limited to military service and financial contribution,
and rights only to commercial practice in public and the defence of
his private interests in court, his character and beliefs are constrained
by his experience to represent such motives, for which he accordingly
functions in the dialogue as a voice.

Of course that Polemarchus chooses to joke as he does with
Socrates and Glaucon does not indicate that he is in fact tyrannical,
but his subsequent death at the hands of tyrants motivated by greed
for his family wealth demonstrates his vulnerability to tyranny. Yet
vulnerability to tyranny is not in principle merely external.
Polemarchus’ constrained political condition limits his prospects in
the community to the goods of wealth and private social influence,
the compulsions for which dominate his motivation. Such goods can
be owned only by excluding others from them, so he might seem

15 Cf. Bloom 318, 323-24 and Page 252. There are strict limits on what
Polemarchus can and does consider his own, which falls well short of
engagement in public life. That Polemarchus at some point took up
citizenship in the colony of Thurii (see n. 10) does not demonstrate any
commitment to, or understanding of, a state’s common interest, since he
probably gave it up to protect his interest in the family property in Athens;
alternately, on the account found in the ancient biographies, his
identification with the democratic faction and consequent expulsion
would indicate an unstable partiality — the same preference for the
greater number, rather than unity, which he initially displays to Socrates.
liable to corruption at the hands of Thrasymachus the advocate of tyrannical *pleonexia*, unlimited gain at the expense of others, who is shortly to be found in his home. What defence does Polemarchus have against the limitless extrapolation of his own private motives which follows upon Thrasymachus' rejection of the value of justice? Thrasymachus identifies justice with the dictates of law, *nomos* (339b7-9, c10-12) but the Athenian *nomoi* are not the metic Polemarchus' own. What motivates him to abide by them, given his commitment to the sort of goods which are at least potentially the objects of *pleonexia*?

Thrasymachus too is a foreigner, and speaks here in a metic household. But he differs from the family of Cephalus, settled in the Peiraeus, as a travelling teacher without the vulnerability of a local household. It is precisely Polemarchus' relation to the household to which he is heir, the source paradoxically of his vulnerability to the thirty tyrants' greed, which protects him from corruption by Thrasymachus. Committed to the defence of property and family he cannot risk the denial of the state's justice of which he is a beneficiary. Of course the *oikos* is also a hostage for the good

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16 The term *pleonexia* and cognates occur some eighteen times in R. Twelve of these are in Socrates' conversation with Thrasymachus in Bk I; yet five of the remaining six occur in Glaucen and Adeimantus' challenge to Socrates in the first half of Bk II to convince them that the just man is happier than the unjust under all circumstances. This indicates the centrality of *pleonexia* to the conception of injustice in the main structural project of R. That this is so is confirmed by the final usage, in Bk IX (586b1) where the comparison of the two kinds of life is finally made. It is in Bk IX moreover that the moral psychology of the tyrant is finally revealed.

17 Cf. K. Lykos, *Plato on Justice and Power* (Albany, 1987) Pt I, ch.2, arguing that a conversation with metics avoids the concealment of true opinions by those affected with political ambition. This fails to distinguish between the concerns of those who hold property and those who do not. Lykos limits his study to R. I, and so does not consider the relation of the metics' interests to those of the citizens who take over the conversation from Bk II onward, which is dramatised in the discussion of guardians' domestic arrangements.

18 For the concept that metic status is a bargain between the polis and the metic, wherein the metic must display exemplary behaviour to fulfil his part, see Lysias xii.4 and 20, v.2-3, and xxii.5, and cf. Eur. *Supp.* 888-90.
behaviour of any citizen burgher, and Polemarchus’ motives for upholding justice are characteristic too of the citizens of a democracy, considered as private householders. It is to this ubiquitous point of view that Polemarchus is uniquely qualified to give voice as a metic, devoid of other ambition.19

But Thrasyilmachus suggests, at the very least, that Polemarchus’ self-interested alliance with the city’s justice is a contingent benefit more useful for the agent who appears just rather than really being so, as Glaucnon later makes clear in Bk II (358e-62c). If Polemarchus’ situation deprives him of the opportunity for full-scale tyranny, it might still allow him the benefits of careful thievery. Furthermore, his appearance in an alliance of numbers ready to deny Socrates the opportunity for rational persuasion suggests his belief that the city itself is merely such an alliance and justice merely the contingent mutual advantage of the majority, an advantage which can be identified without resort to rational persuasion; in other words, an alliance for the sake of those private goods we seem compelled to desire and defend by force. Justice then serves the interests of an essentially forceful private will, and has no particular content beyond the contingent advantage of that will in a negotiated relationship among the majority. This tyranny of the majority is again implied by Glaucnon’s speech in Bk II.

Glaucnon’s speech, then, reports the significance of Thrasyilmachus’ position for Polemarchus, and its conception of the nature of the city, as an essentially private alliance excludes any acknowledgment of a prior common good of the polis. This failure to consider any common ground of more basic significance to fellow citizens than their own private interests appears analogous to Polemarchus’ exclusion of

19 It might seem that this private, defensive, interest in self-limitation and democratic justice can even amount to the principle of a democracy’s political self-understanding, particularly in the modern age. But W.K. Lacey, The Family in Classical Greece (London, 1968) 88-90 and 99 argues that in Athens the state’s motive for controlling private property is to maintain a healthy number of oikoi. In that case there is also an autonomous public interest in moderating the enlargement of the individual citizen oikos, at least when an increase would be at the expense of the existence of other oikoi, as in cases of inheritance.
rational persuasion, which also requires common ground, on his initial encounter with Socrates; if so, then Polemarchus can indeed be helped by Socrates.

3. Cephalus and Polemarchus' Inheritance

Yet what good is Polemarchus to Socrates? At the very least the principle of unreflective compulsion he represents must be modified if Socrates is to engage in rational discussion. Insofar as Polemarchus' ethos corresponds to his metic status and preoccupation with the goods of his oikos and private associations, then once Polemarchus has brought him home Socrates' questions to his father Cephalus on the manner in which he acquired his wealth, and on its main benefit in life, raise an issue of vital concern to the son. Cephalus admits to only a moderate and decent acquisitiveness (330b1-7), in contrast to both his own ardently chrematistic grandfather, and extravagant or unlucky father (Polemarchus' grandfather); this leaves open the question of the degree of possessiveness or even acquisitiveness which Polemarchus inherits together with his patrimony. What does limit his father's potential for pleonexia, and does the same principle restrain the son?

Cephalus claims, in effect, that wealth can be a material cause of justice, by enabling him to pay his debts to gods and men (331a10-b7). It is of course no direct help toward speaking the truth, which he also asserts to be just. In that case, insofar as truth is the primary aim of philosophy, it does not seem that Polemarchus' family wealth can be very useful to Socrates. But if justice requires concern for the truth philosophy would at least be in league with the proper use of wealth. Yet as his grounds for observing what he proposes as the requirements of justice Cephalus can only piously offer a myth which sustains his fear of the afterlife. His response presupposes such an exclusive reliance on poets like Pindar, whom he quotes, and the value of the sacrifices he makes, as to deny philosophy a rôle in his life.

Both Cephalus' account of the requirements of justice, including sacrifice which he leaves to perform again, and his pious motivation of fear, exclude reflection or rational deliberation. Accordingly,
following Socrates' inference from his words of a definition of justice as returning what has been accepted and telling the truth (331c1-3), Cephalus is quite unperturbed in acknowledging the injustice of giving a madman back his weapons or telling him the whole truth, despite the contradiction of his previous admissions. The pious old man feels no obligation to allow reflective consideration, logos, a rôle in determining his morality. Yet madness, weapons and the private oikos are together reminiscent of the misfortune of the mythical Heracles who slew his family. Another myth thus provides the contradiction to Cephalus' myth-derived morality, which suggests the internal incoherence of the realm of poetic stories as a guide to justice, a charge made in Bk II by Adeimantus (362d-67e), leading to the critical revision thereafter by himself and Socrates of the theological and moral content of the poetry used in education (376d-92c).

More importantly, Socrates' proposal on Cephalus' behalf of a definition of justice, in other words, an account of the whole of it, indicates the radical partiality of the metic's conception of his obligations, a view which relates only to his private, wealthy, and aged condition. This suggests a connection between Cephalus' exclusion of reflection upon what is common in all of justice (its universal form), and his lack of concern, as a non-citizen, with the common good of the polis, in each case an exclusion of what transcends the particular and the private. There might then seem to be a relation between philosophy, as reflection upon universal forms, and the polis, founded in the public interest, in their mutual dependence upon what is common, a principle excluded by Cephalus' entirely private concern with wealth and death, the end of bodily life. Yet the case of Heracles might also indicate the madness of any philosopher's attempt reversely to exclude the rôle of the family, the private dimension and its compelling interests, from a place in his universal reflection.

Cephalus' exclusion of reflection upon what is common in all justice corresponds with Polemarchus' exclusion at his initial meeting with Socrates of rational persuasion regarding any common good they might share. Furthermore the motive for the father's moral principles, fear at the imminence of death and the afterlife, is paralleled by the motive already identified as behind the son's
potential for violence, fear for his private estate. And in each case a belief is at work: in Cephalus, a piously held myth which construes the obligations of justice so as to exclude a place for philosophy; in Polemarchus, an implicit assumption about the good of social relations which excludes from justice any constant content beyond the will of the majority, and the defence of their private interests. Polemarchus thus inherits from his father together with a shield factory the defence of a fear-inspired morality of the private life against the threat of rational reflection.

Cephalus leaves to assuage his fear, which Socrates' complacency-threatening questions have done nothing to calm, by expending further wealth in sacrifice, although he is relieved to think his heir will defend him, so that the resources of his private family concerns will suffice for morality. But in Cephalus' absence no mythical justification remains for assuming that justice is necessarily good for the agent. Polemarchus inherits his father's case, but while he too appeals to poetic authority, citing Simonides' dictum that it is just to return to each what is owed (331e3), distinct obligations to the gods drop out of the picture as does that of truthtelling. These particular responsibilities might of course be among what is owed, but once clarified Simonides' view seems to Polemarchus not to involve any such obligations. Polemarchus stands no more for religious obligations than for public duty, contrary to his name.

It becomes evident from his conversation with Socrates that without the gods to assure the benefit of justice to the agent Polemarchus relies on reciprocation by friends and their alliance in mutual defence of private goods. But without a concern for truth problems in identifying friends arise; and even sooner in this conversation the ability to tell truly what is owed to whom turns out to be very much required, as Socrates gets Polemarchus to agree that justice is not merely a matter of property rights, since it is not right to be responsible for harm to friends yet returned property can be misused to the owner's own harm (332a7-b3). The radical contingency of the good of private property is of course confirmed by the circumstances of Polemarchus' own death.20

20 See notes 10 and 11.
Polemarchus first realises at this point (332a10) his commitment to the principle that justice is necessarily good for someone, albeit only one’s friends. Without the help of gods, then, Polemarchus needs knowledge of the truth about who his friends are and what will benefit them. Thus the first among his friends would have to be those who can help him with the truth about such things. Accordingly, in the course of their extended conversation in Bk I, Socrates persuades Polemarchus to an alliance with himself based on the implicit assumptions that (i) justice is knowledge, and (ii) justice is always good (at least for the recipient).

It follows that at least some knowledge is good, and Polemarchus’ conversion to philosophy has begun.

4. Polemarchus’ Moral Pathology

Polemarchus agrees that justice is a principle of benefiting friends and, as an afterthought, harming enemies (332b5-8), based on a knowledge of what is appropriate in given circumstances. Thus it is treated first by Socrates as a kind of expertise like the various technai, which he introduces for comparison in order to encourage Polemarchus to identify the nature of the benefit, and the beneficiary, of justice. The latter’s extension of justice to harming enemies is an afterthought which indicates not just the thoughtlessness of the tendency to resort to force in the defence of private goods but also a failure by Polemarchus to see the real connections between the good of justice, the basis of friendship, and the just use of force, which can only be identified in the polis, a theme developed in the rest of the Republic.

Socrates applies a system of seven sets of questions, each employing two or three examples, and Polemarchus comes to the conclusions (a) that justice is involved in forming alliances and making war (332e5: although for what end is unspecified), and (b) in peace it is useless for any result (333d10-12), and yet (c) it is just as good for theft of property as for its preservation (334a7-b6). Polemarchus’ conception of justice serves his dominant motive to preserve himself and his own. The latter result signifies that this
conception does not distinguish such a motive from the urge to take for himself what is not his own, despite the strength of his moral feelings, fuelled by fear for his own. My analysis of the dialectic is designed to show that Plato chooses the particular examples he puts in Socrates' mouth in order to indicate by both their ambiguities (and Polemarchus' failure to recognise these) and also their occasional metaphorical significance Polemarchus' ignorance of the necessary role of the polis in justice, as a result of his metic status, and similarly his lack of a conception of the soul. Since Polemarchus is a metic constrained to private interests he is used as a voice for the limited view of life such interests involve, which the inadequacy of his conception of justice illuminates.

Socrates makes the assumption that if justice is expertise in what is owed or fitting then it is a skill or art; in order to draw out the further implications of this inference he asks a complex question: what such thing does justice provide and to whom (332d2-3)? Polemarchus is prepared for this by similar questions concerning the sample arts of medicine and cooking, but he overlooks the fact that medicine ultimately provides health, focusing only on the means, drugs, food and drink (c9-10). The 'Socratic proportion'21 (as health stands to the body, so virtue or in this case justice does to the soul), of which he seems ignorant, suggests that just as Polemarchus overlooks the end of medicine, he is unclear about the good of justice. The reason for this, it would follow, is that he does not understand the soul, an account of which Socrates will soon offer to Thrasymachus so as to prove that justice must be good for the agent (352d-354a). There Socrates uses the same concept of a function (έργον) as he does to show Polemarchus that if justice is human virtue it is always good for the recipient (335d3-12).22 A concept of the soul is required for Polemarchus to form a conception of the value to him of its work, rational deliberation, and so of that of Socrates.

21 For the term see R.E. Allen, The Dialogues of Plato (New Haven, 1984) 191; compare, e.g., Pl. Cri. 47a-48a, Gorg. 463e-66a, Prot. 311b-14b.

22 Cf. 341c-42e, 345c-46e, where Thrasymachus is compelled to agree that if justice is the craft of ruling, it is only good for the recipient, not for the practitioner, as such. Note that the subsequent proof that justice is good for the agent implies that it is not in fact a craft, but the natural function of the
Polemarchus' intellectual and moral pathology is further explored in regard to his claim that justice assigns good and bad, respectively, to friends and enemies (332d4-6). Socrates uses as examples the capacities of medicine and navigation for good and bad to prepare for the further question in what specific activity and with what result justice provides its proper benefit and harm. Polemarchus answers, in war and alliances (e5, respectively harming enemies and helping friends), but without specifying a particular outcome. This field of application suggests surprisingly that justice is useless in peace, insofar as a doctor is useless to the healthy and a helmsman to those on land, to which Polemarchus assents (e6-10). Yet medicine is useful not only for restoring but also maintaining health (cf. Allan 87, ad loc.), and indeed so is justice presumably for maintaining alliances in peace, in which case it would be the skill of a statesman, the political art, to the need for which we see Polemarchus the metic is oblivious. Further, the comparison of justice with navigation strongly suggests the common metaphor of the ship of state and again the political art. Yet this ship is always at sea and its helmsman always at work contrary to Polemarchus' assumption (e9-10). That he overlooks this conception of the just man suggests that Polemarchus, a metic for whom political subordination is an unwelcome necessity, is thus far unaware that the good ruler like the helmsman is of benefit to the citizens.

Polemarchus recognises the need for defence and so the possibility of war as the ground of the demand for loyalty in his alliance with a polis. Socrates and Glaucon will later find that war arises from pleonexia, when Glaucon, dissatisfied with the limitations of Adeimantus' rural utopia, demands the 'feverish city' which must

human soul. Plato's use of the craft analogy has generated much discussion which does not take into account the heuristic value of the comparison in relation to the specific beliefs of Socrates' interlocutors. But see W.H.B. Joseph, Essays in Ancient and Modern Philosophy (Oxford, 1935) 5-11, who proposes that in R.I it provides a reductio ad absurdum of the view that justice can be specified by a list of duties, that is, of specific actions in specific contexts.

In addition to its frequent occurrence in tragedy, the conceit of the ship of state is elaborated at length in R.VI, 488a-89c, where Socrates defends the claim that the philosopher, in most cases unrecognised, is its proper navigator.
acquire and defend more land and wealth generating the need for guardians (Bk II, 372c-374a). But the guardians will have to defend the city’s internal condition as much as its borders, and particularly that of their own souls, if they are to preserve it. The external threat of war and hence the need of defence against the pleonexia of others is intelligible to Polemarchus, but the internal threat caused by pleonexia confuses him and he overlooks at first the need for justice in peace. What then does limit pleonexia from following upon his attachment to wealth? His moral reaction later when the just man turns out to be a thief (334b7) suggests he is protected internally, yet by allowing this surprising conclusion to arise Polemarchus shows that his pleonexia is restrained by something quite unreflective and that he is liable to reject the value of reflection if it seems to threaten his private commitments.

Even at this earlier stage, despite what he has agreed, Polemarchus does instinctively feel that justice applies in peace (332ell-33a1). Turning then to peaceful pursuits, Socrates asks what the sample occupations of farming, unfamiliar to the metic who could not own land, and shoemaking acquire. In fact the products of farming are natural and various, tending to support a kind of pre-political self-sufficiency, at least in peace (cf. Ar. Ach.). The artificial and specialised product of the craft of shoemaking, on the contrary, depends upon a developed market in the city, and suggests a commercial conception of the benefits of peace. Similarly Polemarchus depends on the city not merely for defence but for his livelihood also. Further, since he necessarily lacks the landowner’s complacent conception of ancestral nobility, he is amenable to the craft analogy which implies that justice is knowledge.

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24 Cf. 399e, 401d-402c, 409a-e, 411e-12b.

25 Socrates and Adeimantus later exclude the values of the traditional aristocracy from the just city precisely by reducing farming to the status of a specialised craft (Bk II, 369c-70b). Contrast Legg., where citizens alone will be landowners, while metics must practice a craft (848e, 850b-c; cf. 920a-e, 921b-c) and see Whitehead 116-21; he concludes that in classical Athens 'the majority of metics were indeed occupied in crafts and commerce' (117).
In asking about the benefit of justice Socrates describes it alternately in terms of a use or an acquisition (333a10: χρείαν ἢ κτησίν). The former option suggests justice is not primarily concerned with property or wealth but some other requirement, activity, or human relationship. Confusing the distinction Polemarchus identifies the object of justice as successful business deals, which Socrates immediately converts into business associations (a12-14). Socrates has here introduced two distinctions, between material and immaterial benefits, and between the interactions of parties with opposed and with common aims. Restricted as a metric to the public activities of commerce and military service Polemarchus overlooks here and in what follows the kind of conception of justice these distinctions suggest because in accordance with his dominant concern for his private business he conceives of the polis exclusively as an institution for the acquisition and defence of economic interests.

In order to identify the aim of association with a just man Socrates now contrasts him with a player of the board game pettein, one version of which was a game between cities, and again with a builder (333b5: οἰκοδομικός) who in a concrete sense constructs private oikoi. Polemarchus admits that association with each of these has a distinct aim. Repeating the comparisons (b7-9) Socrates replaces the game player with a musician. These two occupations, in contrast to building oikoi, are linked by the lack a material product, which implicitly emphasises the question whether justice is like them or like building oikoi. At this point Polemarchus identifies the goal of association with the just man as money (b10). The properly political association, from which Polemarchus is excluded by devotion to private goods, might seem to have a quite different aim, with implications for the nature of justice.

Socrates asks about the precise moneymaking activity in contrast, for example, to trading in horses or ships in which it is beneficial to be associated with a just man. The ambiguously named ἵππος (c1) useful for horses may be an expert adviser in which case perhaps the

26 LSJ s.v. χρεία, esp. I.1, II.c, IV (and of course III passim).
just man too is useful for some expertise, or he may be the horsetrader in which case justice (and so the law) is here required to avoid cheating. The example equivocates as to whether the associates have common or opposed aims, which Polemarchus is unqualified to realise without a conception of a common good. For buying ships Socrates actually specifies as alternative associates the shipbuilder and helmsman (c3). If the just man is like either of these he will be an expert; moreover in the case of the ship of state, the builder needs knowledge of justice to frame the laws, the helmsman to apply them. But Polemarchus thinks the just man is good for safeguarding money (c7-d1), which seems to require no knowledge, rather than for trade.

The examples of a scythe, shield, and lyre are used to infer that when any tool is not in use but in safe storage, and so useless, the particular art of using each thing is replaced by justice (333d3-12). This suggests that there is an art for the use of money too when it is not merely being safeguarded, and in fact Polemarchus has ignored the fact that money can be deposited at interest, which is sometimes risky, when not otherwise needed. This oversight indicates his primary preoccupation with the protection of what is already his own, and not acquisition. But the restraint of pleonexia apparent here does seem rather unstable since he also overlooked the possibility that justice is a common obligation in all trading, a matter in which the polis takes an interest. Further, just as Polemarchus' preoccupation with the particular and hence with material benefits leads him to associate justice with money, so he fails to identify either the common rôle of money in all trade or the possibility that justice has a common rôle in all the associations constituting the city. Indeed Polemarchus, concerned to protect his own private goods, fails to realise that justice protects the common good of the polis.

In the case of guarding a scythe Socrates proposes that justice is useful 'both in common (or public) and in private' (333d4). Reflection here should suggest that the city is required to preserve in common certain other things beside tools and money, which the following examples, the shield and lyre, respectively indicate might include safety and culture, things impossible to secure alone. Yet Polemarchus is oblivious to the continuing equivocation between joint concerns, and transactions between an essentially separate
buyer and seller, or owner and guardian. When we recall that the concept of use (χρεία) has been assimilated above to that of private acquisition (κτήσις), the paradox of the conclusion that justice is useful for guarding the useless (d10-11) is intelligible. The use of justice may well only be intelligible to someone who does not reduce all value to that of private possession.

At this point in the dialogue, in which so far there has been no reference to the rôle of the polis and hence to community Socrates asserts that justice seems unimportant (333e1), but the concepts of joint preservation and of guardians are themselves preserved in the later discussion of the just polis. The motive of concern for one’s own which issues in defensive force is not entirely limited to Polemarchus’ conception of private goods and not entirely exclusive of rational reflection. The definition of justice discovered by Socrates and Glaucon in Bk IV turns out to restrict each citizen to their own concerns (433a-34d; 442d-45b),28 but Socrates emphasises χρεία over κτήσις: justice in the polis and soul is for each part to do its own work. This involves a functional analysis of both polis and soul, in which Polemarchus has not engaged. In retrospect he appears as a soul which has mistaken part of itself, and not the highest part, for the whole, while insofar as he is excluded from sharing fully in the political community he mistakes that part of the latter of which he has experience for the political whole.

5. Odysseus, Socrates, and Deception

Socrates finally confounds Polemarchus with the result that as expertise in preservation justice like other skills would equally involve expertise in its opposite theft, or more generally fraudulent deception (334a8: κλέπτειν). The examples of boxing and military guarding, significant for Polemarchus in view of his defensive concern for his own, represent respectively private and public fighting; the intervening case of medicine, which alleviates the effects of fighting on the body, suggests, by the Socratic proportion, philosophy, which alleviates the effects on the soul (and perhaps the

28 I must thank Professor Godfrey Tanner for emphasising this point to me.
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polis) of Polemarchus’ compulsive commitment to private goods. Now what passes for philosophy within this discussion seems peculiarly Socratic.

The implication that if the just man is skilled at guarding money he is also skilled at stealing it (334a7-9), which Polemarchus attributes to the deficiencies of this logos, is reminiscent of Socrates’ assertion in the Phaedo (69a-b) that wisdom not pleasure is the true currency of moral trade. Replacing the term money (which buys bodily pleasure) with wisdom (which buys happiness), we could infer here that the just man preserves wisdom; furthermore in this most recent twist of the argument Socrates himself, like the just man, seems to deceive others and deprive them of theirs. Not surprisingly there is here a danger that Polemarchus will lose faith in any logos with Socrates about justice and in self-defence break off their joint venture.

Socrates attributes the knowledge that the just man is a thief to Homer as Polemarchus’ instructor, since the poet approves of Odysseus’ maternal grandfather Autolycus who ‘surpassed all men in theft and fraud’ (Od. 19.395-6). Autolycus is approved by Hermes for his sacrifices, but this aspect of the account of justice inherited from Cephalus has been neglected by Polemarchus along with the demands of truth-telling. Accordingly he cannot rely on Homer for the truth about justice.

In the context of the quoted lines of the Odyssey Odysseus’ scar is explained as a byproduct of his name, which was given to him by Autolycus, a name whose etymology signifies unpopularity (Od. 19.407-9). For the burden of bearing this name the adult Odysseus had gone to claim his reward from Autolycus, and been gashed in a hunt by a boar which he killed. The scar he received in overcoming the animal is the mark of Odysseus’ true identity, which is recognised only by his nurse Eurycleia since Odysseus is a great deceiver. Similarly Socrates’ deceptive speech has given him an unpopular name yet he has mastered his (animal) appetites in pursuit of virtue and the sign of his self-mastery should allow us to recognise the truth

29 Phid. is connected to R. by the theme of death, which links Polemarchus and Socrates, and Cephalus (Bk I) with the myth of Ur (Bk X).
about him. The lying Odysseus is thus an archetype for the just Socrates.

Odysseus lies saying that he came from Crete, the land of liars,\(^{30}\) and later tells a false tale to defraud Eumaeus of a cloak with which to cover himself up; according to Odysseus, at Troy he once caused another man who was (in fact) his own true self, upon telling a lie, to disappear, whereby he got from this disappearing, lying, true self a cloak with which to cover himself up (Od. 14.459-506). The compounded self-referentiality of Odysseus' deceptive speech indicates both the requirement of a self-presentation in the act of self-concealment, and also that the mode of such self-presentation must itself reveal to those who can recognise it the truth of the concealed self.\(^{31}\)

The Republic also involves such compounded self-referentiality, since Socrates reports the whole conversation in which the dialogue consists, as having taken place the previous evening; and because in the course of that conversation the making of certain kinds of false statements is authorised by the agreement of those to whom Socrates speaks (according to his report). This involves both concealing the truth from madmen and the ignorant for their own benefit, which Cephalus and subsequently Adeimantus agree is right (331c5-d1; cf. 382c-d), and also, it later turns out, preserving the just polis by 'noble falsehoods' (414c-15c; cf. 389b-c), which Glauccon accepts as needed to


\(^{31}\) Thus in identifying himself as from Crete Odysseus reveals that he is lying; by identifying himself as the beneficiary of lies who becomes concealed, he reveals the character and aim of his present words. Louise H. Pratt, Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar (Ann Arbor, 1993) 89, argues that the story Odysseus tells Eumaeus provides a model of behaviour to be copied (cf. 90-91, esp. 'the lies preserve and promote the values shared by Odysseus' culture...'), but to account for Odyssean lying only in moral terms overlooks its appeal to audience differentiation and self-referentiality. Thus Pratt fails to recognise the symbolism of cloaking. For earlier discussions of Odysseus' lying see Pratt 89 notes 44 and 45.
reconcile the distinct types of people required in their relations with one another so that the common good will be sovereign.

Adeimantus' admission that the ignorant as well as the mad might need to be lied to, implies that the perfect philosopher is aware that some truths are liable to be misunderstood by, and are dangerous to, some other types of people; but this consideration equally well would apply to Socrates' narration of a conversation about justice to an indeterminate audience. Consider also Socrates' relations to the other participants within the reported discussion: according to the doctrine of 'noble falsehoods' in order to preserve the common benefit of conversation with those participants less motivated by philosophy Socrates may need to conceal some of the truth about his own views, and deceive them about the common basis for agreement. Accordingly the concealed truth, both with regard to the account of justice and the rest of the subject matter of the Republic, and also concerning Socrates' motives in persuading those with whom he talks to the conclusions they reach, is something to be recognised by those who can, as Eurycleia recognised Odysseus from his scar. The scar Odysseus gained in overcoming a boar corresponds on this view to Socrates' distinctive motivation in virtue of having mastered his animal instincts, which is to say, the unreflective commitments dramatised by Polemarchus.

Socrates' reasons for concealing himself derive from the dangers inherent in Polemarchus' compulsory commitment to private goods; ultimately in other contexts (such as courts) such men are only too willing to defend their perceived interests by unreflective resort to force. More immediately, Polemarchus' accommodation to joint reflection with Socrates depends upon allowance being made for his commitments. He would rather give up reflection than his concern for private goods and so Socrates cannot expose his own radically different commitments without undermining the joint venture, until and unless Polemarchus might come to believe his own concerns are best satisfied by an accommodation to those of Socrates.

When Polemarchus rejects the results of the logos and reverts to his account of justice as helping friends and harming enemies (334b7-9) Socrates is required to reconcile him with the need for knowledge by
allowing him to discover that he needs to distinguish true friends from false (c6-9). Polemarchus further accepts that his true friends are the just, his enemies the unjust (d3-11), which contradicts, although this is not brought out, the correct inference from his definition, that two enemies might be just men justly harming each other. Now that his concept of a friend as a man who is truly beneficial (χρηστός c2-7), in other words good (ἀγαθός c10), has been reformulated as non-perspectival (non-relative) but rather objective, he is happy to identify the just man as this same person. Thus by a logical deception Socrates preserves Polemarchus from further distrust of the logos (d7-8). It is from here a short step for Polemarchus to accept that it is never the work of a just man to harm anyone (335d11-13), which he is not reluctant to do since he now believes the just man can be good to another independently of whether they are acknowledged (that is, apparent) friends. Yet it is not surprising that Thrasymachus must break in shortly, given that in his naivety Polemarchus has not yet considered how a just man would treat an unjust.

Socrates introduces three sets of examples in order to show that the work of a just man is never to harm anyone on the grounds that the just man is the virtuous man, and to harm someone is to make them vicious, and so unjust. The first examples involve animals, to establish that harming (βλάπτει) something makes it worse in its species' virtue (335b6-c3). This overlooks what seems unique about human virtue, identified here with justice (c4-5), that it concerns our relations with each other, and so the polis. The second set of examples uses the crafts to infer that it is not the characteristic work of the just and good to make others unjust or bad (c14-d2). Polemarchus' assent indicates he has forgotten that he previously agreed a skill to be capable equally of opposite results so that the just man was the best thief (333e3-34a10). Accordingly Socrates has not here taught him knowledge of justice but only the salutary belief that justice is knowledge, although he does not yet understand of what kind.

Note that Polemarchus accepts this substitution with the implication that the good are not merely those one admires, but those who are truly beneficial.
The third set of examples would be spurious if not needed to justify Polemarchus' previous admission that the just or good man cannot make people bad, that is, harm them. These examples of the natural powers heat and dryness (335d3-5), which do not make things respectively cold or wet, assimilate justice to a different kind of power than a craft and suggest it is natural. Moreover the hot, cold, dry, and wet, as the principles of all body in contemporary physical and medical thinking, suggest again the Socratic proportion and so a doctrine that justice and injustice, and perhaps knowledge and ignorance, are principles of the soul, which is hinted at by the introduction of the verb ψυχειν (d2: 'to cool'); but then Polemarchus has not referred to the soul, which might explain why he is unaware of what kind of knowledge justice is.

6. The Soul and the Polis

Polemarchus' answers to Socrates have revealed that he is oblivious to the rôle of the polis and of the soul in justice. Since he has never before stopped to think about what justice is, he has never considered what it stands against. Thus he is quite unprepared for the effect of Thrasymachus: he is oblivious to the fundamentally political context of justice implied by its rôle in law which to him as a metic is essentially alien. Preoccupied with the contingent private benefits of his alliance to an essentially foreign state he has not yet faced the possibility that justice is bad for the agent nor the enticement of unfettered pleonexia. His protection from this is the private estate for which he fears. Nevertheless the concern for one's own in conjunction with pleonexia can become the cause of political corruption of an alliance of citizen households as a tyrannical polis such as Thucydides suggests became true of Athens,33 a danger mimicked by Polemarchus' mock tyranny at the outset.

Despite this Polemarchus is now persuaded into an alliance with Socrates (335e7-10) to oppose any interpretation of poetic or political wisdom which asserts that justice is responsible for any harm. Polemarchus has now discovered within himself the belief that the

33 Th. 2.63, 3.37, 5.84-116, 6.24.
just man is a good man and so beneficial to those he deals with and that the just man has a certain kind of knowledge responsible for this power he possesses, and on this basis Polemarchus is prepared to reformulate his views about what justice is. While his commitment to a private conception of what is good, that is, his family and estate, has not been challenged he is now prepared to adapt this to the possibility that it depends upon some other autonomous and sovereign source of good which he now understands to be knowledge of justice and which is good for him even in advance of any particular negotiated alliance. His subsequent behaviour in the dialogue is indicative of his conversion.

Later Polemarchus breaks into Socrates’ conversation with Thrasymachus at a significant juncture (340a1-b9). Socrates has just completed his first refutation of Thrasymachus’ initial formulation of his teaching, that justice is the interest of the stronger, understood as the ruler of a polis, the sovereign source of power. Thrasymachus means that justice is no more than a name for the means a ruler uses to maintain his rule; in other words it is the law and the law has infinitely revisable content. The reference to self-interested power has introduced precisely the aspect of the polis with which Polemarchus must negotiate his relationship in defence of his oikos and it is just such a negotiated alliance which he had originally called justice.

Now Thrasymachus has agreed with Socrates that not only (i) is justice the advantage of the ruler (339a1-2; cf. 338c1-2), but also both that (ii) obedience to the ruler is just (339b7-9; cf. c10-12), and that (iii) rulers can make mistakes about their interests (c1-3), and so they may make laws contrary to their interests (c4-9). From these latter admissions it follows that (iv) justice can be equally contrary to the interests of the ruler (339e1-8). Polemarchus now appears in the rôle of Socrates’ student or second, as similarly Cleitophon rallies to the defence of Thrasymachus. Polemarchus, whose new beliefs are threatened by the prospect that justice is not in the interests of the recipient, affirms the admissions (ii) and (iii) vehemently (340a4-6), perhaps suggesting his own commitment to both obedience to the law and its fallibility.34 At Cleitophon’s insistence upon (ii), the

34 Crito, another family man, who had also begun his appeal to Socrates to
identity of justice with the law (a7-8), which he evidently takes as Thrasymachus' central claim (legal positivism), Polemarchus insists upon the inconsistency of the conclusion (iv) with Thrasymachus' original claim (i) that justice is the interest of the ruler. He has clearly grasped a certain minimum insight into the value of reflection but in clinging to the words he shows he has not realised that these must in justice be referred back to the soul of the speaker for their meaning. More importantly though in focusing on (iii), the possibility of error, Polemarchus shows his growing awareness of the value of reflection on one's own interests, and so of philosophy.

Reference to the city and the forces exposed therein points to their source in the forces of the human soul. Thrasymachus' expansive portrait of the powerfully unjust man removes the motive of fear for one's own behind Polemarchus' implicit reliance upon protection by the city. By portraying the fearless tyrant whose appetite ranges beyond the limited private estate that a metic might possess Thrasymachus promotes an unfettering from convention of the desire behind Polemarchus' attachment to wealth, as unlimited pleonexia, the tyrant in the soul. Then the good of justice for the agent must be reconstructed as a limitation of desire by proposing for it an ultimate end which determines the ultimate nature of desire and guarantees its satisfaction. 35 It is precisely the lack of such an end which leaves Claucon and Adeimantus unsatisfied by the conclusion of Bk I. The limitation Polemarchus responds to, fear for his own, is a result of his commitment to vulnerable private goods; yet men with a rôle in the state, adapted to considering the city as a whole, are capable of contemplating an all encompassing desire and thus remain unsatisfied by conventional accounts of the common good.

escape from prison on the basis of the principle that it is right to help friends and harm enemies, is persuaded too that one must obey the law, even though it is fallible in application; see Pl. *Cri.* passim, esp. 45c5-8, 50c1-3, 53b1-11.

35 The concept of a limit is introduced in Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus' claim that it is better to outdo (πλεονεκτεῖν) everyone else (349b2-50c7), which depends upon assimilating justice to a craft, since craftsmen only aim to achieve the same determinate result as other craftsmen, *qua* craftsmen do. Bloom 335-36 comments that justice is not like a craft, since it is concerned with the particular, not the universal, but
Yet without Socrates was Polemarchus vulnerable to a destruction of his internal self-limitation? His sense of justice is based on the defence of private self-interest by private alliances. Yet private attachments defended by force are vulnerable to overwhelming public force, and the obligations of states to aliens are revisable at the pleasure of the government (as are the laws). This implies that there are no limitations to what Polemarchus might have done at the bidding of a state in order to protect his alliance with it. Compelled by defensive fear, he could not oppose the tyrannical democracy. But again Polemarchus' own desire has been limited both by his exclusion from political opportunity and his commitment to his private oikos and he is preserved from the internal experience of tyrannical eros. That is fortunate as equally he would have no internal resistance to it since as a metic he has no experience of any common, sovereign, absolute positive obligations which might bind citizens, and it requires a conception of the overriding value of such a common goal to bridle the force of a potentially tyrannical eros. Only philosophers, it will be shown, have the goal of a sufficiently universal object in order to capture fully the force of an eros liberated from the requirements of tradition and convention.

Such a goal is beyond Polemarchus and since he is committed to private attachment he becomes in Bk V the origin of resistance to the communisation of the guardians' family (449b); thus his place among the rulers is threatened. All the same the guardians are to be encouraged to strive competitively in the common interest by rewards of physical pleasure and status (468b-d). This shows the just polis cannot reject private attachments absolutely, and further the rewards which it is agreed that guardians require motivate pleonectic desire. This fails to do justice to the concept of a limit, or terminus, in relation to pleonectic desire. Ultimately, we are shown, only knowledge of universals can 'contain' our ultimate desires and reformulate our interest in particulars. Thus Joseph 31 claims that this argument against Thrasymachus '...is absolutely convincing and...the whole positive doctrine of the Republic is in accordance with the principle of it. Injustice is conceived as πλεονεκτεία: the attempt to get more than anybody else.' See too n. 16 above. Yet as Joseph 5-11 himself seems to recognise this does not imply that justice is indeed a craft, according to R., but another kind of knowledge and another kind of limitation, or terminus.
efforts to outdo their fellows, so that the polis actively sponsors a moderate amount of what motivates Polemarchus, private benefit. Accordingly, his motives can be reconciled with the demands of a justice which subordinates his own concerns to other requirements.

It is not until the philosopher kings are introduced, necessarily transcending Polemarchus' conception (he is silent from then on), that pleonectic ἔρως is essentially limited and reformed by a sufficient object, the universal forms and the good itself. Polemarchus' alliance with Socrates is based on the belief that such knowledge is good, but not a capacity to attain it, and hence involves a reliance upon the wisdom of philosophers in motivating the just use and limitation of his compulsory attachment to private family and wealth. Not having access within himself to what is common Polemarchus, as his name suggests, must continue to see justice as a relation to other distinct parties requiring the potential for force. In the latter point he is in principle correct but force must depend upon reason and the common good. Yet as the indications that he is wrongly named suggest Polemarchus, who does not understand the soul, is mistaken about his identity, and so needs an external alliance with Socrates for his own good.