European Journal of Philosophy

DOI: 10.1111/ejop.12133

Moneymakers and Craftsmen: A Platonic Approach to Privatization

Jonny Thakkar

Abstract: Debates over the privatization of formerly public industries and services are common in contemporary politics. The overall goal of this paper is to suggest a normative framework within which deliberations over public ownership might take place. I draw this framework from Plato's *Republic*, which I claim justifies public ownership as a means for ensuring that citizens labour as craftsmen rather than moneymakers; according to Plato's social ontology, only craftsmen can constitute a genuine society and hence enjoy access to the full array of goods for the sake of which society comes into existence. This justificatory structure implies that public ownership is only a means for ensuring the appropriate teleology of labour; if there turn out to be better means, so be it. But what does turn out to be indispensable on this view, as G. A. Cohen understood, is an ethos of justice, especially among those in charge of regulating social institutions.

1. Introduction

The last 30 years or so have seen a trend towards the privatization of formerly public industries and services in developed and developing countries alike. From banks, car manufacturers and electricity companies to ports, roads and railways, prisons, hospitals and security services, the overall pattern is clear. Each case is of course different in its particulars; the arguments around a given case may be more practical than philosophical; and it may be that the quality of arguments is not what is really at issue. But to the extent that such policy decisions *are* informed by normative commitments, what can political philosophy bring to the table? One possibility would be arguments concerning deontological side constraints: one might argue, for instance, that some government functions can only be legitimately carried out by public servants or that some things should simply never be for sale.[1] Another possibility would be arguments that do not try to settle the policy question once and for all but rather to bring to light the kinds of principles, values and ideals that might be at issue in any given policy trade-off. The claim that public ownership can serve a democratic function in allowing the political process to govern economic life would be an argument in this vein, because in and of itself it permits policy conclusions that give greater weight to efficiency than to democracy.[2] In this paper, I offer an argument of this second sort.

My claim is that Plato's argument in the *Republic* for denying guardians private property can be helpful in thinking about privatization today. I show that it is not

primarily an argument about rulers (and hence fundamentally dependent on Plato's illiberal politics) but rather an argument about labour, and specifically about insulating workplace deliberations from inappropriate types of consideration. I also show that it depends on a wider normative framework concerning social ontology and what we might call the teleology of labour; the basic idea is that a genuine society, understood as a cooperative scheme for the sake of the good life, is only able to exist if citizens work in the right way. Plato's position therefore suggests a distinctive way of arguing for public ownership that locates its putative value as instrumental with respect to a wider ideal regarding society. As such, it opens up the possibility that certain forms of private ownership might actually turn out to be reconcilable with the normative commitments that speak in favour of public ownership.

Plato famously bans guardians from holding 'any private property that is not wholly necessary' (416d), and this is justified in two ways.[3] The first concerns unity among the guardians: private property leads to lawsuits, accusations and 'faction' (464d–e). The second concerns the work that guardians perform: guardians should be 'soldiers, not moneymakers' (415e), but 'if they acquire private land, houses, and money themselves, they will be household managers and farmers instead of guardians—hostile masters of the other citizens, instead of their allies' (417a–b). It is this second line of argument that interests me; in my view, it depends on a social ontology that gives a central place to labour, and this yields the justificatory structure described above. To show this will require overturning some common preconceptions about the *Republic*. It might be thought unwise to devote so much space to interpretive heavy lifting in a paper whose ultimate focus is the present. I believe that in reconstructing Plato's position on private property, we can uncover a justificatory structure whose very abstraction from contemporary life gives it normative purchase. But the proof can only ever be in the pudding.

The plan for this article is therefore as follows: Section 2 offers a reconstruction of the *Republic*'s argument regarding justice in the political sense (doing one's own work) that grounds justice in a social ontology whose central category is labour; Section 3 claims that the distinction between justice and injustice maps onto the distinction between craftsmen and moneymakers; Section 4 argues that the critique of moneymaking grounds the ban on property ownership; and Section 5 suggests ways in which the line of thought explored in Sections 2, 3 and 4 might bear on the present.

2. The Centrality of Labour

'A city comes to exist, I believe, because none of us is individually self-sufficient (*autarkēs*), but each has many needs he cannot satisfy', says Socrates in Book II of the *Republic* (369b). 'Or do you think that a city (*polis*) is founded on some other principle (*archē*)?' The principle of society, what impels it, is individual need.[4] Note that Socrates does not specify which kinds of need are at issue here. The point is perfectly abstract: the final cause of society, that for the sake of which it first comes into existence and is then maintained in existence, is the satisfaction of such needs as

we can satisfy only by cooperating, whatever they may turn out to be—let us call them our 'social needs'.

In my view, this is the foundational proposition of Plato's philosophy of the polis, by which I mean both his social ontology and his normative political philosophy.[5] From this seed, Kallipolis will be generated: 'Let's, in our discussion, create a city from the beginning. But its real creator, it seems, will be our need' (369c). For although the proposition implies no particular conception of social needs, it does imply a further proposition regarding social ontology—and this in turn has normative implications. We can already see that on Plato's view, a society must be more than a set of individuals living contiguously with one another; it must consist of individuals cooperating to satisfy their social needs. Socrates confirms this immediately:

> Then because we have many needs, and because one of us calls on another out of one need, and on a third out of a different need, we gather many into a single settlement (*oikēsis*) as partners (*koinōnoi*) and helpers (*boēthoi*). And we call such a shared settlement a city. (369b–c)

Notice the language used to describe society and its members. The city is figured as a kind of household, an extended *oikos*, where that means not simply a dwelling but also and more importantly a shared project or *koinōnia*. This project will depend for its existence on citizens' work. Because this work aims at satisfying our social needs, let us call it our 'social work'. Society can therefore be said to depend on its members' social work—without 'the patterns of work that give rise to a city' (421a), there is no city. It does not follow that each citizen needs to carry out the same amount of social work, or that certain individuals cannot 'free ride' on the social work of others.[6] But it does follow that there will come a point where the failure of those who live contiguously to work together as partners and helpers makes it the case that there is no longer any ground for calling their co-dwelling a society at all. Ontologically speaking, then, society is not just a set of individuals living in the same place.[7] Nor is it bound together by collective intentions or speech acts or decision procedures, along the lines of some recent arguments in social ontology.[8] It is like a team: something that can come in and out of existence depending on the work of its members.[9] It is therefore an aspiration, a task; it can be achieved, but never assumed.

So the foundational proposition of Plato's philosophy of the polis, that the *archē* of society is individual need, turns out to imply a particular social ontology, according to which society depends for its existence on citizens' labour. And this has normative implications. We can see this just by following the logic of the argument for ourselves. Because society has a function, it contains within it a constitutive normative standard.[10] Just as a good knife is one that cuts well, the function of a knife being to cut, so a good society will be one that is good at satisfying our social needs.[11] The property in virtue of which a society can do its job well is its members' cooperative activity. It therefore follows that a good society will be one in which citizens cooperate well. Hence Plato's social ontology implies a political philosophy whose primary concern will be labour.

This argumentative sequence turns out to be mirrored in the progression of the dialogue itself: having laid down the *archē* of the city, and hence its ontology, Socrates takes his next task as founder to be working out a division of labour sufficient for meeting the primary needs of citizens. And this quickly leads him onto normative considerations regarding labour. More specifically, he is led to a principle concerning what kind of work each citizen should be doing, the so-called principle of specialization.

Socrates	You see, it occurred to me while you were speaking that, in the first place, we are not all born alike. On the contrary, each of us differs somewhat in nature from the others, one being suited to one job (*ergon*), another to another. Or don't you think so?
Adeimantus	I do.
Socrates	Well, then, would one person do better work if he practiced many crafts or if he practiced one?
Adeimantus	If he practiced one.
Socrates	And it is also clear, I take it, that if one misses the opportune moment (*kairos*) in any job, the work is spoiled.
Adeimantus	It is clear.
Socrates	That, I take it, is because the thing that has to be done won't wait until the doer has the leisure (*skolē*) to do it. No, instead the doer must, of necessity, pay close attention to what has to be done and not leave it for his idle moments (*parergon*—literally, as a sideline or by-product).
Adeimantus	Yes, he must.
Socrates	The result, then, is that more plentiful (*pleiōn*) and better-quality (*kallion*) goods are more easily produced, if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited and does it at the opportune moment, because his time is freed from all the others. (370a–c)[12]

Socrates insists that in this first city there is neither justice nor injustice (371e–372a).[13] But this claim should not distract us from the obvious fact that the principle just stated—that each person should practice only the craft for which he is best suited—represents the first iteration of the 'one man, one job' principle (423d, 433a) that will in turn ground the *Republic*'s main thesis regarding justice in the political sense, namely that being a just citizen consists in 'doing one's own work' (433a–b, 433e–434c).[14] So there is a clear progression in the dialogue from social ontology to the division of labour to a principle regulating the division of labour to a thesis about the nature of excellent citizenship. This is not just a sequence; it is an argumentative structure whereby political philosophy is grounded in social ontology. Socrates confirms this in Book IV, remarking that 'right from the beginning, when we were founding the city, we had, with the help of some god, chanced to hit upon the origin and pattern (*archē* and *typos*) of justice' (443b–c).[15]

The hallmark of Plato's social philosophy is therefore the centrality it gives to labour. Society cannot exist without its citizens' labours; in a certain sense, it *is* its citizens' labours. That is why justice, which is a matter of doing one's own *work*, is the keystone in the arch of social virtue,

> 'the power that makes it possible for all of these [other virtues] to arise in [the city], and that preserves them when they have arisen for as long as it remains there itself' (433b–c).

One might therefore expect the rest of the *Republic*'s politics to be cashed out in terms of labour.

Yet labour slips out of focus as Book V leads us into the political program with which Plato has come to be associated: abolition of the private sphere with respect to family and private property; equality of the sexes; schemes for eugenics and censorship; and rule by philosophers. Much of this program has to do with the guardians and auxiliaries alone; the producers seem far from Socrates' mind. Even in Book IV, Socrates makes clear that the principle of doing one's own work—that is, *justice*—matters above all insofar as it preserves the city's class structure, such that if a carpenter tries to do the work of a shoemaker, that is no disaster, whereas if he attempts to enter the class of soldiers he risks destroying the city (434a–b).[16] One could therefore be forgiven for thinking that labour is not in fact central to Plato's concerns, especially given the aristocratic disdain for 'menial tasks' and 'petty craft' displayed on occasion in the *Republic* (495c–e; cp. 522b, 590c).

But there remains another option, which is to resolutely interpret everything just mentioned in terms of labour. If the most important form of injustice involves infiltrating the top two classes, this must be because the labour of those two classes is particularly important for the provision of social goods. And that is what makes their education, living arrangements and sexual practices so important—they help ensure that the guardians and auxiliaries will do their jobs well. What exactly are these jobs? This question requires a longer answer than I can give here, but for present purposes it is enough to say that we can interpret both jobs as having to do with managing the division of labour in society, as when Socrates says that 'we should compel or persuade the auxiliaries and guardians to ensure that they, and *all the others as well*, are the best possible craftsmen at their own work' (421b–c, my italics).[17] In other words it is possible to understand these jobs, and the special attention they receive, in a way that is entirely congruent with the thought that the central category of Plato's social philosophy is labour.

We will return to the relationship between labour and private ownership. But for now let us take stock. My goal has not been to provide a complete interpretation of the *Republic*'s politics, but only to show that it might be thought to have a basic structure such that some elements are more foundational than others and hence independent of them. If what I have said thus far is correct, Plato's social ontology grounds his notion of justice, which in turn grounds his policies regarding property. But in order to properly grasp this last move, it will help to explore the notion of just labour in greater depth.

3. Craftsmen and Moneymakers

Money is clearly a central concept in the *Republic*: the words 'money', 'moneymaking' and 'money-loving' come up no less than 104 times over the course of the dialogue.[18] Plato's critique of contemporary Athens draws heavily on this family of concepts: this is most obvious in Book VIII's analysis of oligarchy and democracy (550c–562a), but it should also be remembered that the whole conversation of the *Republic* takes place in the Piraeus, the Athenian port and therefore its commercial centre.[19] Not only that, but the topic of justice first comes up as a result of a prior question concerning the contribution that money can make to a good life (330d–331b). Cephalus, a real-life figure who was a well-known arms dealer, claims that wealth enables the right kind of person (*to epieikēs*) to avoid the kind of sins (cheating people, lying to them and being in debt to a god or a human) that can lead one to '[depart] for that other place in fear' (331a–b).[20] Socrates responds by turning the conversation towards defining 'that thing itself, justice', and so begins the series of definitions—giving back what is owed, helping friends and harming enemies, the advantage of the stronger, the virtue of soul that enables one to live well—that make up Book I and set up the rest of the *Republic*. The haste with which Socrates turns away from Cephalus' life, and indeed the haste with which Cephalus departs thereafter, make it tempting to view the episode as little more than a pretext for getting the real action underway. That would be short-sighted. Cephalus' rapid departure is curious from a psychological perspective: he goes off to make a sacrifice, presumably so as to avoid accruing a debt to a god, yet it is precisely the normative status of debts that is at issue in the conversation over justice. Given his earlier avowal of an ever-growing appetite (*epithymia*) for conversation (328d), he might remind us of the democratic man of Book VIII—described as 'gratifying the appetite (*epithymia*) of the moment', whether that be for drinking, dieting, exercise, idleness, politics or philosophy (561a–d)—albeit one whose specifically bodily appetites have waned (329a–d).[21] But that is not all. For Cephalus' beliefs concerning the value of money in a good life are by no means inert: he has spent his life making money. Socrates credits him with not being one of those tiresome individuals 'unwilling to praise anything except money', suggesting this is because his wealth is partly inherited. But it is not entirely inherited: Cephalus has spent his life trying to ensure that his wealth increases so that he can leave his sons more than his father left him. In terms of his *work*, then, he remains (as he himself says) a moneymaker (*chrēmatistēs*) (330b). So the conversation about justice takes place in a moneymaking district, at the house of a moneymaker, and it comes out of a question about the value of money in a good life—which might be glossed as a question about the degree to which one should direct one's labours towards the acquisition of money. And this latter question does not in fact entirely disappear when the focus turns to justice. For in the midst of arguing against Thrasymachus' proposition that the ruler in the precise sense decrees only what is best for himself (336b–354c), Socrates makes a distinction that I take to be crucial for the rest of the *Republic*, and it concerns the relation between money and labour.

'Is a doctor in the precise sense', Socrates asks Thrasymachus, 'a moneymaker or someone who treats the sick?' (341c).[22] Thrasymachus concedes that the true

doctor is not a moneymaker. This is puzzling. Why can doctors not treat the sick *and* make money? Must a true doctor really sacrifice herself for her patients with no reward? But Socrates goes on to explain that he means to isolate the property in virtue of which we can appropriately *call* someone a particular type of craftsman (341c–d). His hypothesis is that each craft aims to provide a distinct good, and that that aim is what distinguishes it from other crafts. The craft of navigation, for instance, aims at making us safe while sailing (346a). This is not to say it provides no other benefits: sailing may be good for one's health, for example. But the reason why sailing is not medicine, no matter how good it is for the health, is that health is not what it aims to produce—it is only an incidental benefit (346b). This notion of aim may appear a little vague; we can make it more concrete by thinking in terms of standards of success and failure. If a navigator fails to make anyone healthy during a voyage, she has not thereby failed qua navigator; if her boat runs aground, she has. A true craftsman—the craftsman in the precise sense, the craftsman qua craftsman—is therefore a worker who deliberates in light of standards of success internal to her craft, and hence with an eye to the benefit which that craft characteristically produces, its *function*. This is not a matter of the quality of the worker's will in some Kantian sense, whether she is doing the right thing for the right reasons and under the right description; the idea is rather that over time the only way to reliably produce the goods for the sake of which a certain craft exists is to deliberate with the relevant standards in mind. Now Socrates' argument with respect to moneymaking is that wages stand to medicine as health stands to navigation: they amount to an incidental benefit that plays no role in making medicine what it is and hence plays no role in the deliberations of a true doctor. Socrates accepts, of course, that a true doctor may seek wages—but denies that she does so qua doctor.[23] Insofar as an individual aims at earning wages, she thereby engages in a distinct craft, namely wage earning (*misthōtikos*; 346–347a).[24] Hence the doctor in the precise sense is no moneymaker.

At this stage an objection might arise. For Socrates' point has been limited to craftsmen qua craftsmen, rather than qua human beings. But why should anyone engage in a craft in the first place? On this point, Socrates says something that might seem to negate his previous position. Given the contrast between a true doctor and a wage earner, we might expect Socrates to enjoin altruistic self-sacrifice on the part of individuals—doctors living off alms and the like. In fact, Socrates accepts that people will require wages to motivate them to engage in a given craft (346e–347a). But if this is the case, why then is moneymaking not the master craft standing above all particular crafts? After all, a craft should be able to incorporate subordinate crafts. The craft of shoemaking might include the craft of lace cutting, for instance, insofar as the latter is disciplined towards the former and hence guided by its standards of success.[25] But if we engage in medicine for the sake of money, is medicine not simply a subordinate activity within the master craft of moneymaking? And does that not destroy the distinction between doctors and moneymakers?[26]

Now at points Plato does seem to equate craftsmen with moneymakers. In Book IV, for example, he speaks of someone 'who is by nature a craftsman or some other

kind of moneymaker', as if the two were equivalent (434a; cp. 547d). Yet in Book VI, he also speaks of the philosophical ruler as a 'craftsman (*dēmiourgos*) of temperance, justice, and the whole of popular virtue' (500d; cp. 395c, 421c, 455a)—and surely the philosopher–king is not a moneymaker. It is therefore important to distinguish between the times when Plato is speaking of craftsmen as a class within Kallipolis and the times when he is using the word to refer to all those engaged in structured activities aimed at satisfying particular social needs by creating or improving particular classes of object. In the Book VI passage just quoted, it is clearly this latter sense that is at issue, and the same would seem to be true of the Book I passage we have been discussing (e.g. 342c, 346a).

It is worth pausing to note that this represents a significant expansion of the notion of craft from the standard Greek usage of the word *technē*, according to which neither agriculture nor ruling would count.[27] And this in turn betokens a significant normative step on Plato's part. For Socrates says, attributing the thought to Asclepius but clearly also endorsing it, that 'everyone in a well-regulated city has his own work (*ergon*) to do' (406c). But if every genuine craft aims to satisfy a particular social need, then some of the occupations commonly called crafts should strictly speaking be called pseudo-crafts, and their practitioners should therefore be understood as pseudo-citizens. This would surely go for the 'thieves … and pickpockets, temple robbers, and craftsmen of all such sorts of evil' mentioned at 552d—they simply have no place in the city, and can therefore legitimately be denied its protections and benefits. So a lot is riding on the distinction between moneymakers and craftsmen.[28]

But the question still remains: if we require wages to motivate us to engage in particular crafts, as Socrates accepts that we do (346e–347a), how can we maintain a distinction between an activity like medicine and the master activity of moneymaking? Will medicine not become part of moneymaking? The way out of this knot is to distinguish between money and wages (the word is *misthos*, which we might also translate as recompense or reward; cp. 363d). For strictly speaking, Socrates conceded not that craftsmen are all *moneymakers*, but rather that they are all *wage earners*. And he goes on to argue that money is just one form of wage. A second kind of wage is honour: someone who becomes a doctor out of the desire for honour is therefore an honour seeker, not a moneymaker. The final kind of wage is more complicated. Socrates frames it not only as the avoidance of a penalty or punishment but also as 'the best people's kind of wages' (347a). The best people are motivated to rule, for example, by the fact that their not doing so would lead to disaster—specifically, to the disaster of the task's being carried out by lesser people (347c).

Socrates stops here because his dispute with Thrasymachus has centred on ruling. But in principle his argument would seem to extend to other crafts besides ruling. Every doctor is a wage earner before she is a doctor, yet different kinds of people seek different kinds of wage. Some pursue medicine for money; others pursue it for honour, but the best pursue it because they do not want lesser people to carry out the task. This might seem like a strange motivation at first, but on reflection it makes perfect sense. A society is a cooperative scheme that comes about in

order to satisfy our needs. The scheme will work better—and our needs will be better satisfied—to the degree that each performs the task for which she is best suited.[29] The best kind of people are therefore motivated to engage in a particular craft by the desire to see citizens deploy their talents appropriately within a division of labour constituted for the sake of the common good. And when *these* are the wages in question, there is no conflict between being a wage earner and being a true craftsman.

But the corollary of this proposition is that neither moneymakers nor honour seekers can be true craftsmen. For if one craft is engaged in for the sake of another, deliberation within the subsidiary activity will be governed by standards of success derived from the master activity. This is harmless in the case of lace cutting and shoemaking. But where moneymaking or honour seeking is the master activity, the subsidiary activity is likely to be distorted. The goal of medicine is to restore the patient to health. But what if an opportunity arises for a doctor to enrich herself at the expense of the patient, for example by prescribing needless and dangerous surgery? Qua doctor, she should resist; qua moneymaker, she should accept; qua honour seeker, she should weigh the prestige that might be gained through additional wealth against the chances of incurring dishonour by getting caught. What this example shows (on Plato's account) is that the moneymaker and the honour seeker can only ever masquerade as, or *imitate*, doctors: benefiting the patient can only ever be an incidental goal to them, pursued just insofar the incentives line up.[30]

To a modern ear this might seem moralistic and naïve. Who cares whether a craftsman has your best interests at heart? 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest' Adam Smith famously declares. 'We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their own advantages.'[31] Does not a moneymaking concern like Breguet make pretty good watches? And if it is honour lovers we are thinking of, why not take the character played by Toshirô Mifune in Kurosawa's *High and Low*, a shoemaker who just wants to make the best shoes he can, regardless of how little profit he makes? The reason for this dedication, it would seem, is that quality craftsmanship affords him the possibility of genuine self-respect; to lower his standards would be to bring dishonour on himself. Does this really make him less of a craftsman?

The first thing to say is that Plato never denies that the wise can care about honour, so long as what is considered honourable is decided by wisdom. Mifune's character could therefore be understood as a true craftsman along those lines. But if we do understand him as an honour seeker in the precise sense, the Platonic account would be that he grew up in a society that was well ordered with respect to crafts, one that attached honour to skilled craftsmanship and shame to shoddiness. Practically speaking, there will often be no difference between the work of people like this and that of true craftsmen in Plato's sense. But the two groups are still not identical: when times change, as in the post-war Japan depicted by Kurosawa, the first, not being led by reflection on the needs of society, may have no way of adapting their sense of what is honourable.[32] And the story is much the

same with respect to Breguet. It is not that their watches are not excellent: they have a strong financial interest in producing watches of the highest quality, since they trade on their reputation as a luxury brand. But if it turns out that no real needs are actually served by the manufacture of luxury watches, that fact will not affect their decision making except insofar as it affects the demand for their products. The standards of success guiding their activity are not essentially related to social needs, and that is what differentiates them from true craftsmen. Just as a sailor produces health only incidentally, so they produce use values only incidentally. If exchange value could be realized through goods that *imitate* use values without actually *being* use values, that would be just fine. But this means that their products will themselves be use values only incidentally. At bottom, they will be *imitation* goods.

This criticism remains somewhat metaphysical; after all, an imitation watch may feel no different from a real watch. But metaphysical criticisms are not necessarily toothless. If I switched to the language of use value and exchange value in that last paragraph, it was in order to suggest just how well Plato's account of moneymaking dovetails with Marx's account of capitalist production in Volume One of *Capital*—and it would be hard to accuse Marx of lacking bite.[33] The idea in both cases is that the metaphysical distinction (real versus imitation, use value versus exchange value) is in fact embodied in the products themselves. While it may not show itself immediately, or with respect to a single product, the concrete effect of different deliberative processes will show up over time. One could plausibly look at a pair of shoes that has fallen apart after a few months, for instance, and say that they were never really made to be *shoes*; every production decision was organized towards making a quick sale rather than enduring protection (or adornment) for feet.

That said, it is true that the Book I passage on moneymaking can only bring us so far by itself. Where it acquires its critical purchase is in combination with Books II and IV. In Section 2, we saw that those books give pride of place to citizens' labour, both politically and ontologically. Like a team, a society is an entity whose full existence depends on its members' activity; just as we might say of 11 soccer players who belong to the same club but fail to work together that they thereby fail to constitute a team, so a group of people living in the same place may fail to constitute a society insofar as they fail to work together. Again, this fate may seem merely metaphysical—why should we care about living in a 'society' as opposed to a 'shmociety'?[34] But as before, the point is far more practical than it first seems: the idea is that in order to flourish, we need certain goods that we cannot provide except through cooperation and that over time these goods will only be produced by citizens working together, where that work is guided by the appropriate deliberative processes.

In Section 2 we saw that Plato's social ontology explains why justice is the central virtue of the *Republic*'s politics. Like a team, society is a cooperative scheme that exists only insofar as its members actually cooperate. Justice is the virtue of doing one's own work within the division of labour—or, to put it another way, of playing for the team. Injustice, by contrast, is the vice of failing to play for the

team or of failing to consider one's work as social work. We can put more flesh on the bones of this account now that we have Book I's distinction between craftsmanship and moneymaking at our disposal. The just worker corresponds to the true craftsman: it is in directing her labours towards the production of genuine goods, goods that serve social needs, that she 'does her own work'. The moneymaker, in contrast, is an unjust worker: the sense in which she does not do her own work is that her labours are not optimally deployed for the sake of serving social needs; her labours are instead directed towards the production of goods that will bring her money. The implication, once we put everything together, is that if citizens comport themselves as moneymakers, society's very existence will be threatened.[35]

4. Property Ownership

Plato's communism, if we can call it that—I refer not only to his ban on private property but also to his ban on private living and eating spaces as well as his ban on private family structures (416d–e, 457c–461e)—is liable to seem either so distant from natural inclinations as to be utopian or so obviously damaging to basic human interests as to be dystopian.[36] Aristotle introduces a battery of arguments against it in Book II of his *Politics*; many depend on misreadings of Plato, but some survive reformulation. His strongest point, in my view, is that communism seems neither necessary nor sufficient for the unity that Plato wishes it to engender among the guardians. In Book V of the *Republic*, Socrates claims communism will ensure that the guardians 'share a single conviction about what is their own, aim at the same goal, and, as far as possible, feel pleasure and pain in unison' (464d). This will prevent faction arising among them, and 'if there is no faction among the guardians, there is no terrible danger that the rest of the city will form factions, either against them or among themselves' (465b). Aristotle's argument is that communism seems neither sufficient for this unity, given that 'we see far more quarrels occurring among those who own or use property in common than among those who have their estates separate' (1263b26–27), nor necessary, given the education system established earlier in the *Republic* (1263b38–41).[37] This is a powerful challenge to the unity justification of communism. But in Book III Socrates suggests a justification that seems more promising, at least with respect to private property. He argues that the guardians should stick to their jobs instead of being moneymakers (415e), claiming that if they 'acquire private land, houses, and money themselves, they will be household managers and farmers instead of guardians—hostile masters of the other citizens, instead of their allies' (417a–b). Socrates does not flesh out this suggestion, but we are now in a position to do so. For we concluded the last section with the thought that if citizens comport themselves as moneymakers, the very existence of society will be imperilled. Given that there is little prospect of established moneymakers suddenly seeing the error of their ways and that there are limits to what an education system can do with human material, we might reasonably ask whether the ideal of society is merely a utopian fantasy that depends on unrealistic assumptions about

human nature. What I want to show now is that answering this question on Plato's behalf allows us to understand the logic of his position on property.

Socrates maintains that Kallipolis is the only society that deserves to be called a society (422e). Yet he certainly does not assume that everyone in Kallipolis will be a true craftsman. Quite the contrary: he characterizes the whole productive class of Kallipolis as moneymakers (441a; cp. 434a). This implies that Plato thinks we can render the presence of moneymakers in the city—as a majority of the population—compatible with the achievement of genuine society. How so?

The answer depends on a distinction between two senses of moneymaking. Socrates' assertion that Kallipolis' producers are moneymakers should be read in conjunction with his subsequent claim that we all have a money-loving element within us (442a); it is primarily a proposition about psychology. Moneymakers in the psychological sense are those inclined to organize their lives around securing appetitive satisfaction and hence securing the all-purpose means to appetitive satisfaction, namely money (580e–581a).[38] If left to their own devices, moneymakers in the psychological sense will tend to become moneymakers in their labours as well. But that is precisely why Plato thinks such people should *not* be left to their own devices. He envisages them growing up in a culture whose myths and prizes promote justice at every corner, creating honour and shame structures that regulate behaviour from within. He also envisages them being shepherded by the law, which both enjoins and enforces justice in behaviour, making citizens act *as if* they were ruled by reason (590c–591a). Even if a large portion of citizens in Kallipolis remain moneymakers in the psychological sense, then, they might still organize their labours as craftsmen insofar as the logic of their institutions pushes them to orient their workplace deliberations towards social needs. Hence the reason that Plato believes Kallipolis can be a genuine society despite containing a majority of moneymakers is that he thinks institutions can make craftsmen of moneymakers.

This leads directly to the question of property. In Book VIII, Socrates attributes the decline of oligarchy to the failure of the ruling class to take appropriate action against moneymakers who 'inject their poison of money' into the rest of the population (555e). He suggests two possible recourses against such poison: the second-best approach would be to pass a law that 'compels the citizens to care about virtue' by prescribing that voluntary contracts are to be entered into at the lender's risk rather than the borrower's (556a–b); better still would be a law 'preventing a person from doing whatever he likes with his own property'.[39] In Book IV, meanwhile, Socrates argues that craftsmen should not be allowed to become either too poor or too rich, because those who become too poor will not be able to buy tools and raw materials, while those who become too rich will no longer devote themselves to their crafts, becoming idle and careless (421d–422a). The worry is that the presence or absence of money can corrupt (*diaphtheirō*) craftsmen—destroy them in their very being, render them no longer what they are.[40] This applies to all craftsmen in the sense of those whose work aims to produce a specific good within the social division of labour.

This category includes the guardians and auxiliaries. But so important is their work to the preservation of society that guardians and auxiliaries require a greater degree of protection from the dangers of private property than ordinary citizens.

Earlier I suggested (without defending the suggestion) that this work involves managing the division of labour and making sure that citizens are 'the best possible craftsmen at their own work' (421b–c); everyone else's work depends to some degree on the guardians' oversight. There is much more to be said about this mandate, but the considerations canvassed so far in this section make it clear that part of the task will be to guard the institutions that make craftsmen out of moneymakers. And that means that guardians had better not be moneymakers themselves. *This* is why rather than simply being prevented from becoming too rich or too poor, as the other craftsmen are,

> they alone among the city's population are forbidden by divine law to handle or even touch gold and silver [or to be] under the same room as these metals, wear them as jewelry, or drink from gold or silver goblets (417a).[41]

So although Plato's ban on private property for the guardians is often regarded as utopian, it actually represents his solution to a feasibility objection. It is precisely because the vagaries of human psychology make it a standing possibility for citizens to be tempted away from craftsmanship and towards moneymaking that a society needs restrictions on property. And these restrictions will have to be most stringent for those with the most important jobs—for even if a combination of nature and nurture means that left to their own devices guardians would most likely be inclined to act virtuously, the risk of testing that proposition is simply too great to bear.

Notice that this argument justifies public ownership instrumentally, as a means of ensuring that citizens perform the right kind of labour. The fundamental proposition is that society is a cooperative scheme that exists for the sake of satisfying whatever needs individuals cannot satisfy without cooperating. This leads both to the notion that society will only exist insofar as citizens perform their roles in a coherent division of labour aimed at the provision of social goods and to its flipside, the notion that productive injustice (of which moneymaking is the most important kind) will prevent society from existing in the fullest sense and hence deny citizens the satisfaction of at least some of their needs. At this stage, we move away from constitutive claims (a society of craftsmen *constitutes* a genuine society) to instrumental claims, such as that moneymaking can be avoided either (a) through an ethos of justice or (b) through institutions that insulate workplace deliberations from the logic of moneymaking. And this is where property comes in—with respect to both (a) and (b). For on Plato's account public ownership can help both (a) to engender an ethos of justice, of taking the good of the whole as one's object in action, and (b) to make sure that people act justly regardless of their ethos. This leads him to the thought that craftsmen should not be allowed to become either too rich or too poor and that those who perform the most important crafts should be prevented from holding any private property whatsoever. Plato evidently thought this last step necessary, but it is important to remember that structurally speaking it is only a means of ensuring that people act justly. If it were possible to achieve this goal by other means, public ownership would not be necessary.

5. The Present

Public ownership of industries and services waxed and waned during the 20th century. In Britain, for instance, coal, electricity, cable and wireless, rail, gas, iron and steel were all nationalized under the post-war Labour government and then privatized after 1979.[42] There were of course numerous factors at work in both phases, both normatively and in terms of power struggles, but one was undoubtedly the question of efficiency. A common argument for public ownership in the first phase was that it would permit the efficient allocation of resources via central planning; a common argument against it in the second phase was that only the free market could allocate resources efficiently.[43] Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the latter position is correct; that there are no deontological constraints regarding legitimacy or the limits of markets; and that the value of efficiency trumps values like democracy that might otherwise have led us to favour public ownership. What Plato allows us to see is that the story need not end there.

The Platonic ideal enjoins workers to deliberate in light of social needs rather than profit. For much of history this would have been accepted as an ideal, even if one more honoured in the breach than the observance.[43] In today's world, however, it might seem naïve.[45] For according to a line of argument that descends from Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith, so long as policymakers design institutions appropriately, worries about moneymaking will be beside the point. In a system where producers are incentivized to satisfy the needs of consumers —that is, a competitive marketplace—self-interest will induce a medical moneymaker, for instance, to heal patients far more efficiently than a true doctor ever could.[46] Patterns of deliberation are irrelevant to productivity. And as Deirdre McCloskey points out in *Bourgeois Dignity*, living standards have shot up since moneymaking began to be perceived as a respectable activity: in 1800, the global average income was just $3 a day (in today's money); now it is $30, and in Norway it is $137.[47] What role, then, can Plato's notion of justice possibly play in today's economy?

The Platonist need not deny the importance of markets and price signals in the decision making of individual producers and hence in optimizing the allocation of social labour with respect to social needs. She need only insist that only just action on the part of individuals will make this process function as it should.[48] For the idea that market incentives will always map onto social needs is patently utopian. To begin with, few markets are fully competitive. To the extent that monopolies and oligopolies exist, along with asymmetries of information, customer satisfaction will be disincentivized. But in any case it is hardly obvious that customers' preferences are equivalent to their needs. There may be some social goods—goods that we can access only via cooperation—whose production will never be incentivized financially.[49] Conversely there may be some social bads—patent trolling, for instance—whose production is very much incentivized. When financial incentives and social needs are misaligned, it will matter a great deal whether we deliberate as moneymakers or as craftsmen.[50]

Of course, there is no question of Wall Street traders—or anyone else—simply seeing the light by themselves. As Plato thought, we need institutions that will either engender an ethos of justice or ensure that people act justly regardless of their ethos. And public ownership is one candidate for this role. The idea would be that companies tend to be accountable in the first instance to their owners. At the annual general meeting of a private company, for example, officials might be obliged to give an account of their activities to shareholders, who are entitled to respond to this account in various ways, including by dismissing the officials.[51] This accountability structure could be modified in various ways, but one of those ways would involve changing who owns the company. It could be that public ownership would entail responsiveness to democratic institutions and thereby mandate or at least incentivize deliberation with respect to social needs.[52] And this might in turn foster an ethos whereby workers come to view such deliberation as natural and begin to take pride in it. So public ownership might be justified as a means to engendering an ethos of justice or ensuring that people act justly regardless of their ethos.

Those motivated by this kind of argument would not fetishize the question of ownership. It is true that in the course of defending existing institutions (universities, healthcare systems and the like) against the pressure to organize themselves around the logic and ethos of moneymaking they would often find themselves resisting privatization schemes. But public ownership may itself turn out to distort workplace deliberation by incentivizing so-called rent seeking. Given that private ownership can come in various forms and with various constraints—cooperative ownership, social entrepreneurship, stakeholder systems, vigorous independent regulation, and so on—there may be circumstances in which it is preferable to public ownership.[53] The important thing from a Platonic perspective would be to select those institutions with respect to the underlying ideal of promoting deliberation in terms of social needs.[54] From a policy perspective there would then be a further question of how important this ideal is relative to other goals, such as promoting efficiency. The answer might depend on the domain: Plato might have been right, for instance, that deliberation in terms of social needs is less important (albeit still desirable) for farmers and mechanics than for soldiers, judges and so on, and that institutional design should reflect that fact by giving more leeway to the former than to the latter.[55]

But rules will never be sufficient by themselves. For as G. A. Cohen points out, the underlying ethos of a society—which he defines as 'the set of sentiments and attitudes in virtue of which its normal practices, and informal pressures, are what they are'—will affect whether citizens comply with rules, and hence whether those rules (and the institutions they constitute) have any actuality in the first place.[56] In this connection, we might think of the 2007–2008 Libor scandal, where mass deception on the part of participants reduced what looked from the outside like a genuine institution into a fiction; indeed, the regulating agencies were themselves said to 'have a reputation among traders of being like Potemkin villages', according to one whistleblower.[57] This points to a logical problem: if institutions are required to ensure that citizens deliberate justly, these institutions will themselves need to be

protected. But who will regulate the regulators? To some extent they simply require especially strong regulation. Qua citizens, they must be allowed private property, contra Plato. But Plato is surely right that qua regulators they should be kept as far away from financial incentive as possible; the modern equivalent of being forbidden by divine law to handle gold and silver might be being forbidden from taking jobs in the relevant sector after leaving office. Yet no amount of regulation can ever be completely sufficient. For a rule is universal and cases are particular—and in the space that must be ceded to judgement, ethos will manifest itself.[58] This is why Plato is so adamant about the proper selection and education of guardians; in Book VIII, the imperfect selection and education of guardians leads directly to their allowing themselves private property and fast becoming moneymakers (546d–547c).[59] As both Plato and Cohen saw, then, by themselves institutions can only take you so far. In the end, there is no substitute for an ethos of justice. And this points to a good that just workers should aim to produce whatever else they produce: a psychic environment, or culture, conducive to justice itself.

6. Conclusions

I have argued that Plato's *Republic* offers a justificatory structure that can be helpful to us as we consider public ownership of industries and services today. If I am right, Plato thinks of public ownership not only as a means of producing psychological unity among the rulers—as is hard to miss—but also as a means of ensuring that citizens perform a certain kind of labour. The background thought is that only by contributing to a scheme of cooperation organized towards the production of social goods do citizens constitute a genuine society. The biggest threat to this process is a kind of labour that Plato calls moneymaking, and it is to ward off this threat that he bans those with the most important jobs—those whose job it is to ensure that everyone else is doing his or her job—from possessing property. My suggestion is that this pattern of thought can help us think through questions regarding public ownership today. What it offers is a way of understanding public ownership as instrumentally valuable with respect to a wider ideal whose central category is labour. The fact that it is instrumentally valuable means that it is only contingently valuable. And even as an instrument it requires supplementing by an ethos of justice in Plato's sense.

In this structure the weight ultimately falls, both normatively and psychologically, on what I have called the fundamental proposition of Plato's philosophy of the polis: 'A city comes to exist, I believe, because none of us is individually self-sufficient, but each has many needs he cannot satisfy.' What grounds everything, in other words, is the thought that there are some goods essential to our flourishing that we can achieve only by playing our part in a well-organized cooperative scheme. This raises several questions, especially when transposed to the present. Who is to be in charge of such a scheme? What kinds of good are we speaking of? How do they fare when weighed against competing goods? And is it really not possible to free ride on the work of others? These are serious

questions that certainly need to be addressed, but they are beyond the scope of this paper. What I hope to have shown is the appeal of the framework within which they arise.[60]

Jonny Thakkar
Princeton University
jthakkar@princeton.edu

NOTES

[1] For an argument that certain kinds of actions (like punishment and war) must be carried out by public actors if they are to be legitimate, see Avihay Dorfman and Alon Harel, 'The Case Against Privatization', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 41, no. 1 (2013). For arguments that certain types of goods and services should never be for sale, see Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets* and Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

[2] The democratic claim could come in different versions, depending on whether one emphasizes, say, 'equal say' in economic life, or 'equal control', or 'checks to avoid the worst', or 'avoidance of alienation'.

[3] Plato, *Republic* (Hackett Pub Co, 2004).

[4] I should make clear that I take *polis* to be best translated as 'society' rather than 'city'. To my ear, 'city' implies an urban settlement, whereas for much of its history the Athenian *polis* (to take one example) was mostly rural in both territory and dwellings. The term 'city' does have one advantage, however, which is that it is naturally correlated with the word 'citizen'.

[5] Compare Rawls, who also begins his political philosophy with an assumption in social ontology, namely, that 'a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage'. See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Original Edition* (Belknap Press, 2005), 4 and Philip Pettit, 'Rawls's Political Ontology', *Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, Vol. 4, 157–74. For a criticism of the way in which philosophers like Plato and Rawls think about social ontology, see Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

[6] See also Raymond Geuss, *A World Without Why* (Princeton University Press, 2014), x.

[7] Compare Rousseau in Book I, Chapter 6 of the *Social Contract*: 'The true meaning of [citizen] has been almost entirely effaced among the moderns; most take a town (*ville*) for a city (*Cité*), and a townsman (*bourgeois*) for a citizen (*Citoyen*). They do not know that the houses make the town but the citizens make the city.' Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau's Political Writings* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 93.

[8] See, for example, John Searle, 'Social Ontology: Some Basic Principles', *Anthropological Theory*, 2006, Vol. 6 (1): 12–29 and Christian List and Philip Pettit, *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

[9] To put it in Aristotelian terms, *the energeia* or being-at-work of a society depends on the being-at-work of its members.

[10] On constitutive standards, see Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 27–25. The idea of constitutive normativity is hardly uncontroversial, but to defend it would go beyond the scope of this paper.

[11] With this in mind, we might understand the difference between Socrates' first and second cities as depending on different understandings of what the needs in question actually amount to. For all that Glaucon calls the first city a 'city of pigs' (372d), it is not quite

right to say that it deals only with our 'animal needs'. Pigs and other animals do not 'recline on couches strewn with yew and myrtles and feast with their children, drink their wine, and, crowned with wreaths, hymn the gods' (372b). But the first city might be considered inhuman insofar as it presupposes citizens whose needs are naturally in harmony with their environment, and hence a conception according to which those needs are in important ways *finite*. If our needs were finite, we could indeed 'produce no more children than [our] resources allow, lest [we] fall into either poverty or war', 'drink in moderation', 'live in peace and good health', and 'when [we] die at a ripe old age, [we would] pass on a similar sort of life to [our] children' (372b–d). But human needs are not like this. They are capable of expanding infinitely; they are potentially 'multifarious' (*pantadopos*), meaning of every shape and origin. This is why we need guardians—first to limit the damage that our *pleonexia* can wreak, because it can cause us to fight wars both against one another and against other cities and then to shape our souls from childhood onwards so that we will achieve as much harmony between our needs and our environment as is possible given our natures. In other words, the second city comes about because Socrates supplements the foundational proposition of his social philosophy—(1) that the final cause of society is the satisfaction of those needs that we cannot satisfy by ourselves—with two further propositions, namely, (2) that those needs include the need for our needs to be regulated in various ways and (3) that social institutions can achieve this. But (1) does not entail either (2) or (3). It would be possible, for instance, to go from (1) to a Hegelian proposition (2a) that the needs that we cannot satisfy by ourselves include the need for recognition and (3a) that the institutions of society can supply this. So in itself, the foundational proposition is compatible with various conceptions of needs—and hence, we might note, with various conceptions of the good life.

[12] An alternative translation for the first part of this sentence might be: 'more things are produced, and better and more easily, when each person…'

[13] I take that to be a function of the conception of needs presupposed by the first conception, as per my remarks in note 11.

[14] I say 'justice in the political sense' because the *Republic* is, of course, centrally concerned with justice in the psychological sense, which has to do with having each part in one's soul do its own work. How psychological justice bears on being a just citizen is an important exegetical question, but I do not address it here. See Aryeh Kosman, 'Justice and Virtue: The *Republic*'s Inquiry into Proper Difference', in G. R. F. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's* Republic, 125.

[15] Compare also 432d–433b, especially this: 'It seems, blessed though you are, that the thing has been rolling around at our feet from the very beginning, and yes, like ridiculous fools, we could not see it' (432d). One might reasonably treat this as an admission that Socrates has built his conclusions into his premises. The question, of course, is whether that is actually as problematic as it first seems, or whether it simply confirms that 'reflective equilibrium' is as far as philosophical argument can ever take us with respect to politics. See Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Original Edition* and especially Timothy Scanlon, 'Rawls on Justification', in Samuel Freeman, *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 139–167.

[16] It is perhaps worth noting that what is exchanged or interchanged (the verb is *metalambanō*) is the same in both cases, namely, 'tools and honours' (*organa ē timai*).

[17] I will also say this: in my view it is no accident that the topic of labour comes back towards the end of the *Republic*, and it is no accident that it does so in conjunction with the notion of forms (595a–602c). For a fuller account of the work that guardians are supposed to do, see Chapter 2 of my *Philosopher-Citizens* (Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

[18] In the index to his 2004 translation, C. D. C. Reeve lists 50 instances of the word 'money', 51 for 'moneymaker' or 'moneymaking' and 3 for the 'money-loving element' in the soul.

[19] On the Piraeus, see J. H. Croon, *The Encyclopedia of the Classical World*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 1535–6: 'It was the Athenians' famous victory at Salamis that enabled the development of Piraeus into a commercial as well as military harbour facility. A century later, Isocrates hailed its creation: "for Athens established the Piraeus as a market in the centre of Hellas—a market of such abundance that the articles which it is difficult to obtain, one here, one there, from the rest of the world, all these it is easy to produce from Athens" (*Panegyricus* 42).' For more general accounts of how the phenomenon of money may have shaped Greek philosophy, see Richard Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (The MIT Press, 1972). On the ancient economy more generally, see Moses Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, University of California Press, 1973, and Ian Morris, 'The Athenian Economy Twenty Years after the Ancient Economy', *Classical Philology*, Vol. 89, No. 4 (October 1994), pp. 351–366.

[20] See Debra Nails, *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Hackett Pub Co Inc, 2002). For provocative readings of the Cephalus scene, see 'Cephalus, Odysseus, and the Importance of Experience', the third chapter of C.D.C. Reeve, *Blindness and Reorientation: Problems in Plato's Republic* (Oxford University Press, 2012), and Mark Gifford, 'Dramatic Dialectic in *Republic* Book 1', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2001), 37–106.

[21] I owe this observation to Jonathan Lear.

[22] The language of the 'precise sense' derives from Thrasymachus himself, who responds to one of Socrates' objections by invoking the notion of a 'true ruler' or 'a ruler in the precise sense' (*kata ton akribē logon*), a ruler who carries out his function without errors (340d–341b). Some might therefore read the entire discussion of craftsmanship and money-making, based as it is on this Thrasymachean distinction, as yielding no clues as to Plato's own position. I take the opposite view, reading Plato's use of Thrasymachus in this respect as a combination of literary and philosophical genius. Under pressure in argument, Thrasymachus is forced to make a conceptual innovation that really is there to be made. It is not the conceptual move that should be called into question; Thrasymachus is right that it is necessary. The trouble is for Thrasymachus alone, in that once the conversation turns to the ruler in the precise sense the way is open for Socrates to pounce. One might think of this by analogy with a distinction familiar to literary scholars, namely that between an underlying story and the particular, contingent narrative through which it is unfurled. The underlying story in this case is the logical structure of reality, and the contingent narrative is the gradual disclosure of that structure in a particular conversation.

[23] We might think of wages as a *parergon*, a by-product, to use the term deployed by Socrates at 370c in reference to the principle of specialization, a principle that clearly depends on the idea of differentiating activities by their aim.

[24] There is a real question as to whether wage earning can in fact count as a craft, given Socrates' apparent understanding of crafts: it does not seem to be 'set over' some object that is deficient, unless that object is one's wallet, and if it belongs to some other type of craft—in particular, one that benefits the craftsman—then Socrates' argument against Thrasymachus will fail. See Rachel Barney, 'Socrates' Refutation of Thrasymachus', in Gerasimos Santas (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic* (Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 52.

[25] Cp. Plato, *Statesman* 281d ff. and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.1.

[26] Allan Bloom raises a somewhat similar objection. See Plato, *The Republic of Plato: Second Edition* (Basic Books, 1991), 'Interpretive Essay', 332–333.

[27] The conception of crafts that I have been attributing to Plato also differs from the Aristotelian usage according to which a craft is a two-way rational capacity, or skill, so that the craft of medicine is exercised as much in intentional poisoning as it is in intentional healing. Socrates does make use of this conception in his refutation of Polemarchus (333e7–334b), but only as part of a series of reductios that serve to bring Polemarchus towards the fundamentally different conception that I have been adumbrating (a dialectical process that culminates at 335c–336a). On this conception genuine exercises of a craft (as opposed to a mere skill) are necessarily directed at the good for the sake of which the craft exists. On Aristotle's notion of a two-way rational capacity, see Aristotle, Metaphysics 9.2 and 9.5, and Stephen Makin, 'Aristotle on Modality', Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 74 (2000), pp. 143–161.

[28] The move to conceive of everyone in the city as having some *ergon* on pain of being outside the community of citizens is reminiscent of, and potentially as radical as, Saint-Simon's move to cast those who consume without producing, the *fainéants*, as either robbers or beggars —just as Saint-Simon effectively criminalizes the unproductive, so Plato declares them undeserving of medical care (405c–408b). This also seems to bear on Plato's discussion of 'drones' in Books VIII and IX: at 564b, the drones are described as *argos* (*a-ergos*, i.e. idle, without work). At 552a, it seems that moneymakers are regarded as part of the city in the relevant sense—as I will argue in Section 4—this does not imply that moneymakers are not a problem for a city but only that the institutions of Kallipolis are capable of ensuring that they deliberate as craftsmen.

[29] On my reading someone whose strength would in most societies dispose him towards jobs that involve lifting and so on might assign himself to a different role in a society of bodybuilders. Anna Greco, by contrast, distinguishes between performing the task for which one is best suited and serving society as best as one can, on the basis that only the latter entails David Ricardo's law of comparative advantage. The law of comparative advantage holds that that 'the individual with the lower opportunity cost for producing a particular output should specialize in producing that output', writes Greco (57). If A is better than B at *both* x and y, he should be assigned to the task at which the degree of his relative advantage is greatest. This is true even if in absolute terms he is better at the other task. Greco correctly points out that this is different from the proposition that each citizen should perform the task for which he is best suited. From this, she draws the conclusion that efficiency is not the guiding principle of Plato's division of labour, if efficiency is understood as 'a function of *quantity* of output, given the desired level of quality' (58). I can accept this, because what I mean by 'serving society as best one can' is not necessarily producing the greatest quantity of goods: as Plato himself says, it is a matter of both quality and quantity (370c). See Anna Greco, 'On the Economy of Specialization and Division of Labour in Plato's Republic', *Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought* 26, no. 1 (2009).

[30] One might plausibly object that the subordination of medicine to wage earning is destructive of the craft even when the wages in question are 'the best people's kinds of wages'—after all, Socrates holds that in Kallipolis some people will be denied medical treatment (405c–408b). In my view, this merely illustrates a distinctive feature of crafts on Plato's account, namely that their proper bounds can only be determined by those with an understanding of the good of the city (and its citizens). So on Plato's view a doctor who attempted to heal 'naturally sick and intemperate people' would in fact be departing from, and corrupting, the craft of medicine properly understood. Asclepius 'invented the craft of medicine for people whose bodies are healthy in nature and habit, but have some specific disease in them' (407c–d).

[31] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Modern Library, 1994), I.2.2.

[32] As it happens, Gondo (Mifune) does seem capable of adapting to the situation, unlike the old man who serves as chairman of National Shoes at the start of the film. This might be a reason to think of Gondo as a true craftsman.

[33] I work through the comparison between Plato and Marx in some detail in *Philosopher-Citizens*.

[34] The term 'shmociety' alludes to David Enoch's parallel objection to Korsgaard's claims about agency in *Self-Constitution*. See David Enoch, 'Agency, Shmagency: Why Normativity Won't Come from What Is Constitutive of Action', *Philosophical Review*, 115(2):169–198, 2006, and 'Shmagency Revisited', *New Waves in Metaethics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

[35] I focus on moneymaking from here on, as opposed to honour seeking, because it is more obviously connected with the question of property ownership and also because in a well-ordered society one's sense of honour will track the social good, such that the honour seeker will be closer to the just person than the moneymaker. For more on this second point, see Geoffrey Brennan and Philip Pettit, *The Economy of Esteem: An Essay on Civil and Political Society* (Oxford University Press, 2005). They quote Thomas Hobbes in this connection: 'Few except those who love praise do anything to deserve it'. See Hobbes, *On The Citizen* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23.

[36] The charge of utopianism might be harder to make than it first seems, because the communism is only for a small group of guardians, and small-scale communism has in fact been practised by various religious groups in the course of history, from monks to Shakers, more or less along Plato's lines. The communities I have in mind make no effort to produce their own children, unlike Kallipolis, and this is a major difference, which could only be bridged if Plato gave up his belief in hereditary excellence.

[37] Aristotle, *Politics*, tr. Rackham (Harvard University Press, 1994), 1260b27–1264b26

[38] For a useful discussion of moneymaking as a psychological term, see 'Souls, Soul-Parts, and Persons' in Reeve, *Blindness and Reorientation: Problems in Plato's Republic*. For a comprehensive account of appetitiveness, see Hendrik Lorenz, *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle (Oxford Philosophical Monographs)* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

[39] In a well-ordered society, this second kind of legislation might not be necessary. Socrates says that a true lawgiver should not legislate about 'all that marketplace business, the contracts people make with one another in the marketplace, for example, and contracts with handicraftsmen, and slanders, injuries, indictments, establishing juries, paying or collecting whatever dues are necessary in marketplace and harbors, and, in a word, the entire regulation of marketplace, city, harbor, or what have you' (425c–d).

[40] What wealth and poverty have in common, Socrates tells us, is that they engender social instability; they introduce *neōterismos*, the desire for novelty or revolution (422a; cp. 555d). I take it that this happens at least in part because they destroy genuine craftsmanship and hence the cooperative scheme that is society.

[41] 'Cobblers who become inferior and corrupt, and claim to be what they are not, do nothing terrible to the city. But if the guardians of our laws and city are not really what they seem to be, you may be sure that they will destroy the city utterly and, on the other hand, that they alone have the opportunity to govern it well and make it happy' (421a).

[42] Part of the rail industry has subsequently been renationalized.

[43] In Britain, the first argument was common among the Fabians; see Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton University Press, 2011), chapters 7–10. The second argument was made most prominently by Friedrich Hayek in *The Road to Serfdom* (University Of Chicago Press, 2007).

[44] See R. H. Tawney's classic, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Transaction Publishers, 1998), for a remarkable treatment of how this ideal lost its grip in the West.

[45] One justification of thinking about contemporary philosophical problems alongside the history of philosophy is that it can help us come to see our own commitments as

strange. See Bernard Williams, 'Descartes and the Historiography of Philosophy', in *The Sense of the Past* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

[46] 'By directing [domestic] industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value [a businessman] intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good.' Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, IV.2.9. For Mandeville, see Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: And Other Writings* (Hackett Pub Co, 1997).

[47] Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 1–2. See also the concluding remarks in Thomas Nagel, 'Getting Personal: Why Don't Egalitarians Give Away Their Own Money', *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 June 2000.

[48] In this respect, my approach is similar to that of Melissa Lane in *Eco-Republic*, 43: 'The present purpose is rather to argue that the current Western social model can be saved from itself, by moderating it with a set of ideas against which it was forged but in light of which it can be reinvigorated. (Compare the way that Aristotle argues, in *Politics*, Book 5, 1309b–1310a, that each kind of distorted regime can be improved and saved by infusion of principles from an opposite kind.)'

[49] Arguably there would be no problem at all if we restrict ourselves to just material needs—certainly it is possible for some (and maybe most) citizens to thrive materially even if the kind of cooperation I have in mind does not take place. The problem really kicks in, we might say, once we realize that humans have other kinds of needs, such as the need for healthy psychic development (or the need for our needs to be regulated) and the need for recognition.

[50] See also Luigino Bruni and Robert Sugden, 'Why the Market Need Not Be a Morally Free Zone', *Economics and Philosophy* 24 (1): 35–64 (2008) and Lucas Stanczyk, 'Productive Justice', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 40, no. 2 (2012).

[51] David Ciepley argues that we should not conceive of shareholders as the *owners* of a corporation. I do not think this vitiates the principle that ownership and accountability tend to be related. See 'Beyond Public and Private: Toward a Political Theory of the Corporation' in *American Political Science Review* 107(1): 139–158, February 2013.

[52] In *Eco-Republic*, Lane also emphasizes structures of corporate accountability but not via the question of ownership. Lane's suggestion is that corporations be expected to demonstrate in their annual reports that 'managers and board members have reasoned about the aspects of the broader social system in which the company engages, have identified the areas where their actions have the most impact, and are able to detail the range of information and views they took into account in deciding on their actions' (176). I find this suggestion powerful, and I take it to be perfectly compatible with my own position, given my ecumenical attitude to institutional design.

[53] See, for example, Ronald Brownstein, 'Forget Dating Apps. These Millennials Want to Use Start-Ups to Save the World', *National Journal*, October 28, 2014. In seeing no non-instrumental difference between NGOs and state actors with respect to the Platonic ideal, I do not mean to deny the soundness of the arguments made in Dorfman and Harel (2013) regarding cases like punishment and war.

[54] I take this to be something like the view espoused by R. H. Tawney in works like *The Acquisitive Society* (Bell, 1921). For my attempts to connect Tawney and Plato, see 'Socialism We Can Believe In' and 'No Such Thing' in Issues Six and Seven of *The Point*.

[55] The Platonic approach to privatization therefore provides a reason for avoiding the use of private military contractors that differs from, but does not necessarily exclude, that offered by Dorfman and Harel.

[56] G. A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* (Harvard University Press, 2001), 145–147.

[57] Douglas Keenan, 'My thwarted attempt to tell of Libor shenanigans', *Financial Times*, 27 July 2012.

[58] Compare Cohen's argument concerning why egalitarianism requires a just ethos to inform individual choices: because the economic literature on incentive compatibility shows that it is impossible to design perfect rules—rules that would perfectly ensure that universally self-interested choices always raise the worst off to as high a position as non-self-interested choices would—there is no escaping the need for an ethos to guide our practical reason as we deliberate over particular cases. See "Justice, Incentives, and Selfishness" in *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?*, 117–133. See also Lane, *Eco-Republic*, 11, 30, 71–72

[59] In this connection, note that Plato wants to censor those passages in the *Iliad* where Achilles is shown to be persuadable through gifts or money (390d–391a). On the theme of culture in the *Republic*, see Myles Burnyeat, 'Culture and Society in Plato's *Republic*', *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 20 (1999): 215–324.

[60] For their advice, criticisms and encouragement I would especially like to thank Danielle Allen, Dan Brudney, John Cooper, Louis-Philippe Hodgson, Mark Johnston, Russell Jones, Melissa Lane, Jonathan Lear, Christophe Litwin, Benjamin Morison, Alexander Nehamas, Robert Pippin, David Plunkett and the anonymous reviewer for the journal.

REFERENCES

Aristotle (1933), *Metaphysics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

—— (1944), *Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

—— (2014), *Nicomachean Ethics*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co.

Bevir, M. (2011), *The Making of British Socialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brennan, G. and Pettit, P. (2005), *The Economy of Esteem: An Essay on Civil and Political Society*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Brownstein, R. (2014), 'Forget dating apps. These millennials want to use start-ups to save the world', *National Journal*, online.

Bruni, L. and Sugden, R. (2008), 'Why the market need not be a morally free zone', *Economics and Philosophy*, 24: 35–64.

Burnyeat, M. (1999), 'Culture and society in Plato's *Republic*', *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, 20: 215–324.

Ciepley, D. (2013), 'Beyond public and private: toward a political theory of the corporation', *American Political Science Review*, 107: 139–58.

Cohen, G. A. (2001), *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Croon, J. H. (1965), *The Encyclopedia of the Classical World*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Dorfman, A. and Harel, A. (2013), 'The case against privatization', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 41: 67–102.

Enoch, D. (2006), 'Agency, shmagency: why normativity won't come from what is constitutive of action', *Philosophical Review*, 115: 169–98.

—— (2011), '*Shmagency revisited*', in New Waves in Metaethics. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
Ferrari, G. R. F. (ed.) (2007), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Finley, M. (1973), *The Ancient Economy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Freeman, S. (2002), *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
Geuss, R. (2014), *A World Without Why*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Greco, A. (2009), 'On the economy of specialization and division of labour in Plato's Republic', *Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought*, 26: 52–72.
Hayek, F. A. (2007), *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents—the Definitive Edition (the Collected Works of F. A. Hayek, Volume 2)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Hobbes, T. (1998), *On The Citizen*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Korsgaard, C. (2009), *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Lane, M. (2013), *Eco-republic: What the Ancients Can Teach Us About Ethics, Virtue, and Sustainable Living*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Lear, J. (1998), *Open Minded: Working Out the Logic of the Soul*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
List, C. and Pettit, P. (2011), *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Lorenz, H. (2009), *The Brute Within: Appetitive Desire in Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Lukács, G. (1972), *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Makin, S. (2000), 'Aristotle on Modality', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes, 74: 143–161.
Mandeville, B. (1997), *The Fable of the Bees: And Other Writings*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub Co.
McCloskey, D. N. (2011), *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Morris, I. (1994), 'The Athenian economy twenty years after the ancient economy', *Classical Philology*, 89: 351–66.
Nagel, Thomas. 'Getting personal: Why don't egalitarians give away their own money', *Times Literary Supplement*, June 23, 2000.
Nails, D. (2002), *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub Co Inc.
Oakeshott, M. (1991), *On Human Conduct*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Pettit, P. (2005), 'Rawls's political ontology', *Philosophy, Politics and Economics*, 4: 157–74.
Plato (1991), *The Republic of Plato: Second Edition*. New York: Basic Books.
—— (1999), *Statesman*. Indianapolis, IN: Hacket Pub Co.
—— (2004), *Republic*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub Co.
Rawls, J. (2005), *A Theory of Justice: Original Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
Reeve, C. D. C. (2012), *Blindness and Reorientation: Problems in Plato's Republic*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Rousseau, J. J. (1987), *Rousseau's Political Writings: Discourse on Inequality, Discourse on Political Economy, on Social Contract*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
Sandel, M. J. (2013), *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Santas, G. (2006), *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic (Blackwell Guides to Great Works)*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
Satz, D. (2012), *Why Some Things Should Not Be For Sale: The Moral Limits of Markets*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
Seaford, R. (2004), *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Searle, J. (2006), 'Social ontology: some basic principles', *Anthropological Theory*, 6: 12–29.
Smith, A. (1994), *The Wealth of Nations (Modern Library)*. New York, NY: Modern Library.
Stanczyk, L. (2012), 'Productive justice', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 40: 144–64.
Tawney, R. H. (1921), *The Acquisitive Society*. London, UK: Bell.
—— (1998), *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
Thakkar, Jonny. 'No such thing', *The Point*, issue 7, Spring 2013a.
Thakkar, Jonny. 'Socialism we can believe in', *The Point*, issue 6, Winter 2013b.
Thakkar, J. (forthcoming), *Philosopher–Citizens*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Williams, B. (2006), *The Sense of the Past*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.