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THRASYMACHUS AND THE *THUMOS*: A FURTHER CASE OF PROLEPSIS IN *REPUBLIC* I

In a recent article, C. H. Kahn addresses an 'old scholarly myth', namely the idea that Book I of the *Republic* began life as an earlier, independent dialogue and was subsequently adapted to serve as a prelude to the much longer work that we know.[1] The case for this hypothesis rests both on stylometric considerations and on the many 'Socratic' features that Book I, unlike the rest of the *Republic*, shares with Plato's earlier works. Having disposed of the positive arguments in favour of the 'myth', Kahn turns to the contrary—and in his view overwhelming—evidence that Book I was composed from the start as an integral part of the longer *Republic*. He catalogues 12 passages in Book I, accounting for roughly half its length, whose full significance will, he argues, only emerge if they are seen as instances of prolepsis, deliberate anticipations of what is to come in later books.

I propose to supplement Kahn's argument with a further example of anticipation in Book I, as striking and as significant as any of those that he cites. The connection that I shall seek to establish is between the character of Thrasymachus and the *thumos*, or 'spirited' part of the soul. This connection is perhaps less immediately obvious than Kahn's examples, but once discerned, it is, I think, inescapable. I am not the first to associate Thrasymachus with the *thumos*: C. D. C. Reeve asserts that he is an 'honour-lover'.[2] But Reeve's argument is scanty, and omits many telling points in favour of a link. I shall set out to assemble a body of evidence in the face of which a denial that Plato intends us to see the characteristics of *thumos* in Thrasymachus becomes almost impossible to sustain. I shall follow this with a further and more precise claim: that in the encounter between Socrates and Thrasymachus we are presented, dramatically, with an argument that has surprised some commentators by its absence from Book IV. The textual material on which I shall draw could scarcely derive from the later adaptation of an earlier work. It is woven into the very fabric of the Socrates–Thrasymachus exchanges and runs through most of their length.[3]

[I]

The evidence for an association between Thrasymachus and the *thumos* can be marshalled under four heads. First, images used in relation to Thrasymachus are also used in relation to the *thumos*, establishing a symbolic connection which can hardly be coincidental. Secondly, the temper that Thrasymachus displays and his argumentative impulse and style are characteristic of *thumos* in its pathological

[1] C. H. Kahn, 'Proleptic Composition in the *Republic*, or Why Book I was never a Separate Dialogue', *CQ* 43 (1993), 131–42.

[2] C. D. C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (Princeton, 1988), p. 41.

[3] A further supplement to Kahn's list is the opening exchanges between Polemarchus and Socrates, where the latter proffers persuasion as an alternative to force (327c). This contrast between two ways of achieving an end, through persuasion or through compulsion or force, is a recurring theme (see e.g. 361b, 365d, 399a–c, 411d, 414b, 519e, 548b, 554d). Force and persuasion are of course associated with *thumos* and reason respectively—see below. The question with which Polemarchus responds to Socrates, how to persuade if the other will not listen, may be part of what underlies the change of approach that we witness in the *Republic*.

aspect. Thirdly, Thrasymachus interprets Socrates' motives as if these too sprang from *thumos*. Fourthly, the substance of what he says—his account of justice and the view of human reality which underlies it—is infused with thumoeidic features.

1. Association through imagery

Animal images link Thrasymachus to the *thumos*. Consider his first entrance—rather his irruption—into the argument. He has been listening with growing impatience to the polite exchanges between Socrates and Polemarchus on the subject of justice. Those around have restrained him thus far from taking over the argument, but now:

> ...when we paused and I said this, he could no longer keep quiet; hunched up like a wild beast (ὥσπερ θηρίον), he flung himself at us as if to tear us to pieces. Then both Polemarchus and I got all in a flutter from fright. (336b)[4]

That Polemarchus and Socrates react like frightened fowl gives added force to the wild beast image. Later, in Book III, the same image is applied to the *thumos*-dominated man. Socrates is describing the effect on a person of a purely 'gymnastic' education focused on *thumos* alone:

> He no longer makes any use of persuasion by means of reason (διὰ λόγων) but goes about everything with force and savageness, like a wild beast... (411d–e)[5]

This passage alludes to two aspects of the pathology of *thumos* which are also relevant, under my second head, to the link with Thrasymachus: neglect of rational persuasion as a means to gaining one's ends, and resort instead to violence or force. In this tendency to savagery and aggression, and in the systematic preference of force to reason as a means, we see a characteristically thumoeidic disposition or personality type.[6]

Thrasymachus suggests more specific wild beasts to Socrates as well. The first, the implied wolf who, seeing a man first, strikes him speechless (336d), has thumoeidic associations but the image is not used of *thumos* directly.[7] The second image is both explicit and also applied to *thumos*. Thrasymachus has been manoeuvred into defining a 'strict' sense of ruling such that a ruler is only a ruler to the extent that he identifies his own interest correctly. In terms of which sense of ruler, Socrates asks, is his account of justice to be understood? The former, Thrasymachus replies:

> Do harm to that and play the sycophant, if you can—I ask for no favours—but you won't be able to.

Socrates responds:

> Do you suppose me to be so mad as to try to shave a lion and play the sycophant with Thrasymachus? (341b–c)

To 'shave' or 'beard' a lion is no common turn of phrase. Shorey describes it as a 'rare but obvious proverb'.[8] For Adam too: 'The proverb is very rare, and does not

[4] The translation I use is A. Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1991).

[5] With 'reason' substituted for Bloom's 'speech'.

[6] Note the use of the term 'harsh' (χαλεπὸς) in relation to Thrasymachus (336e, and cf. 337a), applied also to *thumos* (410d). At 354a Socrates comments that Thrasymachus has become gentle and has ceased to be harsh.

[7] It is generally assumed, from references elsewhere in antiquity, that it is a wolf that Plato has in mind here. Note that the guardians must keep watch lest an enemy, like a wolf, should attack the flock (415e), that the worst thing would be if the auxiliaries were themselves reared so as to become like wolves instead of dogs (416a), and that when a leader is transformed into a tyrant it is as if he were turned from a human being into a wolf (565d–566a).

[8] P. Shorey, *Plato: The Republic*, Vol. I (London, 1930), *ad loc.*

seem to occur elsewhere in classical Greek'.[9] But the turn of phrase acquires a greater resonance if Plato's intention is to foreshadow a later lion: the representative of *thumos* in the striking image of the composite soul as a fabulous monster with which Book IX concludes (588bff.).

As Socrates develops that image of the composite soul, the lion is unexpectedly joined, in a single reference, by a companion. When we censure stubbornness and bad temper, is it not, he asks, because they strengthen the lion-like and snake-like part within us (590b)? The appearance of a snake here has puzzled commentators, but it provides an additional connection with Thrasymachus—albeit through an image of the latter that is to be found, not in Book I itself, but at the start of Book II. Thrasymachus has withdrawn from the fray, and Glaucon expresses dissatisfaction:

> For it looks to me as though Thrasymachus, like a snake, has been charmed more quickly than he should have been. (358b)[10]

The Book I lion might be dismissed as mere chance, but for this later reference to Thrasymachus as a snake. It would surely be an extraordinary double coincidence for Plato, so careful an artist, to use unawares as images for Thrasymachus the very same two beasts that represent the *thumos*.

2. *The character of Thrasymachus and his approach to argument*

If common imagery creates a strong presumption that we are meant to associate Thrasymachus with the *thumos*, the way his personality is invoked provides ample support for this. In particular, his manifestations of temper, his aggressive and violent manner of argument and his fiercely competitive nature are all typically thumoeidic. Thrasymachus' anger and impatience are sharply characterized, providing a striking contrast both to the even-tempered discussion which has preceded his interruption and to the cooperative spirit in which Glaucon and Adeimantus provide a foil to Socrates from Book II onwards. Thrasymachus' speech abounds with rude and abusive epithets. He begins by shouting at Socrates and Polemarchus that they have been talking nonsense, and are simple-minded in the way they defer to one another (336b–c). He wants a clear and precise statement from Socrates himself as to what justice is, and is not prepared to accept 'inanities' (336d). He laughs sardonically when Socrates disclaims the ability to give such a statement (337b). He calls Socrates disgusting (βδελυρὸς, 338d) and, as we have already seen, a sycophant or quibbler, when he is bested in argument. After a particularly serious reverse, instead of answering, he asks if Socrates has a wet nurse:

> Because... you know she neglects your sniveling nose and doesn't give it the wiping you need, since it's her fault you do not even recognize sheep or shepherd. (343a)

After his long outburst to the effect that injustice is more profitable than justice, Socrates says that he himself is not persuaded, and that perhaps he is not the only one. Thrasymachus asks:

> And how... shall I persuade you? If you're not persuaded by what I've just now said, what more shall I do for you? Shall I take the argument and give your soul a forced feeding? (345b)

[9] J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1902), *ad loc.*

[10] If Glaucon's snake confirms that we are meant to associate Thrasymachus with the *thumos*, his statement may also shed light on why Socrates later describes the *thumos* as snake-like as well as lion-like. The *thumos*, like a snake, is something that can be charmed—through the process of 'musical' education (cf. 411b).

It seems a fair description to say that Thrasymachus goes about the business of argument 'with force and savageness' (411d, quoted above), and that he has not altogether acquired the hang of persuasion.

At 581a a cluster of characteristic desires is attributed to *thumos*: for power or domination over others (κρατεῖν), for victory (νικᾶν) and for honour or good repute (εὐδοκιμεῖν). Just as his argumentative style is thumoeidic, so are Thrasymachus' purposes in argument. He is immensely competitive, bent on victory and concerned to shine before the onlookers. What if he can give a different and better answer about justice, he asks at the start, what penalty would Socrates deserve to pay (337d)? And why does Socrates not praise him for his answer when he gives it (338c)? Before doing so, though, he has pretended reluctance when begged by Glaucon and the others to speak:

> And Thrasymachus evidently desired to speak so that he could win a good reputation (ἵν' εὐδοκιμήσειεν), since he believed he had a very fine answer. But he kept up the pretence of wanting to prevail (φιλονεικεῖν) on me to do the answering. Finally, however, he conceded... (338a)

For Thrasymachus, victory appears to be all-important. The dialogue in which he is engaged is a contest. He is out both to win that contest and to win credit in the eyes of those observing it. This thumoeidic approach to argument will be demonstrated at its clearest when, in the next section, we consider the repeated and almost desperate resistance which Thrasymachus puts up before conceding the points made against him by Socrates. When at the climax of these exchanges he finds himself unable to rebut Socrates' proof that the just man is also good and wise, he is shamed, and, for the first time in Socrates' experience, blushes (350d). Shame, like anger, is a feeling rooted in *thumos*.

3. *Thrasymachus' view of Socrates' motives*

Not only are Thrasymachus' own motives thumoeidic, he interprets those of Socrates in a similar light. He tells Socrates:

> If you truly want to know what the just is, don't only ask and gratify your love of honour (φιλοτιμοῦ) by refuting whatever someone answers—you know that it is easier to ask than to answer—but answer yourself and say what you assert the just to be. (336c)

When Socrates expresses himself unable to do this, Thrasymachus jeers that, just as he had predicted, Socrates would do anything rather than answer if he were asked something (337a). It is Socrates' usual trick, he says, to evade answering himself and to let someone else answer and then refute them (337d). When Socrates attempts to explore what Thrasymachus means by 'the stronger', Thrasymachus accuses him of putting the worst interpretation on his argument so as to do it most harm (338d). In response to the accusation that he is a 'sycophant', Socrates asks Thrasymachus:

> 'Do you suppose I ask as I asked because I am plotting to do harm to you in the argument?'
> 'I don't suppose,' he said, 'I know it well. But it won't profit you. You won't get away with doing harm unnoticed and, failing to get away unnoticed, you won't be able to overpower me in the argument.' (341a–b)

The assumption that this is what Socrates is up to, that he too regards the argument as a contest and is out to win it by stealth or force if necessary, gives evidence of a cast of mind which can only see human encounters in antagonistic terms, and has

difficulty even comprehending the idea of a joint search for truth. The antagonistic standpoint shown in Thrasymachus' personal dealings with others is also, at the level of theory, a fundamental constituent of his account of justice—it informs both the manner and the matter of his argument.

4. Thrasymachus' account of justice

My fourth head relates indeed to the matter of Thrasymachus' argument: to the substantive propositions which he seeks to defend and to the assumptions about human reality which underlie these. I shall not attempt here to provide a coherent and consistent interpretation of Thrasymachus' account of justice—a notoriously difficult undertaking.[11] It will suffice to draw attention to some aspects of his beliefs and outlook which seem obviously thumoeidic.

We noted earlier that one of the characteristic desires attributed to *thumos* is the desire for power or domination over others. This desire can be distinguished from its companion desires for victory and for honour or good repute. Power or domination implies some kind of sustained supremacy over others. Victory, by contrast, suggests a particular contest or competitive encounter, which might or might not have a bearing on longer-term power relationships between the participants, while honour and reputation have to do with the way a person is perceived by others. While the desire for power receives less explicit attention in Book IX than its companions, it is of great importance for an understanding of the role of *thumos* in the *Republic*. A desire for power is a desire to rule—the timocratic man, in whom *thumos* is dominant, is described as φίλαρχος or rule-loving (549a)—and it is their not being lovers of rule which, among other qualities, fits philosophers for political office (520dff.).

The conceptual frame in terms of which Thrasymachus' account of justice is couched is that of stronger and weaker, ruler and ruled. It is through the perspective of these thumoeidic polarities that he sees human life. Justice for him, famously, is the advantage of the stronger—even if the precise meaning of this formula has given rise to much controversy. The unjust rule the just, and wherever people interact, the balance of advantage that flows from their interactions is determined by their relative strength. The major point at issue in the earlier stages of the argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates concerns the nature of rule, and who it benefits. For Thrasymachus, ruling is something that benefits the ruler alone. Political power, in particular—for their exchanges encompass both political and non-political rule—is an object of desire.

Consider also the notion of advantage or interest, as it is employed by Thrasymachus. We can contrast two different conceptions of advantage, each rooted

[11] In 'Thrasymachus' Theory of Justice', *Polis* 3 (1980–81), 2–13, I addressed two of the main questions to which an interpretation which preserves consistency must provide an answer. First, is Thrasymachus' initial concern merely with justice in the political sphere, or does he mean from the start to characterize justice wherever it occurs? Secondly, how can the assertion that justice is the advantage of the stronger be reconciled with the later assertion that justice is another's good? On the first count, I argued that Thrasymachus' account is meant from the start to apply to private as well as to public relationships, and that his reference at 338d–339a to the practice of political regimes is intended as evidence for his theory, not as a restatement of its content. On the second count, I argued that for Thrasymachus the two justice formulae are equivalent, because of his factual belief that, in any human encounter, the stronger party will invariably profit at the expense of the weaker. It is against this belief that Socrates' argument from 338c to 347e, an argument which he takes to be countering Thrasymachus' theory of *justice*, is chiefly directed. Some interpretations of Thrasymachus' position would render this argument beside the point.

in a different part of the soul.[12] Conceived from an appetitive point of view, a person's advantage would lie in gain, in the acquisition of material goods. That this drive may lead a person into conflict with others is, in a sense, an accidental consequence of limited resources. Conceived from a thumoeidic point of view, a person's advantage would lie in achieving and maintaining a position of domination or control or supremacy over others, or in winning out over them in competitive encounters. Conflict with others is built intrinsically into such a conception.

There are elements both of the appetitive and of the thumoeidic in the way that Thrasymachus speaks of advantage, but his picture of the supremely unjust man is strongly thumoeidic. This may also hold for the earlier passage at 338d–339a, in which he clarifies what he means by 'the stronger' by invoking what he takes to be the universal practice of political regimes. Everywhere, he says, the ruling element holds sway (κρατεῖ), i.e. is stronger, and everywhere that element enacts laws in its own interest, proclaiming to be just what is to the rulers' advantage. On the face of it we might take this either appetitively, as referring to laws which serve the rulers' material advantage, or thumoeidically, as referring to the constitutional laws which maintain their rule. In my view the latter is the more plausible reading, but I shall not attempt to demonstrate this here.[13]

In the ensuing discussion, up until Thrasymachus' 'wet nurse' outburst at 343a, the term 'advantage' is used in a neutral way and could admit of either interpretation. Thrasymachus now introduces an analogy between rulers and shepherds, and extends the discussion of justice and injustice into the sphere of private relationships. Everywhere, he says, the just man has less than the unjust man. The first cases he cites relate to material interest, and thus to appetite. But for the most telling case, we must turn to tyranny, the 'most perfect' injustice. In addition to their money, the tyrant kidnaps and enslaves the citizens themselves, and is called happy and blessed in consequence (344a–c). This thumoeidic position is reiterated when Socrates asks Thrasymachus if he believes the unjust to be good as well as prudent:

> Yes, those who can do injustice perfectly ... and are able to subjugate cities and tribes of men to themselves. You, perhaps, suppose I am speaking of cutpurses. Now, such things, too, are profitable ... when one gets away with them; but they aren't worth mentioning compared to those I was just talking about. (348d)

The perfectly unjust man is, for Thrasymachus, the one who can subjugate and enslave his fellow-citizens, and get away with it. Supreme injustice lies, thumoeidically, in the exercise of supreme power over others.

[II]

I referred at the start to an argument that appears to be missing from Book IV. It occurs, or rather fails to occur, at the point where Socrates turns his attention from justice in the polis to justice in the soul. A polis, he has suggested, contains three natural classes or kinds, and is just if each of these performs its proper function. If the same account of justice is to apply to the soul, these same kinds must be found there too. Does the soul contain three elements which correspond in the appropriate way to those in the polis? Putative parts are suggested: reason, here identified as that with which we learn, the *thumos* or 'spirit', with which we feel anger, and appetite,

[12] There is of course a third conception, rooted in reason.

[13] For a similar view, see e.g. F. E. Sparshott, 'Socrates and Thrasymachus', *Monist* 50 (1966), 421–59, at p. 426, and J. P. Maguire, 'Thrasymachus ... or Plato?', *Phronesis* 16 (1971), 142–63, at p. 146.

with which we desire such pleasures as eating and sex. But, Socrates asks, is it with the soul as a whole that we do all these three things, or is each done with a distinct part of the soul (436a–b)? For the common structure his argument requires, three distinct parts must exist.

To answer his question, Socrates introduces a criterion for parthood. This relates to conflict—and when applied to the soul, to motivational conflict. Socrates has identified three putative parts of the soul and has therefore three cases of non-identity to demonstrate. It is natural to expect that he will bring the evidence of motivational conflict to bear on each of the three pairings, using it to show in turn of appetite and reason, of appetite and *thumos*, and of *thumos* and reason, that they are distinct parts of the soul. What we find, however, falls short of this. Careful attention is indeed given to proving, on the basis of such conflict, that appetite and reason are distinct. The conflict criterion is then used in a briefer way to distinguish *thumos* from appetite. But when he comes to the *thumos*–reason pairing, Socrates appears to abandon the criterion. What he provides instead is little more than a gesture at an argument for their non-identity.

I do not propose to consider the conflict criterion in detail, nor its application to reason and appetite.[14] Much simplified, the argument goes as follows. The same thing can never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the same other thing at the same time, so that if such a contradiction is found, what appeared to be a single thing must in fact be a composite whole made up of parts (436b). Applying this to the psychological sphere, one must regard as opposites assent and dissent (ἐπινεύειν and ἀνανεύειν, literally nodding assent and nodding dissent), striving for something and rejecting it, drawing to oneself and thrusting away (437b). Thirst is a representative appetite. Thirst as such is an impulse to drink, but it sometimes happens that a person who is thirsty refrains from drinking. It follows that there must be two things in the soul, one—appetite—which bids that person drink and a second—reason—which prevents this, mastering the first (439c).

Having shown that these two elements are distinct, Socrates asks whether the *thumos* constitutes yet a third part of the soul, or whether it can be identified with either of the others. The argument from conflict is redeployed to distinguish *thumos* from appetite. The case cited is that of Leontius, who, happening upon the corpses of some executed men, was impelled by desire to gaze at them while his *thumos* tried in vain to hold him back (439e–440a). When Socrates goes on to suggest a general tendency of the *thumos* to ally itself with reason in the inner conflicts of the soul, a further question naturally arises: is the *thumos*, although distinct from appetite, perhaps no more than an aspect of this rational element (440e)?

And here, where we might expect the argument from conflict to be invoked for a third time, it is singularly absent. Arguments of a sort are of course offered for distinguishing *thumos* from reason, though it is Glaucon who asserts that *thumos* can be found in children before reason is attained (441a–b). Socrates, agreeing, adds that animals also possess *thumos* without reason. He continues with a line from Homer, which he interprets as implying a reproval by reason of the *thumos* (441b–c). But neither consideration is persuasive. From the fact that *thumos* can be found where an

[14] For interesting discussions, see R. Robinson, 'Plato's Separation of Reason from Desire', *Phronesis* 16 (1971), 38–48, R. F. Stalley, 'Plato's Argument for the Division of the Reasoning and Appetitive Elements within the Soul', *Phronesis* 20 (1975), 110–28, T. Penner, 'Thought and Desire in Plato', in G. Vlastos (ed.), *Plato, II* (New York, 1971), J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 137–42, and M. Woods, 'Plato's Division of the Soul', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 73 (1987), 23–47.

ability to reason is lacking, it by no means follows that when that ability is present, it and *thumos* must reside in different parts of the soul. As for using Homer as a witness, it is difficult, given the views that he has expressed on the poets, to believe that Socrates can be advancing this as a serious argument—it is at least as likely that the reference is intended to draw attention to a lacuna.

The casualness with which this third distinction appears to be treated leads Terry Penner, in his discussion of the argument from conflict, to refer to 'the extreme paucity and weakness of Plato's arguments for *thumos* as a separate part of the soul'.[15] Plato, Penner asserts, 'shrank from confronting *thumos* with his criterion for parthood'.[16] He 'had no logical or psychological arguments for going beyond two parts of the soul',[17] introducing a third part 'for irrelevant political or moral reasons only'.[18] Like F. M. Cornford earlier, Penner believes that the *thumos* owes its prominence to Plato's need to find an analogue in the soul to the auxiliaries in the polis.[19] Julia Annas likewise remarks on Plato's failure to apply the conflict argument to *thumos* and reason: '... there is no application of the Principle of Conflict, and hence no satisfactory argument to show that spirit is really distinct from reason, and so a distinct part of the soul.'[20]

Here, then, is the missing argument: a demonstration on the basis of motivational conflict that *thumos* and reason are distinct parts of the soul. But why should it be missing? Because of a simple oversight by Plato? That is not credible. Because, as Penner implies, Plato knew that the argument would not hold water, so shrank from advancing it? I believe that an alternative explanation exists, and is preferable. The third conflict, that of reason with *thumos*, is not invoked here because it has already been presented to us, dramatically, at an earlier stage in the dialogue. It can be found, I suggest, within the soul of Thrasymachus when, in Book I, he is confronted with Socrates' counter-arguments to his case for injustice.

I have already presented evidence for supposing that Plato intends us to associate Thrasymachus with *thumos*. What remains is to demonstrate that, when faced with Socrates' arguments, Thrasymachus experiences a conflict between reason and *thumos* of a kind that would lead us, on the basis of the Book IV criterion, to distinguish between these as separate parts of the soul. It is crucial to my case that we are presented, not just with a clash between Thrasymachus' *thumos* and Socrates' reason, but with a conflict internal to Thrasymachus himself between what *thumos* prompts him to reject and what his own reason prompts him to accept.

That Thrasymachus experiences inner conflict is made evident at a number of points in the text. His resistance to Socrates' argument is emphasised, but it is also clear that he cannot rebut what Socrates says. A series of instances comes after he has been induced to commit himself to a strict sense of rule, in which the ruler never mistakes his own interests. Socrates argues that an art such as medicine or horsemanship benefits its object, not itself. Twice Thrasymachus has to concede that 'it looks that way'. Socrates continues:

> 'But, Thrasymachus, the arts rule and are masters of that of which they are arts.'
> He conceded this too, but with a great deal of resistance (μάλα μόγις).
> 'Then, there is no kind of knowledge that considers or commands the advantage of the stronger, but rather of what is weaker and ruled by it.'
> He finally agreed to this, too, although he tried to put up a fight about it. (342c–d)

[15] Penner, op. cit., p. 111. [16] Ibid., p. 113. [17] Loc. cit.
[18] Ibid., p. 96.
[19] F. M. Cornford, 'Psychology and Social Structure in the *Republic* of Plato', *CQ* 6 (1912), 246–65. [20] Annas, op. cit., pp. 140–41.

Socrates reiterates that a doctor, insofar as he is a doctor, is concerned with his patient's advantage, not his own, and likewise that a pilot is concerned with the advantage of the sailors, not his own—in each case the object of concern being also the object of rule. Thrasymachus again assents 'with resistance' (342e). Socrates then draws the conclusion that any ruler, insofar as he is a ruler, considers not his own advantage but that of the ruled—whereupon Thrasymachus, instead of answering, resorts to abuse and the shepherd analogy. Socrates meets the analogy with patient—if not wholly convincing—argument, drawing a distinction between the shepherd's care for his sheep, which is part of his art, and the money-making which is extraneous to it. Thrasymachus is forced again into reluctant assent (346c).

At 347d, Socrates turns from the claim that justice is the advantage of the stronger to what he regards as the more important contention that the life of the unjust man is superior to that of the just man. I shall not summarize the first part of his argument against this contention, but it produces in Thrasymachus the strongest conflict reaction yet:

> Now, Thrasymachus did not agree to all of this so easily as I tell it now, but he dragged his feet and resisted, and he produced a wonderful quantity of sweat, for it was summer. And then I saw what I had not yet seen before—Thrasymachus blushing. (350c–d)

It is made clear in the passages cited that what Socrates says produces contrary impulses in Thrasymachus. If we apply the conflict criterion, we shall be led to conclude that there must therefore be two distinct things within his soul, one which bids him reject the argument with which he is confronted, the other which bids him accept it. What bids him reject it is surely his *thumos*, intent on victory in an encounter which he insists on regarding as a contest. To accept the argument is, for his *thumos*, to concede defeat—but his reason finds it irresistible, and enjoins acceptance. None of this is stated—but when we conjoin the facts that the conflict that Thrasymachus experiences is repeatedly highlighted, that in Book IV we are introduced to a criterion for separate parthood which rests on conflict, that Socrates fails there to apply the criterion to the distinction between *thumos* and reason while applying it to the other two sides of the triangle, and that an association between Thrasymachus and the *thumos* is signalled in so many different ways, it is surely not fanciful to impute a conscious intention to Plato here. As if in final confirmation, Thrasymachus announces after his blush that if he is not allowed to speak at length he will restrict himself to nodding and shaking his head (350e, and cf. 351c), foreshadowing the 'nodding assent and dissent' which Socrates will instance as opposites at 437b.

If I am correct, what significance should we attach to this conflict, expressed in the drama but not explicitly stated, between *thumos* and reason? I believe that for Plato both appetite and *thumos* pose, in their different ways, a threat to proper order in the polis and soul. The threat from appetite appears more visibly on the surface of the *Republic*'s argument, and *thumos* of course plays a positive role as reason's ally in containing this. But the threat from *thumos* itself is also real, and provides an important if more hidden strand in the dialogue. If Plato is seeking, through a portrayal of the conflict within Thrasymachus between *thumos* and reason, to foreshadow later themes, what might these be? I shall not attempt to give a full answer to this question, but shall conclude by mentioning some of the possibilities that an answer might explore.

The first and most obvious theme concerns the nature of philosophy itself. Thrasymachus' approach to argument is thumoeidic. That is not to deny that he exercises reason, but *thumos* occupies the driving seat in his soul. An argument is a

contest, to be won or lost, and conceding Socrates' case is a matter of personal defeat. For Plato, philosophy must be a cooperative search for truth, not a competitive encounter. *Thumos* as such is no impediment to this enterprise—Glaucon shows some of its characteristics, and Socrates himself hints at the need for courage in pursuing the truth (e.g. at 374e and 503e)—but it must always be subordinate to and serve the ends of reason. The genuine philosopher will be glad to learn from others. 'When you say I learn from others', Socrates tells Thrasymachus, 'you speak the truth' (338b). And much later—but shortly after a reference to the friendship that now exists between himself and Thrasymachus—he asserts that the many have a mistaken view of philosophy because they have failed to understand that, unlike so much of what goes on in the court-room or in private talk, it strives for truth, not victory (499a).

The broader issue of conflict is also raised. As F. E. Sparshott has noted, Thrasymachus construes all human encounters as conflicts and fails to grasp the concept of a common good; Socrates will go on to expound social principles which transcend private interest and replace conflict by cooperation.[21] It is as though for Thrasymachus the whole of human life is a zero-sum game. It is true that appetite is, like *thumos*, a source of conflict, but only because the acquisitive impulse brings different people into competition for the same goods. For *thumos*, by contrast, when untamed by reason, contention with others is itself the point. The move from appetite to *thumos* brings us into an essentially social world, but it is of a Hobbesian kind, a struggle for supremacy, which can only be reconciled by reason.

Related to this is the issue of power itself, and the dangers posed by political ambition. The desire for power springs from *thumos*, and has great destructive potential. The exchanges between Thrasymachus and Socrates serve to introduce into the dialogue the question of political rule, and its proper beneficiary. Socrates will go on to argue that the best run polis is that in which the holders of office are those least eager to rule (520d), and that when rule becomes the object of contention, both those contending and the polis itself will be destroyed (521a–b). Political power and philosophy must be brought into conjunction, he has earlier said, or there will be no rest from the ills of poleis or of human kind (473d). We can see this conjunction as reflecting, at a social level, the alliance of *thumos* and reason that obtains in a well-ordered soul.

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[21] Sparshott, op. cit., pp. 427, 439–40.