

ABSTRACT

Civic Flourishing and Individual Freedom: The Political Tension

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Which is more important: a perfectly flourishing city or a perfectly free individual? All societies at all times and in all places deal with this tension. This thesis looks at thinkers who have answered this question at different points along a political continuum. Plato's *Republic* can serve as a thought experiment that allows us to look at the civic end of the continuum. On the other, individualistic end, I look at both J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* and F.A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* as descriptions of different ways to orient society solely for the purpose of increasing individual freedom. Near the middle of these two extremes lies the society that I find Socrates imagining in the *Apology* and the *Crito*. The primary purpose of this thesis is to analyze these various points along this continuum between civic health and individual freedom.

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CIVIC FLOURISHING AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM:
THE POLITICAL TENSION

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CHAPTER ONE

The Republic Abstraction

Political life in all places and at all times is characterized by a natural tension between the freedom of the individual and the health and wholeness of the state. Different political theorists and different polities resolve this tension in various ways, but the tension itself is permanent. One can imagine a continuum such that at one extreme the flourishing of the state is absolutely prioritized and the individual subjected to this end. At the other extreme individual freedom is prioritized to such an extent that the state can make virtually no demands against this. Our society obviously falls very close to this individualist end. But is this a good thing? Is such a high regard for personal freedom really best for individuals living together?

In this thesis, I explore different ways of resolving the tension between individual freedom and civic health by analyzing four texts that differ precisely in this regard. Ultimately, I am interested in two things: understanding what sorts of things are sacrificed and gained as life is lived at one or another point on the continuum, and reflecting on what might be ideal. The texts I use to help me think through this are Plato's *Republic*, *Apology* and *Crito*, Mill's *On Liberty*, and Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*. As I interpret these texts, the *Republic* is useful for thinking about one extreme end of the continuum, namely absolute attention to civic health. At the other end of the continuum, Mill and Hayek offer different versions of an emphasis on individualism over-and-against

the state. In the middle somewhere I place the *Apology* and *Crito*, two texts I use to help me imagine what an ideal balance might be like.

I begin by looking to Plato's *Republic* in an attempt to define the civic end of this continuum. Socrates gives us descriptions of two cities—The City of Need and the Kallipolis—that prioritize health and flourishing for the city as a whole. In both cities the individual's happiness is consistently sacrificed for the sake of the whole. Again and again Socrates tells his interlocutors that his intention is not to make one person or group happy, but rather it is to make the city per se happy: “in establishing our city, we aren't aiming to make any one group outstandingly happy but to make the whole city so...to be fashioning the happy city” (420bc).

If one were to read the *Republic* as merely a guide concerning politics, he would be sadly disappointed. Neither the City of Need nor the Kallipolis fully take into account human nature, and de-emphasizing the health and happiness of the individual to this point is unsustainable. Realizing this, one can either think the philosopher simply mistaken and add this work to the pile of disproven theories, or one can recognize that the *Republic* was not intended to be Plato's political “how-to” book. Instead, this work can be read as a thought experiment that examines what a perfect city would look like without the burden of cultivating its citizens' subjective experiences. This is the way I use the *Republic*, giving full respect to the genius of the ancient philosopher and the utility of the theory for considering politics.

First, I turn to the city Socrates and his interlocutors plan first, the City of Need, examining its benefits and shortcomings. Then I turn to the Kallipolis to find what it

adds to the City of Need. I look at the characteristics of this city and their implications for its citizens, concluding that the Kallipolis is not actually the model we should use for shaping our own society. I conclude this chapter with thoughts on why analyzing the civic end of the continuum is useful for thinking about the sort of society for which we should strive.

The City of Need is the bare-bones description of what is needed for people living together to remain alive and healthy in the easiest way possible. Socrates describes this city to his interlocutors as “a city in theory from its beginning” saying that their “needs, it seems...will create it” (369c). The aim of the city is to provide for the physical health of its inhabitants. The reader can infer that purely physical need is the sort of need to which Socrates refers by first considerations taken. The “greatest need is to provide food to sustain life” then “second is for shelter, and third for clothes and such,” (369d). This aim is fulfilled more efficiently by dividing the labor amongst the small population and allowing each person to focus on what he does best. Once the division of labor is instituted, the occupations differentiate slightly to include subsets such as cobblers and metalworkers to be included under the general categories of clothiers and farmers. Because the primary goal is the health of the inhabitants, civic activity is limited to matters pertaining to physical well-being, such as agriculture, carpentry, medicine, and the like. One finds that because of this division of labor, a person’s primary role is to work for the sake of the community while living off of the work of other members in exchange. One man has one job, and the rest of his physical needs are provided for entirely by others.

According to Socrates' description, one sees that the chief virtue of this city is moderation (372a-c). Because one depends so heavily on the work of those around him, he is obliged to use the communal resources responsibly and to focus on his particular duties to the community in order to reciprocate. The nature of Glaucon's objection to the City of Need reveals its shortcomings well. He objects that Socrates is feeding the inhabitants as a man would feed pigs (372d). The emphasis on moderation and simplicity leads Glaucon to equate civic life in the City of Need with animalistic survival. He wants the pleasantries of life without the hardships, such as artists, exquisite food, and money without strife, waste, and war (*ibid.*). Though he rightly identifies the way this city reduces the human experience, he reveals that he is not thinking of the noble, intellectual pursuits that have been excluded. Unfortunately, as Socrates points out, the finer things cannot be had or kept without a likely chance of the less fine. When one expands beyond basic physical needs, there is always the risk. In order to enjoy finer things, one must risk experiencing pain that would not have been a part of life had he contented himself with subsistence.

The City of Need offers a reductionist account of human nature by assuming that the only needs its inhabitants have are physical and ignoring the intellectual or spiritual aspects of life. All other pursuits are relegated to a person's leisure time and are regulated by his primary duty to the community. Considering the premise Socrates puts forth that a man does better work if he pursues one craft rather than many, the activities of a person's leisure time would most likely be limited to those things necessary for

survival so that those secondary activities do not take away from the efficient production of the primary one.

Though many occupations are listed in the makeup of this city, there is no mention of any occupation associated with non-physical aspects of human life. There are no powerful religious leaders, no politicians, no academics. No one in this city is doing anything except living healthily. One may argue that those things could be pursued during a person's leisure time, but not only is that leisure time limited by the duty to the community, but also it is impossible to develop advanced schools of thought or art if they are relegated entirely to leisure time. Socrates himself says that "the thing to be done won't wait on the leisure of the doer, but the doer must of necessity pay close attention to his work rather than treating it as a secondary occupation," (370b). In these lines he is describing the necessary focus when a person works in his primary occupation, but they could just as well be applied to one pursuing the arts or academics. Further, we see that the first things to be added after Glaucon's objection are artists, as if Socrates knew that they would have no place at all in the first city (373a).

The search for the Good does not even come up in the discussion of the City of Need. One may argue that it could have been included later had the conversation not been turned, but this is not the case. The organization of the City of Need leaves no room for the pursuit of the Good. In this city, the search is supererogatory at best and selfish at worst. Along with intellectual pursuits and arts, the search for the Good, here referred to as philosophy, would be relegated to a secondary concern and discouraged for its inability to aid in survival. On this point, it is obvious that though Socrates describes the

City of Need as the true and healthy city, he does not himself find it sufficient (372e). He must be referring to the physical health found in the moderate practices of the City of Need and cannot be referring to its intellectual paucity. He later says:

[I]f we don't know [the Good], even the fullest possible knowledge of other things [i.e. the virtues] is of no benefit to us, any more than if we acquire any possession without the good of it. Or do you think that it is any advantage...to know everything except the Good, thereby knowing nothing fine or good? [...] Nobody is satisfied to acquire things that are merely believed to be good...but everyone wants the things that really *are* good and disdains mere belief here. [...] Every soul pursues the good and does its utmost for its sake. It divines that the good is something but it is perplexed and cannot adequately grasp what it is or acquire the sort of stable beliefs it has about other things, and so it misses the benefit, if any, that even those other things may give. (505a-b, e)

These lines imply nigh unquestionably that a city not ordered after knowledge of the Good in a meaningful way will not be satisfactory, no matter how physically healthy its inhabitants. Though the City of Need is the truest city because all of its inhabitants are united as one, it does not even begin to address those specifically human needs, like intellectual stimulation, for example.

If the City of Need is not the picture of complete flourishing, then one must look to the Kallipolis to find what it adds to the fill in the gaps. With this move, Socrates inches a bit closer to fulfilling some higher desires. As Glaucon requested, the Kallipolis includes excellences in all of the fields included in the City of Need. It surpasses adequacy and encourages pursuit of the higher practices of even the basic occupations. For example, in this city one finds fine cuisine instead of moderate, simple meals. One reclines on nice couches in ornate clothing under beautiful roofs rather than sitting under a plain roof around a simple table the clothing required by the weather. This elaboration

on the basic necessities comes about because the moderation required by the social structure of the City of Need is replaced in the Kallipolis by encouragement towards excess. As already pointed out, the Kallipolis moves past the service of only physical needs by including artists and intellectuals. In this way it no longer prioritizes physical health through moderation.

Everyone in the City of Need served an equal role in the city's survival, but in the Kallipolis, the different classes are responsible for protecting and serving the city in different ways. There are drastic consequences of the division of labor in the Kallipolis as it identifies and encourages different characteristics in its different parts. One may think this would lead to factions in the city, but Socrates is careful to remind us that these parts all serve the one city. They do not have interests particular to their own class over and above the rest. If this were the case there would be many cities instead of one (422e-423ab). The focus is on flourishing and not only survival here, so each class works not only to maintain a satisfactory level but to develop its particular form of service to the city to its fullest capacity. As I will argue later, this does not mean that the citizens of the Kallipolis are free to individually develop; instead, this means that the classes are encouraged to embody their collective roles more and more.

This dogged focus brings us to another addition in the Kallipolis: justice and, inversely, injustice. Socrates says to his interlocutors: "It isn't merely the origin of a city that we're considering, it seems, but the origin of a *luxurious* city. And that may not be a bad idea, for by examining it, we might well see how justice *and* injustice grow up in cities," (*emphasis added* 372e). This indicates that the City of Need is not sufficient to

identify the beginnings of injustice. We know that justice is in the first city by Socrates' remark in Book IV that the idea of tending to one's own role, which is how he defined justice, had been around since the beginning of the whole conversation (434d-e).

We see that Socrates must move to the Kallipolis as a tool to deal more directly with the question of injustice, which is after all part of what Glaucon and Adeimantus challenged Socrates to describe: what is justice, what is injustice, and why the one is good in itself (367c-e). As was said, once one moves beyond merely physical necessity, there is risk involved in the outcome. It will include inextricably linked positive and negative aspects, such as the justice and injustice found in the Kallipolis. The unjust aspect of the city is the excess into which each class is encouraged. Socrates describes the just man as one whose rational parts rules his spirited part and both together rule the appetitive. In this new city, however, the citizens are not just individually in this way. As I suggested, each class is directed to cultivate a particular part of the soul. In this city one is able to find both justice and injustice that was not recognizable in the City of Need.

A third feature added to the City of Need by the Kallipolis is a hierarchical structure. Since the first city had no politicians or military, it lacked a structured societal order. The City of Need featured a more egalitarian structure considering the importance of each inhabitant for the survival of the rest. All played vital roles. The Kallipolis, on the other hand, is explicitly ordered into hierarchical classes. These classes do not relate to one another as equals. There is conscious and intentional differentiation of authority in the Kallipolis. Of course, Socrates makes a point to explain that this is a natural differentiation and that a citizen should not balk at being assigned to a class with less

ruling authority. The Myth of the Metals attempts to assure the citizens that these different places in society are ordained by nature and the gods and thus should be respected with gladness. Along with this hierarchy comes leisure time, as only one class, the guardians, is tasked with protecting and policing the whole city. The citizens of the merchant class are free to indulge themselves as their appetitive natures lead, provided of course that it does not detract from their roles in the city, because they are kept from harm by the guardians.

With all of these additions, one may be led to believe that the structure of the Kallipolis is ideal for the planning of a society. If this were the case, the search for an appropriate balance between the two extremes of total civic flourishing and absolute individual health would be over, and one could confidently and consistently emphasize civic considerations over individuals. However, even with these additions that attempt to fulfill more than simply physical needs for the citizens, the Kallipolis is not an appropriate place to settle on the continuum. Its citizens have a hard time being just and healthy; the natural, private affections of its people are sacrificed to civic health; it contradicts Socrates' abiding concern with individual flourishing; and its layout is contingent upon a ruler in possession of full knowledge of the Good. This situation is utterly improbable considering the nature and limitations of humanity. Most importantly, though, it does not leave room for individual flourishing.

Justice exists on the macro scale in the Kallipolis, but its citizens themselves are not able to lead just lives. By living according to programs set up to develop one part of their souls over the rest, the citizens are not able to allow the reasoning part of their souls

to rule over the rest. Only the ruling class is encouraged in that regard. The guardians are prompted to disciplined but overly-spirited natures, and the merchant class is left to its greedy decadence. It seems that self-control would not be properly developed, let alone any of the other virtues aside from the chief characteristic of the class (i.e. courage in the guardians) because control is effected externally by the guardian class. Unlike the City of Need that relied heavily on moderation on the part of its inhabitants for its own health and theirs, this city allows its citizens indulgences and “luxuries,” thus forfeiting optimum physical health in favor of happiness. The city as a whole achieves justice by perfectly balancing its parts against one another, and it is with that analogy that Socrates is able to show that the just soul rightly balances its parts as well. In order to achieve this civic balance, it is necessary that no care is taken for the right ordering of the citizens’ souls.

Even if the individuals in each class of the Kallipolis manage to still lead just lives, a part of their nature is ignored for the sake of unity in the city. For example, in order for there to be no factions in the Kallipolis, guardians are denied the freedom to have families of their own. They are allowed sexual liaisons and offspring, but they are not permitted to hold some in closer regard than others. This is why they call all of those older father and mother and all of the same age sister and brother. The structure of the Kallipolis actively undercuts natural affections, and in this way denies an essential part of human nature.

Civic justice is not an adequate replacement for individual flourishing, if one takes seriously the care that Socrates shows for his interlocutors personally and the

personal character of the Myth of Er. Beginning with Polemarchus is the first scene of the dialogue, Socrates shows that he cares for those around him. Instead of matching the commanding tone of Polemarchus, Socrates becomes docile and accommodating in tone. He suggests discussion, but when it is not favored at that time he gladly takes the excuse offered by Adeimantus to go along with Polemarchus' requests that Socrates stay. Again, Socrates' interaction with Thrasymachus demonstrates a desire to win over his interlocutors through their own free assent rather than to simply beat them in a show of logical force. Socrates has beaten Thrasymachus in the conversation, and yet he is unsatisfied with the result. He desires to teach Thrasymachus that justice is its own reward, and so instead of just rejecting Thrasymachus' account, Socrates argues him into submission and then builds up his own theory with persuasion rather than force. One can see Socrates' care for personal development in the conversation by the way he faults Thrasymachus: "you care nothing for us and aren't worried about whether we'll live better or worse lives because of our ignorance of you say you know. So show some willingness to teach it to us," (344e). He wants the truth to be taught so all listening can make choices in accordance with it.

The Myth of Er also reveals that Socrates is highly concerned with an individual's choices. The order of life that he describes is as follows: one learns all he can about living the best sort of life while he is alive right now, then, after death, he chooses the best of the lives available, remembering to learn even more about the just life next time in order to choose even better. The myth emphasizes the importance of reasoning out the best combinations of accidental qualities of the lives from which one

will choose. Importantly, the text reads that “the soul is inevitably altered by the life it chooses” (618b). This statement indicates malleability in the soul. Because of the extreme consequences of the choice a soul makes when he picks a life, Socrates encourages us that “each of us must neglect all other subjects and be most concerned to seek out and learn those that will enable him to distinguish the good life from the bad and always make the best choice possible in every situation,” (618c). Here he explicitly says that an individual should care most for the health and flourishing of his own soul, and he makes absolutely no mention of civic institutions that could aid in this endeavor. He does not even mention friends or family aiding in this; the focus is on the development of the individual himself, through his own rational choices. If Socrates himself put so much emphasis on individual development, we should not settle for the Kallipolis that subjects the individual entirely to civic concerns.

A third way the Kallipolis is not ideal is that it is founded on the idea that its ruler would have perfect knowledge of the Good with which to plan and organize the city. Of course, this is wildly improbable. Socrates, though he knew he had been declared the wisest man alive by the Delphic oracle, did not consider himself capable of describing or even easily discussing the pure form of the Good (506de). If Socrates did not think himself capable, it is difficult to believe that he imagined his Kallipolis to be a true possibility. One could point to Book V and Socrates’ responses to the waves of criticism as proof that he did in fact believe it to be possible, but these lines at least cast doubt and create room for disagreement:

Do you think that someone is a worse painter if, having painted a model of what the finest and most beautiful human being would be like and having rendered

every detail of the picture adequately, he could not prove that such a man could come into being? [...] What about our own case? Didn't we say that we were making a theoretical model of a good city? [...] So, do you think that our discussion will be any less reasonable if we can't prove that it's possible to found a city that's the same as the one in our theory? (472de)

In the next lines he leads his interlocutors to admit that practice always grasp truth less well than theory, and so they agree not to judge his theory strictly in accordance with practicality (4723-473a). Regardless of whether or not Socrates held this city to be possible, we can safely hold it to be implausible. It is a foundational belief of liberal democracy that one person should not be trusted to rule the rest without question. Liberalism recognizes the weakness of any particular person and attempts to supplement it with the strength of community. It may be that we simply cannot distinguish when a person has knowledge of the Good, nevermind the fact that without that knowledge ourselves we may be incapable of recognizing its full presence in another.

The real coup de grace of a straightforward application of the Kallipolis structure is the fact that this city leaves no room for individual development. The reader finds that citizens are split into their appropriate classes early in life, and there is no method of changing what is assigned. Like the position of philosopher-king requires trust from the citizens that the ruler has knowledge of the Good, the rigid class system requires quite a bit of trust in the accurate identification of souls. The Myth of the Metals teaches that the differences between soul-types is not a chosen thing. They are descriptive, not prescriptive, and the Kallipolis assumes that each citizen is born to fit into one of the three general categories for life. The guardian class has a bit more upward mobility by being able to gain individual distinction through advancing in schools and training, but

again the movement from guardian to ruler is one that depends on the identification of inborn traits, not on learning or development of new abilities. The Kallipolis is supposed to identify where a person should be placed; it is not designed to build up the souls of the citizens personally.

Book VII's Allegory of the Cave would not have been applicable to any other citizens of this city than the philosopher-king. The journey out of the cave there is typically read as representing an internal movement towards realization of truth and goodness. This would not occur in the rest of the population of the city because even in the Kallipolis there is the belief that a person should focus on the one capacity in which he is best able to serve the community. Though the division of labor is not so regularized here as it was in the City of Need, there is still the idea that each class should focus solely on that which best suits their soul-type. All work is still done for the good of the community, not for personal fulfillment.

More evidence for this is found in the fact that citizens are judged based on their utility. The guardians are not praised because they are good men and women per se, but because they are the sort of men and women that will serve the city best. Similarly, the cooks, carpenters, smiths, and other merchants or artisans are evaluated based on the services they provide the city, not on any value intrinsic to their trades. Though the Kallipolis seems to expand beyond need, it only changes the parameters of what counts as a need. It recognizes that mere physical health is not enough to satisfy human desire, and so it attempts to meet the perceived needs for luxury and finer things. The pursuits in and of themselves, though, matter very little.

One sees this clearly in the regulations put on art and poetry. It does not matter that a large part of poetry's purpose is to capture his perception of truth; instead, Socrates only allows poetry that will encourage good citizenry and proper thoughts towards fellow man and the gods. If a poet sees politics as ultimately tragic or the gods as weak and cruel, he is not permitted to compose about those things. He is encouraged to sing the praises of civically advantageous thoughts and actions only. Socrates is not concerned with all the citizens of the Kallipolis perceiving truth and growing in accordance with it. Instead, he is concerned with the institutions that would create a perfectly flourishing city qua city. The fact that the ruler needs to have a complete knowledge of the Good is only a means to this end. The conversation of the *Republic* gets off the ground on the question of whether justice is a reward in itself without the external benefits a just reputation brings. Because they are categorized and their actions regulated according to their external works and reputations, the citizens of the Kallipolis have no chance to realize Socrates' claim that justice truly is its own reward. The citizens are so structured that they simply cannot grow.

At this point, one may wonder why he should read the *Republic* at all, considering its resting place along the political continuum. It is essential, though, that a person know the extremes if he is to avoid them and find a place of moderation. Socrates' did not mean to teach his interlocutors to be good statist citizens; rather, he gives them a thought experiment to be used to evaluate what perfectly healthy or perfectly flourishing civic life looks like. One can see that prioritizing the civic to the point of ignoring the personal is not the right combination for society. From this point we can make adjustments, slowly

dialing back up the amount of consideration we give to the individual within society, until we find a stable balance. Just as the Kallipolis identified the misperceptions of the City of Need and made changes to accommodate more of human nature, we can recognize that the Kallipolis takes the wrong approach to dealing with individual citizens in taking no consideration for their fulfillment.

Another way to consider the *Republic* abstraction helpful is to look at the tension Socrates discusses between extremes. He sets up the question of this thesis nicely when he writes about the man choosing his next life in the Myth of Er: “And we must always know how to choose the mean in such lives and how to avoid either of the extremes, as far as is possible, both in this life and in all those beyond it,” (619a). After reading the rest of the *Republic* one sees that the two extremes Socrates is discussing here are justice and power. They both exist on both ends of the continuum this thesis discusses, but their ordering is different. One sees that justice is contingent on rational choices through the Myth of Er. Power is that which enables the justice to be acted out. The perfect city uses social power to serve the rational plan according to which it is organized, and this is civic justice. Only the philosopher-king needs to make the rational choices because the power of the city carries them out. On the other end of the continuum, each individual is free to make rational choices himself. The power is in the freedom, and that freedom can serve the just life well.

As we saw when the *Republic* moved from the City of Need to the Kallipolis, when one tries to accommodate more of humanity in the scheme of civic life, he takes on risk. The luxuries that Glaucon desired came with injustices, and though the Kallipolis as

a city did not suffer, the citizens within were not fully fulfilled or satisfied. Now we move to the opposite end of the continuum to see the benefits and drawbacks of looking to individual happiness more than civic health.

CHAPTER TWO

J.S. Mill's Priorities

We have seen that the *Republic* abstraction is useful for thinking about this tension between the city and the citizen, but we have also seen that it is not a desirable resting place along the continuum. As civic health was prioritized in the Kallipolis, J.S. Mill and Friedrich Hayek argue for societies that prioritize individual freedom. For these writers, the most important aspect of society is its benefit to the individual. They value the city only so far as it is beneficial to each and every particular person within it. Rather than concern themselves with fitting together the parts of society into a healthy whole, they allow a more atomized, individually autonomous society. The more freedom the individual has over his own affairs, the better.

In his book *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill writes to protect the individual from the intense social pressure that he saw building in his time. He recognizes the power tyrannical majorities as well as the great progress and innovation that comes with individual creativity. Noting that the former stifles the latter, he argues for radical individual freedom. His reasoning goes thus: a society conducive to free and creative geniuses is a more progressive society. Its members will feel more satisfied with life because they are able to do more of what they want. What they want will be considered what is best for them because one fears he is being presumptuous to dictate another's happiness. Mill states explicitly that he does not want to argue in terms of natural or conventional rights; rather, he believes that a society built up around the best individuals

will produce results that are better than any other sort of planned society. He writes “It is proper to state that I forgo any advantage which could be derived to my argument from the idea of abstract right, as a thing independent of utility,” (14). This is appropriate, given Mill’s utilitarianism.

But one wonders why Mill asks his readers to forsake the manageability of an intentionally structured society, exemplified by the Kallipolis, for one as potentially volatile as the society that may result from Mill’s suggestions. In one sense these models for society are similar. They both use the skills of the citizens of the city in order to make the whole better. In the *Republic*, better is defined as more just; for Mill, better is defined as more progressive. This chapter explores Mill’s arguments for doing just that by prioritizing the individual over the communal. It then reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of his approach, touching on the problems that a lack of direction causes.

On Liberty does not limit its focus to the behavior of an individual, however. Much of the work is devoted to the behavior of society as well. He argues vehemently for the value that the individual can bring to and glean from society. Mill recognizes that in order to have the necessary free individuals, society must be tweaked to allow for their growth. The ideal individual is not manufactured; he grows and requires an atmosphere that fosters development.

In Mill’s thinking, societies tend towards tyranny more often than anarchy, so measures must be taken to protect individuality and train the masses in how to respond to those who think and act differently. To this end he develops the harm principle to manage social pressures. The harm principle simply states that “...the only purpose for

which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant,” (13). This principle is intended primarily to curtail the negative actions taken by members of social majorities against those who do not share the popular opinion. It is aimed at empowering individual spontaneity and creativity while preserving a way to prevent crime or injustice. If society is held back from inflicting punishments on those who try new things or act in ways contrary to social norms, individuals with the natural proclivity towards eccentricity or genius will not have the freedom to make discoveries that advance society. According to this argument, the more individual freedom a society promotes, the more chances it has at improvement.

Almost the entirety of Mill’s argument for radically free individuals hinges on the likelihood that a competition of ideas will get at something useful or true more reliably than a single set of beliefs imposed upon society. As his reasoning goes, a society built around useful things will be naturally more productive and happier than its opposite. Also, we do not know the best way to do almost anything inherently. Whether it be an intellectual pursuit like politics or a domestic one such as housebuilding, we learn the best way to do something through trial and error. From this, one can see that he would be more likely to discover the best way to do whatever he desires if he is presented with evidence of many different attempts. From those attempts, he can judge the best and continue to improve upon it. This is the importance of a free competition of ideas: it provides many examples of how to do something and thus is likely to find the best. This

model would not work, however, if there were things impeding individuals from contributing.

Mill sees the pressure of social opinions as an impediment on the freedom individuals feel in trying out new things. Though many political communities are organized in such a way that there is no danger of being led by a single man acting as tyrant, Mill sees a majority opinion that is oppressive to individual expression as equally dangerous and unjust. Members of the community that do not agree with majority may be legally free to do as they like, but the social consequences of such actions would be so severe that they render the attempt futile. Therefore, Mill focuses on the need for both society at large and for the individual himself to encourage originality. The more diversity and originality a community has, the more likely it is that progress will occur.

In addition to the harm principle intended to hold back the wave of potential disapproval, Mill also describes the benefits of individuality per se. His age had become so accustomed to conformity to the general will that he thought himself compelled to rile the spirits of his readers and cause them to see the good of living in ways that do not conform to the majority. He describes it thus:

In this age, the mere example of nonconformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigour, and moral courage it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time. (67)

Mill encourages originality regardless of whether or not the new is an improvement upon the old. The act of thinking through the steps to create something entirely new sharpens the mind.

Fundamentally, man is meant to be a thinking and reasoning creature. It is understood that not every person will have the capacity for the sort of eccentricity and originality that characterizes the ideal individual, but every person does have the capacity to think through the choices he makes. Even supposing that the majority of the members of a particular society will not have the natural ability to be considered genius, they will still constitute a better community if they are practiced in free thinking and decision making. According to Mill this is because they will have more developed decision making abilities. For the truth to be found in the midst of the numerous half-right or altogether wrong opinions that compete with it, the members of this society must have minds sharp enough to test arguments and follow reason. Even if most are not capable of putting forth a new perspective themselves, if they are in this habit of testing the validity of opinions and questioning the merit of generally accepted maxims or habits, they are in a good position to contribute to the health of the community by passing well-reasoned judgment on the new contributions of others. On the other hand, if those individuals have had no practice developing their own opinions, they will not be able to make the good social decisions that Mill is depending on for his ideal society.

So, the harm principle creates a space for the individual to thrive and grow on his own. However, Mill does not ignore the fact that every person benefits from the shaping influence of others. For the members of the society to improve upon one another the way

Mill intends, they must know what the others are doing and have some common ground on which they can relate. This is naturally the marketplace or town hall, but he also plans for this common ground to be mutual education throughout the first years of life and the shaping of character that results from the laws intended specifically to encourage certain sympathies and antipathies.

Not every member of a community will naturally hold the others with the warm regard and social feelings that would tend towards mutual advancement, so Mill intends both schooling and legal practices to engender these feelings in the masses. He writes:

[It is not] ...as if society had no means of bringing its weaker members up to its ordinary standard of rational conduct Society has had absolute power over them during all the early portion of their existence: it has had the whole period of childhood and nonage in which to try whether it could make them capable of rational conduct in life.” (82)

Also, regarding laws: “ To be held to rigid rules of Justice for the sake of others, develops [sic] the feelings and capacities which have the good of others for their object,” (63). The education system and laws, then, are to be vehicles for conveying the values that Mill finds important, namely tolerance and originality.

Here Mill relies heavily on the usefulness of tolerance and originality to avoid falling into a relativist position. He demonstrates that these attitudes are suited for a community of happy individuals trying for improvement, progress, and even for the possibility of truth, and he grounds his evaluations in the consequences of those attitudes rather than their intrinsic worth. However, Mill makes two assumptions here that could cause problems for his position. He assumes that these characteristics will develop good

and amiable people and that the tools of education and law are enough to shape civically beneficial people.

He sees education, the example of law, and the normal good intentions one feels towards those around him as ways to shape and develop individuals with naturally strong characters. He believes that “[it] is not because men’s desires are strong that they act ill; it is because their consciences are weak. There is no natural connection between strong impulses and a weak conscience. The natural connection is the other way,” (60). This displays an overly optimistic view of man that could be harmful to a docile society. It does seem beneficial and right to encourage the development of individual ambition and to provide a space in which members of a community can pursue the things that they decide to make into goals, but the extent of Mill’s trust is unsettling. Trusting the natural presence of strong consciences to keep individuals in check, or even to the development of the same through means like education, is a great risk.

The perhaps most serious, argument against Mill’s position comes from the fact that his atomized society does not provide a space for communal fulfillment. Similar to the way intellectual development was needed in addition to mere physical needs, it seems that people are more fulfilled when they are acting in community with one another. There are identities and functions that one cannot engage in alone, such as mother or father, citizen, politician, soldier. Mill’s atomized society makes it more difficult to fill ones desire for these roles by prioritizing autonomy and differences over group activities.

Mill moves us from the communal perspective to more individualized concerns, but he recognizes the impact society has on an individual’s behavior. Members of Mill’s

community are unique and make decisions from self-regarding considerations. Social concerns are secondary to protection of the individuals within the society because they are the building blocks of the whole, not the other way around.

CHAPTER THREE

The Hayekian End

F.A. Hayek's arguments in *The Road to Serfdom* place him on the same end of the spectrum as J.S. Mill concerning the importance of the individual liberty for society. Their reasoning is so similar in this regard that it would be helpful to distinguish between the two in order to come to a better understanding of each writer's position. This paper asks why Hayek prioritizes the individual and what advantages and disadvantages come from the model he proposes. I begin by exploring the aspects of society that he protects with his model of government. I then argue that Hayek's thoughts on human nature influence his emphasis on progress, and finally, I suggest that while the Hayekian model may encourage reliable economic development, by disincentivizing moral claims it does not provide the means for healthier individuals.

The *Republic* abstraction represents a perfectly healthy city, and in a society like the one depicted there, there is no need for growth. It has already reached perfection, and so any change would be a detriment necessarily. It is obvious that we cannot have that sort of society in reality, though. Individual people are not perfect or complete; they require room to develop. The key to the abstraction is that it does not dwell upon this characteristic of mankind, and the example of Socrates in the *Crito* and *Apology* demonstrate the problems caused by personal growth and distinction. We do not live in a society that is able to identify the perfect niche for each of its members and thus enable all to be fulfilled in their situations.

Hayek recognizes this, and his answer is to imagine a model that is able to remain agnostic on the higher goods a person should pursue while utilizing his natural and necessary pursuit of the lower goods. If allowed to flourish, the free market is capable of doing just that. He sees that mankind needs the freedom to change, but that does not mean that a society should be left without anything to direct the growth. The government fills this role by passing and enforcing laws on subjects where general agreement can exist. He writes that "The liberal argument is in favor of making the best possible use of the forces of competition as a means of coordinating human efforts, not an argument for leaving them as they are" (85). In short, the role of government is that of a "gardener who tends a plant" and is responsible for creating the best conditions for its growth (71). He gives three conditions that must be met in order for the state to create a law to this end: The first, hereafter referred to as the knowledge condition, states that the government must make significant effort to inform the public of the legislation in a sufficient amount of time before it takes effect; the second, the cost analysis condition, states that the legislation must be more beneficial than the total social costs that will ensue; and the third and most important, the development condition, states that the legislation must not unreasonably limit the development of the individual (85-89).

From the knowledge and development conditions one sees that Hayek is concerned with a citizen's ability to plan his own actions and to change according to his own desires. Not only does this lead to a successful free market economy, but it also tends to allow for the satisfaction of the individual himself. He understands that "The ultimate ends of the activities of reasonable beings are never economic," but that does not

mean that he is confident one person can know the ultimate ends of another (125). Hayek refuses to nail down a detailed definition of human nature to be used in guiding society; however, he goes out of his way to protect the individual's ability to choose his own priorities and order his life according to his own standards.

The Rule of Law preserves this agnosticism towards the higher goods by protecting society from the imposition of any one value system. The most useful aspect of the Rule of Law is that it is universally applied. He goes so far as to say that "The important thing is that the rule enables us to predict other people's behavior correctly, and this requires that it should apply to all cases-- even if in a particular instance we feel it to be unjust," (117). Hayek is not suggesting that law be arbitrary, however. He writes that "The state should confine itself to establishing rules applying to *general* types of situations and should allow the individuals freedom in everything which depends on the circumstances of time and place,"(*emphasis added*, 114). Again, there is an emphasis on personal concerns that are particular to certain groups of individuals.

A citizen must be able to make decisions for himself on matters that concern him most. Morality *per se* is contingent upon personal decision-making. Though Hayek is hesitant to argue for universal standards for moral behavior, he is ready to say that if there is to be moral behavior, it must be within particular circumstances involving the reason of the actor. This is why the first and third conditions considering new legislation are included and are indispensable: they protect members' ability to choose and thus to be moral. The first allows a person to judge what actions are available to choose from, based on what is legal behavior for himself and others. If it is understood that individual

development, the third condition, stems from moral decision making and that moral decisions necessitate personal reasoning not blind obedience, then the government should not pass legislation that takes decision-making power away from individuals in areas that involve their betterment.

Hayek is similar to Mill in hoping to create a space for originality and creativity, but where Mill encourages change regardless of its direction, Hayek leans more toward guided growth. He is more comfortable using the government to shape society than Mill. This is where the second condition becomes important. Hayek protects the prerogative of the state to make laws that cultivate progress, provided that, in good faith, the law is not intended to advance any particular group of society more than the whole. Though Hayek writes persuasively for trust in the individual on personal matters, he still encourages a liberalism that is pliable and adaptive, writing:

There is nothing in the basic principles of liberalism to make it a stationary creed; there are no hard-and-fast rules fixed once and for all. The fundamental principle that in the ordering of our affairs we should make as much use as possible of the spontaneous forces of society, and resort as little as possible to coercion is capable of a variety of applications. (71)

As long as it stays within the parameters of the other conditions, the government is free to interact with its citizens in whatever ways will tend towards the most progress.

According to his emphasis on personal choice in moral matters and his doubt about the possibility of gaining general agreement in most areas, one may think Hayek would be skeptical of a progressive agenda. If the state cannot make pronouncements according to a universal standard of goodness, it seems impossible for it to guide society towards a greater goal. However, through the second condition on legislation, we see

that Hayek protects this very capacity. The cost analysis condition specifies that the proposed law must be of greater benefit than its total social cost. This means that the potential areas for government legislation are the areas where individuals are able separately to make similar cost analyses. These tend to be economic. Using the pricing model the government and the individual can evaluate the benefits of a particular action in relationship to a quantifiable cost and then decide on the desirability of that action accordingly. The cost does not have to be an explicit price; it can be manifested in social inconveniences or disapproval as well (151).

Though man is necessarily limited in the amount of information and interest he can act upon, there are issues on which many people come to similar conclusions. These are usually not ends having to do with the ultimate goal of the individual, but rather basic and intermediate ends that can be means to greater things. Hayek describes that point at which many individual analyses meet as the "social end" and limits the action of the state to that place of agreement (102-3). In this way society is capitalizing on a function that only a government can fulfill. Because the state has broader perspective and information than the individual, it can more easily identify the places of common opinion and advance legislation accordingly.

Like Mill, Hayek sees society as the sum of its parts, and so, like Mill, he emphasizes the benefits of independent individuals and governments that cooperate with them. The development of each member of society encourages and should facilitate the development of others. A reader wonders, though, how this development is to be directed. Without some belief in a general human nature, one most readily grounds his

arguments regarding the political philosophy he proposes in the prospect of future progress. The *Republic* abstraction gets its traction from the fact that one's assignment to a class of the city is determined by his nature, and in doing so it provides the compelling reason for adopting its argument as well. One should be just because it is the most appropriate ordering of his nature to be just. On the other hand, Hayek privileges his model specifically because it does not align itself with any claims about an inherent nature of mankind. By taking this position, he avoids aligning himself with many codes of morality as well, specifically virtue ethics, divine command, and natural law. Hayek bases his arguments safely on utilitarian calculi. In order to make this model appealing, then, he argues for the progress that will result from its adoption and not by virtue of its justice. The good of the model is found in its consequences, not in its intrinsic value. Hayek explicitly rejects the existence of a complete ethical code that could intrinsically validate his proposal (101).

The notion of progress requires a trajectory along which one is progressing. Without a goal at which to aim, it seems that society cannot move confidently in any particular direction. Though he claims that there are more important considerations than economic decisions, the standard Hayek seems to judge progress by is economic prosperity. The values of the other aspects of society protected under this model are determined by their use towards that end. He writes: "Though in the short run the price we have to pay for variety and freedom of choice may sometimes be high, in the long run even material progress will depend on this very variety..." and also that "the argument for freedom is precisely that we ought to leave room for the unforeseeable free growth

[speaking in terms of economic growth],” (97). However, this standard is problematic. Drawn to its conclusions it posits that mankind’s ultimate ends are contingent upon the wealth of society. If we are bankrupt financially and the standard by which we are judged is economic freedom and stability, it follows that we cannot attain those ultimate ends towards which we were striving. This seems obviously false, given that things like friendship, honesty, or kindness are in no significant way contingent upon external circumstances. Hayek tries to connect economic matters to a person’s deeper desires in a means-ends relationship. However, even if he were to succeed in arguing that a wealthier society would be better able to provide space for its members to pursue the higher goals they decide on individually, his argument does not suggest any real progress towards more satisfied individuals. The economic freedom imagined here does not guarantee, or even guide, healthy or beneficial choices.

In fact, though he emphasizes the importance of preserving personal choice in order to preserve moral decision-making abilities, he does not address the fact moral claims get in the way of progress. Moral claims even get in the way of many conceptions of individual freedom. Real morality is firmly grounded in the principle that in order for one’s choices to be morally praiseworthy, they must align with an objective standard. At times the thing that would bring more economic progress—and thus in Hayek’s view the thing that would make room for one to realize his ultimate ends more fully—is contrary to the moral choice that should be made. This is to say that one is not able to fulfill his ultimate goals while he is fulfilling his ultimate goals. To avoid this, Hayek would have

to deny morality per se, not only the existence of a complete ethical code, or he must measure progress by a better standard than economics.

The real reason Hayek supports individual freedom seems to be for the sake of progress. When discussing democracy he writes: “Democracy is essentially a means, a utilitarian device for safeguarding internal peace and individual freedom,” (110). If a person is free to plan his life according to the information available, he will be more likely to make good economic decisions than those made for him by another person. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but it is limiting to reduce politics and society to primarily economic matters. The only check to one’s lifestyle would be economic. The Hayekian model is reductionist. Unchecked freedom is not the liberty that cultivates the growth of a person qua person. As said, there is no reason to think that a person would make more ultimately fulfilling and healthy choices if he is subject to almost no restraint. If society is the sum of its parts, one can see that a society built on completely free people with extremely flexible moral obligations is shaky at best.

Though a rigidly ordered city is not the goal, there is surely a bigger place for government than simply economic regulation. I do not suggest that it try to impose an ethical system on its people, nor that we should take all of our moral cues from the direction of legal institutions. However, it does seem that given the government’s role in preserving peace, it has an obligation to do more than develop citizens directed primarily at economic progress. Civil peace is predicated on some sort of agreement on how we will act towards one another. If the goal of society is economic progress, the civility with which we treat one another will be dictated by what the competitive free market requires.

A quick reflection on the cut throat business world shows that the peace needed to run an economy is much less than the peace we expect in society at large. The state has an obligation to cultivate that civil peace by judiciously ordering those parts of society that pose the largest threats to the whole. If we are to be fulfilled as people and not merely as members of a free market economy, we must have more from the ruling body than economic regulation. Further, give the position of authority the government enjoys, it may have an added duty to encourage its citizens in education towards a common good. A people must be taught that there are objective standards by which their actions are measured if they hope to accomplish anything together.

Mill hedges on the question of what his liberal society is progressing towards, but Hayek is much more willing to admit that the bottom line is economic progress. Hayek uses government to protect its citizens' ability to plan their own lives. He also authorizes the government to pass laws in areas of general agreement. However, everything he protects under his model of government is protected because of its use for economic development, not because of an intrinsic value. The reason the *Republic* abstraction failed to provide an adequate model for balancing a healthy society with healthy individuals is that it did not have room for individual development. Hayek's model solves this problem completely, but in doing so it reduces the society to only an accidental quality of life for the purpose of economic development rather than a needed, natural outgrowth of human nature. For this reason it is not sufficient.

CHAPTER FOUR

Socrates and the City

Unlike the Kallipolis or the liberal societies of Mill or Hayek, Socrates imagines a society in which a citizen's freedom contributes to the good of the city while being held in check by those civic institutions that make for a healthy city. The politicians and the Athenian court that condemned Socrates were powerful due to their rhetorical abilities and free to exercise that power to a high degree. Socrates, on the hand, was similarly free and similarly powerful, yet he lives and dies in a manner that truly benefits the city as a whole. This chapter asks what a society that acted out this Socratic freedom fully would look like. Part of an answer is seen in the personification of the city laws that is given in the *Crito*, and a further answer can be found in Socrates' arguments for his submission to the court decision. I propose that Socrates models a principle that is useful for guiding a society into an appropriate balance between a city like the *Republic* abstraction and an atomized society.

Socrates values the pursuit of the Good over what society holds as his obligation to family and friends, over his reputation, and even over his life, so initially one is puzzled by the choice to submit to the Athenian court and die. However, I find that as usual, Socrates is using this opportunity to teach. By the time of the events in the *Apology* and *Crito*, he is an old man, and given his ongoing concern for the development of others presented in the discussion of the *Republic* and elaborated further here, we see

that his actions and arguments concerning his trial and punishment are not meant to protect his own life. He is interested in protecting a citizen's ability to seek the Good.

If it were not already obvious enough through descriptions of Socrates' life that he held the pursuit of the Good to be the most worthy in all of life, Socrates explicitly argues for it in the *Apology*. He says to the court: "Men of Athens, I respect and love you, but I shall obey the god rather than you, and while I live and am able to continue, I shall never give up philosophy or stop exhorting you and pointing out the truth to any one of you whom I may meet," (29d). From these lines and more, we see that Socrates is more convinced of the value of philosophy than he is afraid of the power of the politicians over his life. He is able to step back from immediately apparent obligations that society imposes in order to evaluate the merit of fulfilling each one. In the *Crito* Socrates is confronted by Crito for choosing to die and leave his sons as orphans rather than try to live and to flee into exile. He is also said to be giving his friends a bad turn by tarnishing their reputations. Socrates' response reveals the way he justifies holding his obligation to the Good above all others. He explains to Crito that if he keeps his life through unjust means, he can be of no good to his family and friends. He would be displaying a pernicious example that could corrupt not only his own soul but also the souls of those who followed him. As the *Republic* takes ten books to argue, justice is a reward in and of itself. It would be senseless to attempt to preserve one's life or reputation through unjust means when doing so would remove the sweetness and purpose of one's life in the first place, and so Socrates is content to go along with his death sentence.

The philosophic life is not only beneficial to the philosopher, though. It is characterized by a life of ordered thoughts and desires, and that life must be consistently moving toward more familiarity with the Good. It is this habituated but freely chosen order that builds flourishing individuals and a flourishing city. This sort of life cannot be mandated from the civic level, and so the best way to encourage citizens to live in this way is to lead by example. We have a plethora of instances of Socrates trying to guide others towards the Good. The Socratic dialogues are full of examples of the way Socrates acts as a sort of teacher for his interlocutors. In the *Meno*, he uses the opportunity to teach both the slave boy and Meno. Likewise, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes himself as a midwife bringing new things out of others and into the world. He models this with Theaetetus as well. In the *Symposium* Alcibiades tells the party how Socrates is always concerned that the young man learns, much to Alcibiades' sexual frustration.

Likewise, his arguments in neither the *Apology* nor the *Crito* are solely for his own sake. Whether by drinking hemlock or by some other method, Socrates knows that death will come soon due to his old age, and so he is able to give nearly undivided focus to those around him. He is interested in preserving both freedom and the ability to philosophize in Athens. There is a distinction between his ordered freedom, which enables a pursuit toward the Good, and the politicians' charismatic, arbitrary freedom.

If there is an objective thing called Goodness, then there are right and wrong ways of getting closer to it. Socratic philosophy is about finding the more useful and true ways of getting at the Good, but the unchecked freedom of those like the Athenian politicians

does little to aid that pursuit. It is even the case that people like the politicians, who have a great deal of power, can crush the pursuit of Goodness altogether in most of a city through the way they exercise their power.

It is for this reason that Socrates is concerned with his reputation in the *Apology*. If he were attempting to save his own life it would be a strange move to call to the jurors' minds another set of accusations, these more difficult to overcome. It is important that he does this, however, in order to help justify his actions in the role of a true philosopher in contrast to the power-loving politicians.

He imagines a new set of accusers that voice the fear and doubt felt by many Athenians. These accusers take on his reputation, as we see when he says:

For many accusers have risen up against me before you, who have been speaking for a long time, many years already, and saying nothing true; and I fear them more than Anytus and the rest, though these also are dangerous; but those others are more dangerous, gentlemen, who gained your belief, since they got hold of most of you in childhood, and accused me without any truth. (18b)

These are accusations against more than just Socrates as a person; they are against the entire Socratic, elenctic process. By addressing these concerns, Socrates is doing more than clearing his own name or trying to avoid strict sentencing in court. We see in the *Crito* that he is concerned very little with the power the majority has over his life (44cd). Socrates is trying to alleviate some general fears concerning the practice of real philosophy. From his efforts a principle for guiding politics emerges. It is this: one should re-enforce those institutions in society that enable a philosophic life. In this way, we get parts of the perfect city in the structure and parts of the atomized society in individual choice.

Through his defense, one can see that Socrates is supporting a method of philosophy that any willing man or woman could employ. The more individuals who pursue the Good there are in a society, the better that society will be by definition. These people are pursuing Goodness, and if their pursuits were perfect, there would be no possible way for harm to come from them. However, from the distinction between Socrates and the politicians we see that there are at least two opinions on the best way to live this out. Socrates' philosophy looks for the objective Good, and in that way it will be beneficial to the city as a whole. On the other hand, the politicians and those like them pursue a subjective version of goodness and in doing so they place their own power and happiness over that of the city. This breaks down notions of civic good, and it leads to many of the problems faced by Mill and Hayek. If, however, they are obligated to place the civic over the private, they forfeit the growth that comes with making one's own decisions. If the members of a city choose to put the civic concerns over personal ones of their own volition, they do not suffer the same rigidity that confined the Kallipolis. A key concern with the *Republic* abstraction is that it sacrifices individual development and growth for stability. Here Socrates defends a way of life that entails development with guidance towards that which is truly Good.

Before going further into the way Socrates compares and contrasts with those liberal societies, it would be appropriate to look more deeply at the nature of the powerful freedom of the politicians. It seems the politicians (and perhaps the sophists of other dialogues) are propagating a sort of political structure that is almost antithetical to the practice of philosophy. Power that is gained and maintained primarily by a charismatic

personality privileges strongly-held opinions over truth. It is unpredictable because the use of that power is not dictated by anything but the feelings and desires of the person wielding it.

As Socrates sees when he faces resentment from the political powers in Athens, revealing another's ignorance can have serious consequences. If a person's source of power is his reputation, then he has strong incentive to do everything possible to build it up. The politician would not welcome the simple but revealing questions of Socrates because through this elenchus, he is shown to be lacking in some way. The lack is interpreted as weakness, and the political power built up around a strong reputation is eroded.

Support for this as a motive in the accusers' minds is found in their own accusations. They say that Socrates makes the weaker argument seem to be the stronger (18bc). They are simultaneously blaming him for using the rhetorical tricks that they employ themselves while taking revenge on him for revealing their ignorance. If a reputation amasses power, then there is incentive to say that anyone who points out a flaw in one's reasoning is doing something deceptive in order to usurp power. With this accusation, the politicians shift the blame for obscuring or ignoring truth from their own pride to some deception on the part of Socrates.

The second accusation, that Socrates is corrupting the youth, is similarly motivated. They complain about the impact of those men who were following Socrates' example and testing the wisdom of prominent figures are having on Athens (33a-c). The implications of this accusation is that these followers are acting in a way that hurts the

accepted power structure of the city. If one needs to be cautious of the changing moods of influential men, he is safer sticking with the things that have already been done and cannot be interpreted as a risk to the powerful. This attitude is unfriendly towards philosophy.

Because he is up against this attitude regarding Goodness, Socrates models a temperance of his own power for the good of the city as a whole. He emphasizes one's obligation to the institutions, and the city of Athens, over the unchecked freedom that he could have won himself through rhetorical prowess. However, he believes that a city's institutions, like the rule of law that is beginning to be espoused in the *Crito* or the command of the tyrant-generals in the *Apology* (32cd), should be supported or neglected according to the measure with which they encourage a citizen's development towards a common held Good. Socrates models this principle for us by submitting to the decision of the court and thus representing the way one should submit to those ordering principles for the sake of some higher good.

Here the discussion of the reasoned part of the soul of the *Republic* is helpful to interpret Socrates' vision for society as well as his interaction with the personified laws in the *Crito*. Of course, we have already seen how the *Republic* is primarily a thought experiment intended to show the perfectly flourishing city, so by personifying the laws, Socrates can treat them as a friend and interlocutor rather than a strictly reasoned plan modeled after the Good. The laws are the reasoned part of the city, not because they are developed by a philosopher with access to knowledge of the Good, or even necessarily because they are themselves directed at learning about the Good. The laws serve as basic

structures that protect the citizens' individual abilities by checking the power of those individuals who have developed influential personalities. Socrates is not against leadership heavily influenced by personality—he himself leads his interlocutors by example—but this sort of leadership needs to be checked by some structure.

Whether or not it was his intention (and I believe it was), Socrates models a mixture of both ends of the continuum. His position is one directed first at the pursuit of Goodness. Just as in his personal life he argues that his pursuit of the Good will benefit his sons, even if it does not seem to do so immediately, so too a society that holds as its first obligation the pursuit of the Good will be benefitted by the commitment. This approach encourages free and robust individual development, thus fulfilling the natural desire that was not fully address in the *Republic* abstraction, while at the same time giving direction and structure to that freedom that will benefit both the individual experiencing it and the community at large. With the model Socrates puts forth, we are not given perfectly free individuals within perfectly flourishing cities, but we do find a compromise between the two that has hopeful implications for our own society.

One's ability to seek the Good relies on one's freedom to direct his will as well as his power to act it out, as discussed in the first chapter. If that power is too limited, the citizen cannot properly exercise his nature as a rational being. If it is given too broadly, the power to act can be despotically exercised over those influenced heavily by personality. Similarly, without a structure that at least attempts to provide some basic stability from which one can explore to find truth, the direction of one's will is heavily

influenced by passions and desire, and the power to act it out turns self-destructive, as we see in the devolving soul types in Book IX of the *Republic*.

The Socratic approach to politics, then, is to support those things that allow for and encourage the development of philosophical habits in citizens. By philosophical habits I mean a way of life that is directed at learning more about and living more in accordance with the Good. We have seen that a good deal of individual freedom is necessary for this, as well as a foundational structure that guides all members of society. With the model of Socrates in the face of the Athenians, we see both individual power and immense humility for the sake of the city. Those things in our society that tend towards this example should be held to ardently, and those things that lead us away from this ordered liberty should be corrected for the good of the whole.

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