Rethinking Bernard Williams' Criticism
of the City-Soul Analogy in Plato's *Republic*
(draft)

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Abstract

This essay takes a close look at Bernard Williams' criticism of the city-soul analogy in Plato's *Republic*, which "has dominated the discussion of its subject ever since." (Myles Burnyeat). I start with reviving Williams' arguments to elucidate the genuine challenge to Plato's theory of justice by introducing city-soul analogy. The second part of this essay aims to show that Williams' critics, such as Jonathan Lear, G.R.F. Ferrari, and Nobert Blössner have not successfully solved the problems Williams brought forth in his article. Finally, I call attention to a neglected aspect of the city-soul analogy, i.e. the predominance of reason in Plato's theory of justice. By carefully analyzing Plato's account of justice and briefly addressing the discussion about philosopher-kings in Book V–VII, I argue that Plato actually defines justice as the rule of the reasoning part. With this new definition of justice, the city-soul analogy will be shown philosophically accountable within the whole argumentative structure of *Republic*.

It is well known that *Republic* is not an accurate translation of the ancient Greek word πολιτεία, whose meanings range from "condition and rights of a citizen" to "constitution of a state"[1]. The Chinese translation *Li Xiang Guo*, which literally means the ideal state, even goes further to identify Plato's *magnum opus* as a utopian writing. However, Plato's or Socrates' mythical narrative[2] of the ideal city (καλλιπόλις) and its constitution starts rather late in the middle of Book II of Republic. This is to meet Glaucon's tough challenge, i.e. to clarify what justice is and how justice is in every way better than injustice. (357b-368d) This mission leads Socrates to adapt the strategy of argument. Instead of his dialectical examination of conventional definitions of δικαιοσύνη in Book I,

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1   See H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented throughout by Sir H.S. Jones, with a revised supplement 1996, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, 1434.

2   Myles Burnyeat sharply notices that Socrates uses the verb μυθολέγειν (to tell mythic tales) to imply that the ideal city merely exists in imagination or in speech (λόγῳ) (427d). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the callipolis is a groundless fantasy. On the contrary, Socrates takes great pain to defend its realizability. See M.F. Burnyeat "Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City", in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. G Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 297–308, at 297. This point will be confirmed in our later discussion on philosopher-kings.

Socrates attempts to construct his own theory of justice in a more direct and positive way.[3]

Against this background, Socrates introduces the discussion on the just city, with the hope that this would be like some large letters, helping us read a smaller copy of the same letters a bit away from us, i.e., the justice in an individual. (368d-369a) In later conversations, the individual in question is identified with his or her soul. (435c)[4] Accordingly, the analysis of the justice in the city will shed light on our inquiry into the justice of the soul, provided that the term 'justice' expresses the same message in both the city and the soul. This is the so-called 'city-soul analogy', which runs through the dialogue from *Republic* II to IX. Socrates employs this analogy not only to introduce his political reflections on justice, but also to present his own response to Glaucon's fundamental challenge, i.e., to manifest what justice is. As will be shown shortly, Socrates interprets the justice as the health of the soul in terms of harmony of political powers, and refers the injustice of the city to the inner conflict of the soul. All of these suggest that the city-soul analogy is not merely the opening word, but actually occupies a significant position in the construction of the theory of justice in *Republic*. As a result, we cannot talk about Socrates' definition of justice in *Republic* without first addressing the city-soul analogy.

Nevertheless, the city-soul analogy and its role in Socrates' definition of justice in *Republic* have been severely criticized by Bernard Williams in his article "The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's Republic", first published in 1973.[5] As Myles Burnyeat rightly claims in his introduction to Williams essays in the history of philosophy, this article "has dominated the discussion of its subject ever since."[6] Williams' criticism constitutes an essential starting point in later reflections on the relationship between soul and city in *Republic*.[7] For this reason, I start with reviving Williams'

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3   Otfried Höffe identifies here "the double turn" of *Republic*: on the one hand, the method of argument changes from criticism to construction; on the other, the topic moves from individual justice to political justice. Höffe, "Zur Analogie von Individuum und Polis", in *Platon: Politeia*, hrsg. von O. Höffe, Berlin: Academie Verlag, 1997, 69–94, esp. 69. Out later analysis will show that Höffe obviously exaggerates the transition of thesis; otherwise it would be difficult to account for Plato's detailed analysis of the individual soul in the later discussions in *Republic*.

4   Cf. David Roochnik, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato's "Republic"*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003, 12.

5   Willliams' article was originally published in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, ed. E.N. Lee etc., Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973, 196–206. It was later included in Bernard Williams, *The Sense of the Past: Essays in the History of Philosophy*, ed. Myles Burnyeat, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006. This article will later be abbreviated as "Analogy" with the pagination from the latter work.

6   Bernard Williams, *The Sense of the Past*, xv.

7   G.R.F. Ferrari briefly summarizes the influence of Williams on later contributions on this topic from Jonathan Lear, Julia Annas, Otfried Höffe, Terence Irwin, Mario Vegetti, and Norbert Blössner. Ferrari's own book *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005) can also be treated as a response to Williams' article. See esp. 55–57. It deserves notice that the influence of Williams' analysis of the city-soul analogy is quite restricted in 1970s. For instance, it is not mentioned at all in J.R.S. Wilson's "The Argument of Republic IV" (in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 26 (1976), 111–124), neither in J.M. Cooper's "The Psychology of Justice in Plato" (in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1977): 151–57), nor in Nicholas White's *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979). See also note 10 for Vlastos' attitude to this article. To my knowledge, the turning point seems to be Julia Annas' *An*

arguments to elucidate the genuine challenge to Plato's theory of justice by introducing city-soul analogy. The second part of this essay aims to show that Williams' critics have not successfully solved the problems he brought forth in this article. Finally, I call attention to a neglected aspect of Plato's city-soul analogy i.e. the predominance of reason in his theory of justice. By carefully analyzing Plato's account of justice and briefly addressing the discussion about philosopher-kings in *Republic* V–VII, I argue that Plato actually defines justice as the rule of the reasoning part. With this new definition of justice, the city-soul analogy will be shown philosophically accountable within the whole argumentative structure of *Republic*.

I

Above all, Williams rightly points out that when Plato applies his observation of justice in the city to an individual or soul, he already presupposes that

(1) The explanation of a city's being just is the same as that of a man's being just.

This presupposition is first grounded upon the fact that the Greeks use the same word δίκαιος (just) or δικαιοσύνη (justice) to talk about the justice in the city as well as in the soul. (435a) In Plato's terms, it implies that both the city and the soul have a single form (εἶδος) of justice: "So the just man in his turn, simply in terms of the form of justice, will be no different from a just city. He will be like the just city." (435b)[8] However, the exact meaning of δικαιοσύνη as a single form in both cases is not self-evident but actually the problem to which the whole argument of *Republic* is directed: what is justice? If the definition of justice is still in darkness, we are not entitled to apply it to both the city and the soul or to claim that they are alike in regard to justice.[9] In other words, we need to inquire the philosophical foundation of the aforementioned use of language.

Moreover, as Williams rightly points out, Plato himself does not take (1) as an axiomatic truth.[10] Instead, he insists that the application of our observation on the just city to the just soul

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Introduction to Plato's Republic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). Annas explicitly confirms Williams' contribution to this topic in this still standard introduction to *Republic* for English readers. See esp. 146–152.

8   Unless otherwise noted, the English translation of *Politeia* is cited with necessary modifications from Plato, *The Republic*, ed. G.R.F. Ferrari, tr. Tom Griffith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Williams' own rendition of this verse runs as, "So the just man will not differ at all from the just city, so far as the **character** of justice is concerned, but will be like it." (emphasis added) See id. "Analogy", 109. Without least doubt, here Socrates or Plato has not introduced his well-known theory of Form and εἶδος does not refer to an ontologically independent being. Nevertheless, it will be clarified in later discussions that it is better to translate this special term as "form" to maintain the consistency of terminology as well as to keep intact the context of Plato's theory of Form, which is **later** incorporated into his analysis of the city-soul analogy. Here I would like to express my deep gratitude to my student Liu Xin for drawing my attention to the role of 'form' in Plato's account of the city-soul analogy.

9   Socrates himself stresses at the end of Book I that the first step (dish) of his arguments is to define justice. "After all, if I don't know what justice is, I'm hardly going to know whether or not it is in fact some kind of excellence or virtue, or whether the person who possesses it is unhappy or happy." (354c)

10   For instance, in his classical article "Justice and Happiness in the *Republic*", Gregory Vlastos claims

is merely the first step of our inquiry into this invisible entity. We should approach the justice in the soul in an independent way. If we reach the same definition with that in the city, that would be fine. Otherwise, we need to rethink our earlier findings on the level of city. By setting the just city and the just soul side by side, we will reach the definition of justice which can be applied to both. (434d–435a)[11] This bidirectional application of city-soul analogy is identified by Williams as "the analogy of meaning".

However, Williams argues that Plato does not stick to this "analogy of meaning" in his later analyses of city and soul, but converts to a reductive account. Plato attempts to argue that both the classification (εἴδη)[12] and characteristics (ἤθη) of the city can be reduced to its components, namely, its citizens. For instance, when talking about the spirit element of a city, we are actually referring to the citizens who are well-known for their spiritedness. (435e–436a) Williams identifies this reductive account as "the whole-part rule", which is thought to be applicable to justice as a cardinal virtue of both the city and its citizens. It can be formulated as

(2) A city is just iff its men are just.

However, Plato does not believe that the whole-part rule itself can define the essence of justice. Otherwise, as Williams correctly argues, the explanation of an individual's justice would be reduced to his components and further ad infinitum.[13] For this reason, Plato appeals to other model or formula to define justice in *Republic*:

(3) Each of the elements (reasoning, spirited, and appetitive parts) does its job. (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν)[14]

Williams believes that (3) implies that

(4) The reasoning part rules.

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that Socrates takes the following statement as self-evident truth: "If the same predicate is predicable of any two things, then, however they may differ in other ways, they must be exactly alike in the respect in which it is predicable of each." Vlastos believes that this is the source of Socrates' confusion of social justice with psychological justice in *Republic* IV. See Gregory Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness in the *Republic*", in id. *Platonic Studies*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, second printing with corrections, 1981, 111–139, esp. 131–132. It deserves notice that in his 1981 revision of this 1969 article, Vlastos does not mention Williams' work at all, which was originally published in a collection of essays dedicated to Vlastos himself! Instead, Vlastos insists that the defect of Plato's argumentation lies not in the analogy but in his equivocation on the definition of justice.

11   Williams, "Analogy", 108.
12   In this context, Plato uses the plural of εἶδος to signify sorts of things, with special reference to the classes within a city. It is therefore used as a synonym to γένη (kinds) and should not be translated as form.
13   Ibid., 109–110.
14   Here I follow Williams' rendition of the phrase τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν, which will be further analyzed and retranslated in Session III. See esp. note 55.

Applying (3) to the city, we can easily infer that a just city should also have a reasoning, a spirited, and an appetitive part in it. This unlikely division of the city, as well as Platonic tripartite theory of the soul, brings on the following problems.

First of all, it follows that the just city also has an appetitive class, which constitutes the largest part in the city as well as in the soul. (cf. 442a) As mentioned earlier, the characters of a political class, such as spiritedness, can be reduced to the characteristics of its individual members. It follows that the appetitive element of the city is composed of appetitive men, who are controlled by their lowest desires. However, it is obviously absurd to claim that a just city is full of those appetitive men who are undoubtedly unjust.[15]

The same problem occurs on the level of the soul as well. From (2), we should accept that the appetitive class in the just city can also be called just. Moreover, according to (3) and (4), in an individual soul even of the lowest class, the reasoning part should rule, even though in a more restricted manner and quite different from that in a philosopher-king. For without this minimal function of reason, these appetitive men would not know what their appropriate task is, not to say to do their own job. In the Platonic callipolis, the most significant task of all citizens is to obey the authority of the reasoning part, i.e. the philosopher-kings. Now applying the analogy from the city to the soul, we have to concede that in the just soul there is also an appetitive part which can mind its own business and "harken to" the rule of the reasoning part. As is clear on the level of the city, this task cannot be achieved without the minimal exercise of reason. However, Plato's tripartition of the soul is based upon a "principle of conflict" (436b–c), which does not allow the same element to have different functions of the soul, such as appetitive and reason.[16]

Williams argues that when Plato returns to the city-soul analogy in *Republic* VIII, he actually adopts a weakened version of whole-part rule:

(5) A city is just iff the predominant citizens are just.[17]

Moreover, this so-called "predominant section rule" is not confined to the case of justice but is generalized in Plato's analysis of the degeneration of cities in Book VIII and IX:

(6) A city is F iff the predominant citizens are F.

Here, F refers to the characteristics common to city and soul, such as just, spirited, timocratic, democratic etc. However, this adaptation cannot save Plato's unattractive account of the city. This is first shown in Plato's criticism of democracy. A distinguishing feature of a democratic city, ac-

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15   Williams, "Analogy", 110.

16   Ibid., 110–111. For recent accounts of Plato's tripartite theory of the soul, see G. R. F. Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 165–201. For a more recent effort to reconcile Plato's tripartition of the soul in Republic IV with his dualistic division of the soul into rational and irrational part in other works, see Jessica Moss, "Appearances and Calculations: Plato's Division of the Soul", in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. XXXIV (2008), 35–68.

17   Williams, "Analogy", 112.

cording to Plato, lies in its acceptance of all sorts of men. (557c) On the other hand, the principle of democracy lies in that the majority rules. In other words, the predominant of a democracy is its majority. Applying (6) to democracy, we can know that most of its citizens are of democratic character, i.e., an unsteady character of the so-called "drones". That means, most people of the people have the same democratic character, which is not completely compatible of the characteristic of a democratic city to accommodate various characters.[18]

Incidentally, those democratic people happen to form the lowest class of the just city. The only difference is that now these drones are under the control of the reasoning element and no more function as the predominant part. However, as Williams rightly points out, the meaning of "control" here is quite ambiguous. It seems that in the callipolis, these people of the lowest class also have some rational control over their unsteady character, which refers us back to the dilemma we mentioned earlier on the level of soul.[19]

Furthermore, in order to establish the complete similarity between city and soul, we have to link the appetite of the soul with the productive class, the lowest in the city. It is evident that one can be a good producer without possessing strong irrational desire to food or sex.[20] Moreover, it is not difficult to assign a double function to the spirited part in the city. For the soldiers should be both fiery against their enemies and gentle towards their fellowmen. However, the meaning of spirit as a part of the soul is quite ambiguous. It is not evident that a single part of the soul can accommodate both the emotion of anger and an assistant to the reason. Williams cites *Phaedrus* to show that the feeling of anger does not always side with reason as Plato believes in *Republic*. (*Republic* 440b and *Phaedrus* 254c)[21]

Williams therefore concludes that by introducing the city-soul analogy, Plato does not successfully solve the difficulties in defining justice by division of labor, but rather conceals the possible paradoxes in his psychological reading of politics as well as in his political understanding of psychology.

II

Williams' article clearly reveals the characteristics of city-soul analogy in *Republic*: it contains a vertical aspect in addition to a horizontal one. By appealing to this analogy, Plato not only describes the parallel correspondence between city and soul, but also attempts to offer a causal account of the relationship between these two terms at 435e, that is, the characters of the city, such as justice, can be reduced to those of the soul of its men.

To establish this point, first we need to clarify the meaning of analogy in general. The English word "analogy" originates from the Greek ἀναλογία, which originally denotes the comparison involving the likeness between two ratios and relations. It is also specified as "analogy of

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18   Ibid., 112–113.
19   Williams, "Analogy", 113–114.
20   Ibid., 115.
21   Ibid., 116–117.

proportionality".[22] For instance, the word "harmonious" can be used as an analogical term to describe a musical scale as well as the ordered movement of heavenly bodies, for both are analogous in terms that they contain a similar or same ratio. The definition of justice in *Republic* IV (see (3)) clearly satisfies this conception of analogy, for the relationship between elements in the callipolis is similar to or correspondent to that in the just soul.[23]

The particularity of the city-soul analogy exists in the whole-part relationship between the two terms of analogy: the city is composed of different classes, while the class are of individual souls. Before reintroducing the city-soul analogy in *Republic* IV, Plato first discusses in what sense a city can be called wise, courageous, and self-disciplined. In everyday language, these virtues are primarily applied to individuals, and to a political community only in a derivative sense. In this context, certainly we can still claim that the wisdom of the city is similar or even analogous to that of the soul. But it presents an asymmetric relationship: it is difficult to conceive a wise city without a wise man; however, a stupid city can have a wise man (e.g., Socrates in Athens, at least in Plato's eyes). The priority of the soul or individual over the city is quite evident here. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Socrates brings the city-soul analogy into discussion for the sake of exhibiting invisible features of the soul. All of these invite or impel Plato as well as readers of *Republic* to interpret the justice of the city in terms of psychological justice. The contribution of Williams' article is to show that this reductive or causal reading of city and soul, in particular when the virtue of justice is concerned, has to face some insurmountable problems on both the levels of city and soul.

Willimas' criticism of Plato was also criticized in recent scholarships on the city-soul analogy in *Republic*. They did not call into question Williams' powerful argumentation, but its basic premises which support his reductive reading of the analogy: 1. does the city-soul analogy entail a vertical aspect in addition to a horizontal one? 2. Should the vertical relationship between city and soul be interpreted as a one-way causality, i.e., the character of the city is determined by that of the soul? 3. Does Plato treats the city-soul analogy as an essential part of his argumentation for the theory of justice? These three different perspectives were respectively incarnated in the studies by G.R.F. Ferrari, Jonathan Lear, and Nobert Blössner.[24] In this session, I will deal with these criticisms of Williams' causal interpretation of the city-soul analogy, in order to show that Williams' challenge is still relevant to our reading of *Republic*.

In the article "Inside and Outside the *Republic*" published in 1992, Jonathan Lear explicitly concedes that "Bernard Williams offers the most penetrating critique we have of Plato's analogy."[25] Following Williams, Lear believes that the city-soul analogy reveals not only the mere likeness

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22   E. J. Ashworth, "Medieval Theories of Analogy", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL=<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/analogy-medieval/>. It deserves notice that Plato does not use the term ἀναλογία or its adjective ἀνάλογος to denote the comparison between city and soul in *Republic*. He prefers more ordinary words such as ὁμοιότης or ὅμοιος (both mean "alike").

23   Ferrari also rightly emphasize that the city-soul analogy involves a comparison of proportion., See Ferrari, *City and Soul*,40.

24   For other secondary literature on this topic, see G.R.F. Ferrari (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 492.

25   Jonathan Lear, "Inside and Outside the *Republic*," *Phronesis* 37 (1992): 184–215, at 194.

between two terms, but actually the intimate relationship between soul and city. What matters here is how to interpret this relationship. Lear argues that Williams fails to realize that Plato's psychology has an external perspective as well as an internal one. The status of an individual psyche contains both the inner life and the effect from the outer world upon the soul. In Lear's own words, "psyche-analysis and polis-analysis are, for Plato, two aspects of a single discipline, psychology."[26] In light of this, Lear argues that Williams' analysis merely capture one aspect of Platonic psychology, that is, "externalization", the psychological activities processing from the soul to the city. Williams' "whole-part rule" is reformulated as a psychopolitical proposition: "If a polis is F, there must be **some** citizens whose psyches are F who (**with others**) have helped to **shape** the polis."[27] On the other hand, Plato stresses that the presence of polis or political life can also shape the soul of its men by education, which is called "internalization".[28] In this regard, there do exist a causal relationship between city and soul, however, it should not be a one-way process, but rather a bidirectional one. It is precisely this mutual interaction or interdependence that determines the isomorphism of justice between city and soul in Plato's psychology.[29]

Appealing to a more complex model in modern psychology, Lear rejects the second premise of Williams' arguments. The obedience of the appetitive class to the reasoning part in the callipolis is correspondently interpreted as the result of education, or internalization, not by virtue of the unexplainable exercise of reason in the appetitive part of the soul.[30] However, this argument lacks strong textual evidence. As Ferrari rightly comments, even though education plays a significant role in Plato's Republic, it is never used to support the city-soul analogy. So is the process of externalization. For instance, an oligarchic state is not molded by oligarchic people according to their own psychological characteristics, though the former is still analogous to the latter.[31] Moreover, nothing can prevent us from inquiring which process is more fundamental in Lear's subtle account of the vertical relationship between city and soul, externalization or internalization. Lear follows the order of account in *Republic* to claim that internalization is more primary, for only in the callipolis, an individual soul can become just by appropriate education. Obviously, the content of education should contain the justice of callipolis, which manifests itself principally in its harmonious construction. This comes into conflict with Plato's emphasis on the priority of the soul when he reintroduces the city-soul analogy in *Republic* IV. We have to ask further: why this political structure can be called just, if not on the ground that the rule of reasoning part in the city is analogous to the rule of reason in the soul? Most importantly, internalization and externalization merely explain

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26   Ibid., 184–185.

27   Ibid., 191, emphases are added to show the difference from Williams's (2) and (6).

28   Cf. Lear, "Inside and Outside", 186–190.

29   Ibid., 195. Höffe also insists that city and soul are interdependent though the soul possesses some priority in the analogy. Nevertheless, Höffe refuses to interpret this mutual reliance as a psychological feature, but rather takes it to be an essential component of Plato's political account of the genesis of polis. See Höffe, "Zur Analogie", 69–93, esp. 78. As Ferrari rightly points out, in regard to their emphasis on the causal interdependence between city and soul, there is no essential difference between Lear's and Höffe's criticisms of Williams's account. See Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 55–6.

30   Lear, "Inside and Outside", 198–200.

31   Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 52–53.

how the virtue of justice transmits from city to soul and from soul back to city. Lear fails to address the more basic question what is justice, for the sake of which the city-soul analogy is introduced in *Republic*. However, in Williams' argument, though the analogy itself cannot define justice, it does function as an efficient instrument to justify the definition of justice.

Ferrari thoroughly analyzes Williams' argument and sharply criticizes the causal account of analogy from Williams, Lear, Annas and other scholars, in his work *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* first published in 2003.[32] Ferrari follows Terence Irwin to cut off the vertical bond implied in the city-soul analogy. Irwin explicitly identifies it as a "political analogy" and maintains that it is brought into discussion for recognizing the parallel proportion of elements in the city as well as in the soul. According to Irwin, we have no reason to enlarge this analogy to apply it to the moral feature of these elements, such as justice.[33] However, Irwin merely points out this misunderstanding of the city-soul analogy without positively articulating its role in *Republic*. Ferrari develops this non-reductive reading by exhibiting in detail the rhetorical function of the city-soul analogy.[34] He borrows a rhetorical term from Aristotle to call this analogy "a proportional metaphor or simile" (μεταφορὰ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον)[35], which is precisely the original meaning of ἀναλογία in ancient Greek. What should be stressed here is that this metaphor should be applied in two directions to maintain the balance between city and soul, between politics and ethics in *Republic*.[36] This symmetric structure of the city-soul analogy is well represented in Plato's account of timocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. On the one hand, the projection of city on the soul helps us better understand the moral feature and happiness of the city as a whole. On the other, the transition of the soul to the city enables us to glimpse the truth of the inner life of an individual soul on a bigger screen.[37] However, when coming to tyrants and philosopher-kings, Ferrari also compromises that Plato does employ a causal model to interpret the vertical relationship between city and soul. In these cases, the analogy manifests its asymmetric feature with focus on the soul rather than the city.[38] Nevertheless, Ferrari still insists that this causal relationship is not entailed in the city-soul analogy, but rather originates in the characteristics of the subject matter to which the analogy is applied, that is, in human nature.[39]

Ferrari's account definitely denies the first two premises of Williams' argument by stressing the rhetorical function of the city-soul analogy. Nevertheless, this admirable effort does not resolve the inner paradox in *Republic* in a philosophical way. First of all, by reducing the analogy to a rhetorical instrument, Ferrari undeniably weakens its argumentative strength. Moreover, this renders

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32   This book originates from the author's lectures delievered at the University of Macerata in 1999 and first published in 2003 by Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin. The pagination cited in this article is from the later reprint by the university of Chicago press. (see note 7 for detailed reference).

33   Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics*, New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 230.

34   Ferrari repeatedly stresses that the city-soul analogy is no more or less than an analogy and cannot be used to reveal the virtue within the soul of an individual citizen. See Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 53, 55, 60 etc.

35   See for instance Aristotle's *Poetics*, 1457b, *Rhetorics*, 1407a, 1411a, cited from Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 61.

36   Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 59.

37   Ibid., 75–82.

38   Ibid., 85–89.

39   Ibid., 97.

it difficult to account for the unity of political narrative and psychological narrative in *Republic*, which is reached in the attainment of happiness of an individual soul. As Ferrari himself admits in his refutation of Lear's solution of the analogy, "although we have evaded Williams' unpalatable conclusions, we have also radically disengaged the soul from the city."[40] In his later account, Ferrari does not convincingly justify this detachment. For insofar as a citizen as a political animal in the city cannot be identified with the owner of the tripartite soul, a just person in the political life will not be the individual whose soul is in a harmonious state. As a result, it would be difficult for us to meet Glaucon's challenge: why a just person is necessarily a happy one? With Lear, Ferrari's account renders Plato's definition of justice an abrupt claim, which is hard to be justified. Ferrari ascribes the similarity between a tyrannical city and a tyrannical character to an ambiguous term, i.e., human nature, which is obviously an unsatisfactory solution. For it is precisely for the sake of revealing the invisible nature of the soul that the city-soul analogy is introduced in *Republic* II. This ascription is not only subject to the suspicion of circular argument, but also explains away the argumentative value of the city-soul analogy.

In the most recent treatment of the analogy[41], Nobert Blössner rightly points out that the analogy should not be conceived as a theoretical model invariable in Plato's *Republic*. At the right beginning (368c–369a), the analogy is introduced for clarifying moral characters of an individual soul and is specifically concerned with the virtue of justice. Moreover, at that stage, the analogy is merely treated as a useful presupposition.[42] However, in Book IV, Plato or Socrates takes the analogy as an accepted truth without further justifying its validity. He directly employs it to examine if the elements of the soul are correspondent to those in the city.[43] Nevertheless, Blössner does not believe that Plato has an established theory of the soul which needs to be illuminated by the city-soul analogy. On the contrary, Plato rather starts from the likeness of the soul to the city to construct a novel theory of tripartite soul.[44] Following Bernard Williams, Blössner argues that this analogy does bring about certain theoretical puzzles, which manifest themselves both on the level of city and soul as we mentioned earlier. [45]

Quite different from his predecessors, Blössner maintains that Plato is not blind to the limitations and problems of the city-soul analogy, but rather intentionally utilizes this defective rhetorical instrument as an essential move to advance the whole argument of *Republic*. By distorting or developing the city-soul analogy, Plato aims to convince the interlocutors of the plausibility of Socrates' account, that is, his thought experiments of establishing a callipolis from Book II to IV.

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40   Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 50.

41   Nobert Blössner, "The City-Soul Analogy", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G.R.F. Ferrari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 345–385. Blössner's study of the city-soul analogy is first published in German in his book *Dialorgform und Argument: Studien zu Platons 'Politeia'* (Stuttgart, 1997), which strongly influenced Ferrari's interpretation. The article mentioned here is based upon this earlier work and is translated from German to English by G.R.F. Ferrari himself.

42   Ibid., 346–7.

43   Ibid., 347–350.

44   Ibid., 354–358.

45   Nobert Blössner, "The City-Soul Analogy", 358–360, in which Blössner definitely acknowledges Williams' contribution.

In light of this, it is an obvious fact that the causal account of the analogy will help Glaucon and his brother acknowledge its validity, even though a careful analysis will reveal the insurmountable difficulties of this interpretation.[46] Accordingly, in *Republic* VIII and IX, Socrates, as Blössner argues, definitely abandons the metaphor of letters in Book II and further develops the tripartite theory of the soul in Book IV. Now, the division of the soul is no longer dependent upon some single actions, but rather on long-term goals of individuals.[47] Plato's description of the degeneration of various polities, as well as various sorts of soul, does not rely on his earlier causal interpretation of city and soul, but rather points to various ways of life. This account culminates in the ultimate aim of the arguments in *Republic* that happiness is essentially inseparable form the just life.[48]

Adopting a developmental approach, Blössner carefully locates his examination of the function of the city-soul analogy within the whole framework of argument in *Republic*. This effort does help to overcome the tendency to fragment the texts in earlier studies, especially in those works under the influence of analytical philosophy. However, by identifying Socrates' use of the analogy in Book IV as a rhetorical device, Blössner's interpretation is as unattractive from a philosophical point of view as that of Ferrari's. Furthermore, Blössner insists that Socrates deliberately uses a seemingly persuasive strategy to win the trust of his interlocutors, at least the trust on the surface. We have to say that this account is in conflict with the spirit of Socratic arguments in *Republic*, for Socrates explicitly tells Glaucon that he prefer really to convince, not just to seem to convince them that justice is in every way better to injustice. (357b) As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the city-soul analogy is the right beginning of Socrates' efforts to positively construct a theory of justice that should be genuinely convincing.[49] Moreover, although Blössner insists to interpret the city-soul analogy within the whole structure of *Republic*, he straightforwardly jumps from Book IV to Book VIII, while calling the three middle books as a lacuna which should be filled by a reader.[50] However, this lacuna will be shortly demonstrated as essential to a comprehensive understanding of the city-soul analogy.

III

It is evident now that recent studies on the city-soul analogy have not successfully defended its validity in *Republic*, by meeting the philosophical challenge from Bernard Williams to Plato's theory of justice grounded on the analogy. To talk about Plato's *Republic* in a philosophical way, that is, not to read it merely as a literary work, we still have to face Williams' sharp criticism of the analogy.

One of Williams' insights is that the analogy itself, even when both its horizontal parallel and its vertical causality are considered, cannot define the justice. Otherwise, this would result in argument in a circle and the regress ad infinitum. Therefore, when Socrates reintroduces the analogy in

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46   Ibid. 372–375, esp. 374.

47   Ibid., 360–366, esp. 363, cf. *Republic*, 550b, 553b–c, 559e–561a, 572d–573b.

48   Ibid., 372.

49   See note 3.

50   Blössner merely mentions in one of footnotes that Ferrari attempts to fill this lacuna. See Nobert Blössner, "The City-Soul Analogy", 350.

Book IV, he first offers an independent definition of justice: "... to do one's own, and not trying to do other's, this is justice. (τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν δικαιοσύνη ἐστί)" (433a)[51] Socrates claims that this is precisely the principle upon which the callipolis can be established. First of all, the foundation of a city lies in the fact that we have all sorts of needs (ἐνδεής) that none of us can satisfy by himself. (369b–c) On the other hand, "one individual is by nature quite unlike another individual…different people are equipped to perform different tasks (ἐργου)". (370b) Therefore, in a beautiful city, one should concentrate on the work most appropriate to oneself, in order to guarantee that various sorts of needs can be satisfied to the fullest extent.[52] Here, the ambiguous expression "to do one's own" is related to a job or an occupation which mostly suits one's natural aptitude. Correspondingly, justice reveals itself as the principle of labor division, which is primarily concerned with productive arts and economic functions of citizens. Later, the arts in question are enlarged to include the art of war (374b) and the art of ruling (412cff.), which help to demarcate different roles in political life: the producers, warriors and rulers. Here, we suspend the validity of Plato's transition from economic behavior to political identity, but return to a more basic question, which Williams and his critics ignored, if Plato really defines justice as "to do one's own".

From Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus, we know that the definition of justice should be universally applicable to all just things. Ancient Greeks talk about political justice as well as individual justice. However, when Socrates first brings in the abovementioned definition of justice, obviously it cannot be directly applied to an individual soul. Instead, we should first of all demonstrate that the soul also can be divided into three parts correspondent to three political classes and that the justice of soul also resides in that each of these elements does its own. (435c) Our earlier discussions have shown that the city-soul analogy can **anticipate** this finding, but **not determine** that the soul itself is so structured. Plato is quite conscious of this subtle difference and therefore turns to establish his tripartite theory of the soul on the so-called "principle of conflict"[53]. Whether this argument can stand independent from the analogy it is another controversial question. What matters here, as Sachs and Vlastos among others have pointed out, is that the inner harmony of an individual soul cannot be identified with the just action an individual shows in political life.[54] In other words, the Platonic justice of the soul or psychological justice is not the social justice or conventional understanding of justice, which is the genuine concern of Socrates' interlocutors. At least, Plato needs further argument to establish the necessary connection between these two sorts of justice. All of these problems indicate that either there are unsolvable problems in Plato's theory of justice, or "to do one's own" is not Plato's final words on justice.

Secondly, the universal applicability merely represents the formal character of definition. For instance, "biped animal" describes a universal feature of human beings but cannot count as a genu-

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51   Here, I follow Gregory Vlastos to translate the phraseτὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν as "to do one's own", so as to stress its ambiguity. See Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness", 115, esp. note 13.

52   It should be stressed here that this is not only applicable to the callipolis, but also to the first city Socrates attempts to establish in Book II ("City of Pigs:").

53   Ferrari rightly stresses that this formulation is better than "principle of (non)contradiction", see Ferrari, "The Three-Part Soul", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, 168.

54   See David Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's Republic", *Philosophical Review*, 72 (1963): 141–58; Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness".

ine definition. As Aristotle rightly formulates, "a defining statement (ὁριστικὸς λόγος) should not only make clear the fact... but it should also contain and reveal the reason for it."[55] The definition of justice should be able to account for all just things. Moreover, when it defines the essence of justice, it should function as the ultimate explanation of all just things and should not be reduced to other justice-statements. In earlier analysis, we have seen that the same account of justice is applicable both to city and soul, because they both have a single form (εἶδος). (435b)[56] Certainly, here Plato has not introduced his theory of Forms. Nevertheless, it is evident that a definition of justice should reveal the essential feature of the sort (εἶδος) of just things.

Bearing these points in mind, we return to the definition that "justice is that each of the three political or psychic elements does its own". First, "one's own" is an elliptical expression whose content varies according to its contexts.[57] On the level of city, we see that for producers and merchants, who constitute the inferior class of the city, "to do one's own" for them means not merely to be absorbed in their proper occupations, but primarily to refrain from government affair, or to reconcile themselves to the rule of guardians. (434b–c) We certainly will ask the question: what or who can justify the legality of this division of political roles? Human nature is evidently not a convincing explanation. It is conceivable that division of labor reflects the difference of nature, however, it is really hard to imagine that those artisans and merchants by their own nature can recognize and voluntarily accept their political role in the just city. This problem is even more serious on the level of soul. When we say that the appetitive part of the soul is doing its own, we mean that appetites direct us to material goods and bodily pleasures, where the natural inclination of appetites lies. It cannot signify the submission of appetite to reason and spirit as Socrates claims. (442a–b) Even though it might be conceded that the appetitive part of a just soul can achieve this obedience, we still have to face the problem how can the lowest part of the soul involve minimal exercise of reason.

All of these points offer us good reasons to doubt the definition of justice as to do one's own. In general, a division of labor or function is beneficial to a city or an individual soul only when it is a reasonable one. However, neither innate talent nor natural inclination can qualify as the foundation for the reasonableness of division. In contrast, reason itself is unquestionably a promising candidate. For only the rational element "is wise and takes thought for the entire soul". (441e) From this we can easily get that only reason can recognize and determine what is appropriate to each element of the soul in order to defend the good of the soul as a whole. A careful analysis of the tripartite account of soul will show that the three psychic elements are not equal, but coexist in a hierarchical order. Only when the rule of reason is established, it is possible for the other two elements to accomplish their own proper tasks. The priority of reason determines that the labor-division definition of justice can be reduced to the rule of reason at least on the level of soul. Moreover, the virtues of wisdom and self-discipline both required the predominance of reason in the soul. (441c ff.)[58] This means that Williams propositions (3) and (4) actually reverse the causal

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55   Aristotle, *De anima* 413a13–16, translation cited from *Aristotle De anima: Books II and III*, tr. D. W. Hamlyn, Oxford: Clarendon, 1993 (1968).

56   See note 8.

57   Cf. Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness", 115.

58   For the controversy on the question if the four cardinal virtues can be all explained in terms of knowledge or reason, see Ternece Irwin's defense of Socratic intellectualism in *Republic*, "The Parts of the Soul and

relationship between them.

Of course, our definition of justice as "the reasoning part rules" is merely a plausible conjecture in *Republic* IV, in particular on the level of city. To justify this claim, we should prove that Plato actually accepts this presupposition, which is at least philosophically defensible. In other words, by applying the city-soul analogy to this definition, we will not have absurd or unpalatable results.

This points us to the discussions in *Republic* V to VII, which have been unjustly ignored by the scholars of city-soul analogy. It is well-known that these middle books contain the institutional imagination of Plato's ideal city, as well as his epistemological and ontological accounts based upon the theory of Forms, especially in his famous allegories of sun, line, and cave. Due to the limitation of space, the following account will only outline a sketch of argumentation, aiming to offer an alternative strategy of reading.

At the beginning of *Republic* V, when Socrates thinks that he has already finished the task to determine what justice is and can now begin to discuss the various forms of injustice, his interlocutors insists that he should above all demonstrate the feasibility of the callipolis. This requirement is not a digression, but is directly related to the justification of the city-soul analogy. It is certain that the purpose of the city-soul analogy is to manifest the justice and happiness of the invisible soul. Nevertheless, if the theoretical ($\lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omega$)[59] consistency and plausibility of the just city cannot be guaranteed, it is natural for us to take the just soul as a self-contradictory fiction. As a result, the justice itself will become completely out of place ($\ddot{\alpha} \tau o \pi o \varsigma$). Therefore, Socrates' responses to the "three waves" against the callipolis are also crucial to his analysis of the soul and whole theory of justice. Among these, it is his defense of "philosopher-kings" that applies the new definition of justice as "the reasoning part rules" to the city in order to assess its validity.

It is impossible for us to go into details of the long debate over the practicability of Plato's callipolis, which goes beyond the scope of this essay.[60] What concerns us here is merely the argumentative moves of *Republic* V to VII, for our purpose is to show that the city-soul analogy is accountable within the whole structure of argumentation of *Republic*.

First, Philosophers as lovers of wisdom love the nature of beauty or justice itself and therefore can achieve the knowledge of beauty or justice as it is. (476b–c) Without any doubt, knowledge exemplifies the excellence or virtue of the rational soul. Plato claims that this philosophical knowledge also determines that philosophers can also attain practical experience and the rest of human excellence, such as a love of truth, virtues of self-discipline, great-mindedness, courage etc. for these qualities are essential and interconnected.[61] (485a–486e) Here, Plato does not ground his account of callipolis on the parallel of city with soul, but definitely identify the rulers of the just city with

the Cardinal Virtues," in *Platon: Politeia*, hrsg. von O. Höffe, Berlin: Academie Verlag, 1997, 119–139.

59   See note 2.

60   For classic defenses of the callipolis as a plausible utopia rather than a mere phantasy, see Christoph Bobonich, *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, esp. Myles Burnyeat, "Utopia and Fantasy". For more recent discussion on this issue, see Donald R. Morrison, "The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, 232–255.

61   For recent account for how philosophers are equipped to obtain these practical experiences, which are essential for the art of ruling, see David Sedley, "Philosophy, the Forms, and the Art of Ruling", in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, 256–283.

the philosopher-kings whose soul is ruled by reason.[62] Furthermore, the predominant role of reason in the soul is no longer a mere claim, but carefully grounded upon the ontological priority of the objects of rational cognition. What reason knows is that which always is and does not vary according to people's opinions or beliefs. Only when we understand this rational object, we can attain the genuine knowledge.[63]

In the discussions that follow, Socrates goes on at tedious length to clarify every detail concerning the education of philosopher-kings so that they can possess the knowledge of the Good. (504d ff.) Then, the priority of rational cognition is further advanced in the three famous allegories. When philosopher-kings really come into being, "they will serve justice, watch over its growth, and in this way keep their city on the right lines." (540e)

The validity of this sophisticated argument is not our concern here. It at least indicates that Socrates conceive his defense of plausibility of philosopher-kings as an essential part of his whole theory of justice. It functions as an independent effort to justify the statement "justice is for the reasoning part to rule" on both the levels of city and soul. Obviously, this justification is deeply embedded in Plato's theory of Forms. Only after Socrates has established the theory of Forms and the rule of philosopher-kings, the participants of dialogue agree that the city-soul analogy concerning justice comes to its end. (541b)

If Plato's theory of Forms is sound, it means that the predicate "just" can be applied to both city and soul because they both share the same form of justice. However, the aforementioned difference between psychological justice and social justice forces us to ask how these obviously distinct appearances of justice can be united in a single form or in justice itself. It is Plato's account of philosopher-kings that bridges these seemingly two different sorts of justice. For only the philosopher-kings can both defend the harmony of the soul and the justice of city. We are brought to this point exactly by the city-soul analogy.

Now we return to Williams' criticism of city-soul analogy. It is unnecessary for us to question his premises that have strong textual evidences. What we need to do is simply to combine his propositions (3) and (4) into a single one, namely, justice is for the reasoning part to rule. This intellectualistic statement obviously obeys Williams' "predominant section rule". Moreover, it neither relies on nor necessarily directs to the tripartite theory of soul. For what matters here is only the predominant role of rational element, regardless of other parts of the soul.[64] Accordingly, Williams' puzzles over appetitive and spirited parts are readily resolved, for these two elements are

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62   Both Williams and his critics do not doubt that the causal account can be applied to the case of philosopher-kings.

63   For classic defenses on the significance of our knowledge of forms without denying the knowledge of the sensibles, see Gail Fine, "Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V" and "Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V–VII", both in ea. *Plato on Knowledge and Forms: Selected Essays*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

64   For this point, one only need to rethink Socrates' city of pigs. It is probably a better city which is paralleled by a better soul which does not necessarily contain three parts. (Cf. 544a). As Ferrari rightly points out, if Socrates were not disturbed by Glaucon, he could establish a corresponding relationship between the healthy city and a just person. In that case, Socrates might emphasize more on the aspect of co-operation within the soul, rather than a hierarchical order or a proportional relationship between different elements of the soul. See Ferrari, "City and Soul", 39.

not included in the definition of justice and therefore do not need to be examined by the city-soul analogy.

Of course, this new model of interpretation will not be complete until we explain how unjust cities can be correspondent to unjust persons in *Republic* VIII and IX, for what is analogous there is not merely the rational part. As Blössner sensitively notices, the use of analogy is radically changed in Plato's later account of city and soul with no reliance on the aforementioned horizontal and vertical mechanisms.[65] What should be added here is that this change is not only due to rhetorical need. In the case of philosopher-kings, Socrates powerfully demonstrates that the justice of city and soul can be united in the political life of an individual. In light of this, the analyses of unjust cities and unjust persons should also direct to various modes of life.[66] More importantly, what is treated in Book VIII and IX is various forms of injustice. However, in *Republic* there is only a single form (ἓν εἶδος) of virtue, whereas vice can have many sorts (ἄπειρα). (cf. 445c) Therefore, we cannot use the theory of Form to explain the city-soul analogy in other cities and souls.

If my arguments are sound, this opens up a new direction of interpreting the city-soul analogy in *Republic*. It not only directly responds to the philosophical criticisms from Williams and others, but also better situates the analogy within the whole framework of argument in *Republic*. The city-soul analogy does not operate as a definitional element of justice, but rather points to the theory of justice that can be grasped only on ontological-epistemological foundations. Plato lays a strong emphasis on the priority of soul without undermining the significance of political analysis, but refers both of them to his theory of Form. In the meanwhile, the city-soul analogy also becomes a powerful instrument to assess the validity of a definition of justice. When Plato has reached his final definition of justice, he also employs the city-soul analogy, though in a different sense, to scrutinize unjust cities and unjust souls. His purpose is to demonstrate that all sorts of life including that of philosopher-kings have both inside and outside. By contrasting the just life of philosopher-kings with other modes of life, Plato vehemently meets Glaucon's challenge: as a form of life, justice is in every way better to injustice.

Without least doubt, the weak point of this account also lies in its heavy reliance on Plato's metaphysics of Form. If the theory of Form collapses, the city-soul analogy will also lose its validity. In other words, we merely relieve but not resolve the crisis of the analogy by incorporating it into Plato's theory of Form. Nevertheless, we have to say this is an inherent requirement to ensure the unity of the arguments of *Republic* as a whole. Otherwise, Plato's analogy of callipolis and the just soul would lose its philosophical foundation on the one hand, and his political account and his psychological analysis would both be detached from the middle books of *Republic* on the other. In short, we cannot attain a genuine grasp of Plato's theory of justice, whether of city or of soul, without first articulating his metaphysics of Form.

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65   See note 47.

66   Blössner rightly recognizes this point but fails to notice its reliance on Plato's earlier account of philosopher-kings.