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A NOTE ON *REPUBLIC* 335C9-10 AND 335C12¹

PLATO'S argument at *Republic* 335B2-E5 to the conclusion that "it is in no way just to damage (harm) anybody"² has been esteemed, at least for its sentiment, since antiquity. An important step in that argument involves Polemarchus' acceptance of the principle that "just men are not able, by justice, to make [men] unjust,"³ on the basis of his negative answers to these two questions from Socrates:

335C9-10: Ἐὰρ ὁδὴν τῆ μουσικῆ οἱ μουσικοὶ ἀμούσους δύνανται ποιεῖν;

335C12: Ἐλλὰ τῆ ἵππικῆ οἱ ἵππικοὶ ἀφίππους.

These lines are characteristically understood as instances of one of the following general questions:

Q1: Are craftsmen able, by practicing their craft, to make men unskilled in that craft?

Q2: Are craftsmen able, by teaching their craft, to make men unskilled in that craft?⁴

¹ I wish to thank my teachers, Marsh McCall, David Sachs, and Gerasimos Santas, and my friend, Victor Menza, for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this note. Line citations are from the edition of J. Burnet (*Platonis Opera* [Oxford, 1900-1907]). Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

² οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ δίκαιον οὐδένα . . . ὄν βλέπτειν (335E5). This, I take it, restates the conclusion as announced at the beginning of the argument (335B2-3): "Ἔστω ἄρα . . . δικαίου ἀνδρὸς βλέπτειν καὶ ὄντινοῦν ἀνθρώπων ("Then is it [the nature or duty] of a just man to damage any man whatsoever?").

³ At 335C14 Socrates asks, Ἐλλὰ τῆ δικαιοσύνη δὴ οἱ δίκαιοι ἀδίκους (sc. δύνανται ποιεῖν); Polemarchus responds with Ἐλλὰ ἀδύνατον ("No, it is impossible") at 335D2.

⁴ Thus P. Shorey (*Plato: The Republic*, I [Cambridge, Mass., 1937], 35) renders them, "Do musicians then make men unmusical by the art of music?" and "Well, do horsemen by horsemanship unfit men for dealing with horses?" F. M. Cornford (*The Republic of Plato* [Oxford, 1941], p. 131) gives us "But a musician or a riding-master cannot be exercising his special skill, if he makes his pupils unmusical or bad riders." E. Chambry (*Platon: Œuvres Complètes*, VI [Paris, 1947], 17) translates, "Mais un musicien peut-il en vertu de son art rendre ignorant dans la musique?" and "Et un écuyer peut-il en vertu de son art rendre maladroit à monter à cheval?" And F. Schleiermacher (*Platon's Werke*, III

I believe that these readings of 335C9-10 and 335C12 are mistaken and that their currency vitiates critical understanding and assessment of Plato's argument. In this note, after explaining what I regard as the motivation for and shortcomings of these standard readings, I shall urge, on both textual and philosophical grounds, that the lines can and should be read such that they are instances of this general question:

Q3: Are craftsmen able, by practicing their craft, to make the object on which their craft is practiced deficient in the virtue or excellence which that craft produces?

The reason 335C9-10 and 335C12 are understood on the model either of Q1 or of Q2 is, I believe, that the lines are read on the supposition that both ἀμούσους (in 335C9) and ἀφίππους (in 335C12) modify ἀνθρώπους (men) understood.⁵ I see two reasons for this supposition. The first is that in 335C14 (quoted in note 3 above) ἀνθρώπους is clearly understood with ἀδίκους (unjust). Since Socrates asks 335C9-10 and 335C12 to convince Polemarchus to answer the question at 335C14 in the negative, it would seem that ἀνθρώπους must be understood in 335C9-10 and 335C12 as well. The second reason is that Socrates here treats οἱ δίκαιοι (just men) as craftsmen analogous to οἱ μουσικοί (musicians) and οἱ ἵππικοί (horsemen) and ἡ δικαιοσύνη (justice) as a craft (τέχνη) analogous to ἡ μουσική (music) and ἡ ἵππική (horsemanship). On these assumptions, ἀδίκους in 335C14 means "unskilled in justice," and so it would seem that ἀμούσους must mean "unskilled in music" and ἀφίππους "unskilled in horsemanship." Thus again, ἀμούσους in 335C9 and ἀφίππους in 335C12 must modify ἀνθρώπους (men) understood.

For the moment, then, let us agree that ἀνθρώπους is understood in 335C9-10 and 335C12. Since Plato held that a man is skilled in the practice of a craft just in case he is skilled in teaching it, we have

[Berlin, 1862], Bk. I, p. 57) has "Können nun wohl die Tonkünstler durch ihre Tonkunst andere untonkünstlerisch machen?" and "Oder die Reiter durch ihre Reitkunst andere unberitten?" Similar readings are also given in the following translations: B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, II (Oxford, 1871), 173; J. L. Davies and D. J. Vaughan, *The Republic of Plato* (London, 1935), p. 12; A. D. Lindsay, *The Republic of Plato* (London, 1932), p. 12; A. Bloom, *The Republic of Plato* (New York, 1968), p. 12; L. Robin, *Œuvres Complètes de Platon*, I (Bruges, Belgium, 1950), 868; V. Cousin, *Œuvres de Platon*, IX (Paris, 1833), 21; O. Apelt, *Platon: Der Staat*, I (Hamburg, 1961), 15; H. Müller, *Platon's Sämtliche Werke*, V (Leipzig, 1855), 282; and G. Kouchtsoglou, *ΑΠΛΑΝΤΑ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΟΣ*, V (Athens, 1966), Sec. 17, p. 77.

⁵ This assumption is shared by all the scholars cited in n. 4 above.

two ways to read the lines. We can suppose with Cornford, for instance, that Plato is referring to the teaching of crafts and understand the lines on the model of Q₂ above:

335C9-10: Then, are musicians able, by [teaching] music, to make [men they teach] unskilled in music?

335C12: Or are horsemen [able], by [teaching] horsemanship, [to make men they teach] unskilled in horsemanship?

This forces us to read 335C14 in this way:

335C14: Or are just men [able], by [teaching] justice, [to make men they teach] unskilled in justice?

Or we can suppose, as Shorey, for instance, apparently does, that Plato is referring to the practice of crafts and read the lines on the model of Q₁:

335C9-10: Then, are musicians able, by [practicing] music, to make [men] unskilled in music?

335C12: Or are horsemen [able], by [practicing] horsemanship, [to make men] unskilled in horsemanship?

This forces us to understand 335C14 as follows:

335C14: Or are just men [able], by [practicing] justice, [to make men] unskilled in justice?

I shall refer to the first set of readings as “Cornford’s reading” and to the second as “Shorey’s reading.”⁶ Each of these readings is textually possible, though Cornford’s, because it forces us to understand “teaching,” is perhaps the less likely.

Both readings, though, are irrelevant to the conclusion of the argument in which the lines occur, that “it is in no way just to damage anybody.” Here is the argument, with questions replaced by statements and the troublesome Greek retained:

P₁: To damage (*βλάπτειν*) a horse is to make it worse in the virtue of horses (*χείρους . . . εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων* [sc. *ἀρετὴν*]) (335B6-9).

P₂: To damage a dog is to make it worse in the virtue of dogs (B10-11).

C₁: To damage a man is to make him worse in the human virtue (*εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ἀρετὴν, χείρους*) (C1-2).

⁶ All the scholars cited in n. 4 apparently follow Shorey except Cornford, of course, and Kouchtsoglou, who has it both ways by using parentheses.

P3: Justice is [the⁷] human virtue (C4).

C2: To damage a man is to make him more unjust (*ἀδικωτέρους*) (C6-7).

P4: Musicians are not able, by music, to make *ἀμούσους* (C9-10).

P5: Horsemen are not able, by horsemanship, to make *ἀφίππους* (C12).

C3: Just men are not able, by justice, to make men unjust (*ἀδίκους*), and in general, good men are not able, by virtue, to make men bad (*κακούς*) (C14-D1).

P6: It is not the function (*ἔργον*) of heat, but of its opposite, to chill (D3).

P7: It is not the function of dryness, but of its opposite, to moisten (D5).

C4: It is not the function of the good man, but of his opposite, to damage (D7).

P8: The just are good (D9).

C5: It is not the function of the just man to damage either his friend or anyone else, but of his opposite, the unjust man (D10-11).

C6: It is in no way just to damage anybody (E5).

I understand this argument in the following way. Socrates uses Polemarchus' admission that to damage a horse or a dog is to make it worse in its peculiar virtue (P1, P2) to convince him that to damage a man is to make that man worse in the human virtue (C1). On the assumption that justice is the human virtue (P3), then, to damage a man is to make him more unjust (C2). Socrates then urges that, as musicians (horsemen) are not able, by music (horsemanship), to make *ἀμούσους* (*ἀφίππους*), so just men are not able, by justice, to make men unjust, and good men are not able, by virtue, to make men bad (C3). He takes C3 as a claim about the function of the just man and the good man and, using its second part, goes on to argue on the

⁷ The definite article is not in the Greek. We must, however, either supply it or take the understood *ἐστὶ* as expressing identity. For otherwise, in the absence of an appropriate version of the doctrine of the unity of the virtues, C2 will not follow: a man could be damaged with regard to some human virtue other than justice yet remain equally just (or unjust).

basis of P6 and P7 that it is the function of the opposite of the good man to damage (C4). Noting that the just are good (P8), he next argues that it is the function of the unjust man to damage (C5). He then concludes, on the basis of C3 and C5, that it is in no way just to damage anybody (C6). The entire argument is directed against Polemarchus' characterization of justice as the rendering of benefits to one's (real) friends and damages to one's (real) enemies,⁸ according to which it is (paradigmatically) just to damage one's (real) enemies.

On this account of the argument, the difficulty with Cornford's reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12 is that the interpretation we must give to C3 on his understanding of P4 and P5 makes C3 of no use in reaching C6. According to Cornford's reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12, P4 and P5 are claims about the teaching of music and horsemanship. Since C3 follows from P4 and P5, C3 is a claim about the teaching of justice. For C6 to have force against Polemarchus, though, it must be a claim about the *practice* of justice. To reach C6 from C3, then, we would have to suppose that from the claim that just men are not able, by teaching justice, to make men unjust, it follows that just men are not able, by practicing justice, to make men unjust. But it does not. As a counterexample, while we might agree that surgeons are not able, by teaching surgery, to make men bad surgeons, they might very well do so by practicing surgery: by amputating a man's hands, for instance. On Cornford's reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12, then, Plato's argument is a *non sequitur*.

Shorey avoids this harshness since, on his reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12, P4 and P5 are claims about the practice of music and horsemanship, and so C3 is what we want: a claim about the practice of justice. But a problem still arises when we notice that there are natural interpretations of his readings of P4 and P5 such that they are sometimes false. I know a person, for example, who lost interest in playing the piano when she first heard Rubinstein play, thinking that, since she would never be able to play that well, there was no point in playing at all. She stopped practicing, with the result that today she is a poor pianist. This is a case about which we could say that a musician, however inadvertently, unintentionally, and blamelessly, has, by practicing music, made someone unskilled in music.

⁸ Polemarchus characterizes justice at 332D5-6 as *ἡ τοῖς φίλοις τε καὶ ἐχθροῖς ἀφελείας τε καὶ βλάβας ἀποδιδούσα* (sc. *τέχνη*). In response to a difficulty raised at 334C-E, he qualifies this at 334E10 by restricting *τὸν φίλον* to *τὸν δοκοῦντα* τε . . . καὶ *τὸν ὄντα χρηστὸν φίλον*, and goes on to qualify *τὸν ἐχθρόν* similarly.

An expert horseman, also, might make someone unskilled in horsemanship by introducing a relative novice to techniques too advanced for him. Were the novice to attempt those techniques, he might very well lose mastery of the techniques he had already acquired. So on these natural interpretations of Shorey's reading of P₄ and P₅ they are, or at least could easily be, sometimes false.

To these counterexamples it might (fairly) be objected that (supposing Shorey's reading to be correct) Plato hardly intended these interpretations of P₄ and P₅. Rather, he must have intended by the qualifications τῆ μουσικῆ (by music) in 335C₉₋₁₀ and τῆ ἵππικῆ (by horsemanship) in 335C₁₂ to be expressing the point that these craftsmen are not able, by the practice of their crafts per se, to make men unskilled in those crafts. Plato could acknowledge the effects described above (inadvertent intimidation and disabling inspiration), that is, but deny that they are in any way essential to those craftsmen's practice of their respective crafts. According to the objection, then, we should understand P₄ and P₅ in this way:

P₄': Musicians are not able, by the practice of music per se, to make men unskilled in music.

P₅': Horsemen are not able, by the practice of horsemanship per se, to make men unskilled in horsemanship.

Since P₄' and P₅' are to convince Polemarchus of C₃ (that just men are not able, by justice, to make men unjust), C₃ must be understood as:

C₃': Just men are not able, by the practice of justice per se, to make men unskilled in justice.

The cure, though, is worse than the disease. The point that musicians or horsemen are not able, by the practice of their crafts per se, to make men unskilled in their crafts is true, perhaps, but trivial. The horseman practices his craft on horses, not on men.⁹ So the practice of horsemanship per se has no effect at all on men; a fortiori it does not make them ἀπίπρους. Music is a productive craft¹⁰ which makes use of musical

⁹ This is one of Plato's characteristic uses of ἡ ἵππικῆ. See, for example, *Euthyphro* 13A, 13B; *Apology* 25B; and esp. *Republic* 342C.

¹⁰ We can distinguish between productive crafts, which create objects, and beneficial crafts, which improve existing objects. In terms of this distinction, e.g., carpentry and pottery are productive crafts, while, e.g., gymnastics and medicine are beneficial crafts.

instruments to produce beautiful music (songs, melodies, and so forth).¹¹ So conceived it too has no effect at all on men. But according to Polemarchus' definition of justice, the practice of justice per se (in contrast to the practice of music or of horsemanship per se) *does* have an effect on men: one's (real) friends are benefited, and one's (real) enemies are damaged, by one's practice of justice per se.¹² So concluding C3' from P4' and P5' simply begs the question against Polemarchus. It is like concluding that a doctor is not able, by the practice of medicine per se, to make men healthy, from the fact that musicians or horsemen are not able, by the practice of their crafts per se, to make men healthy. Without C3 (that just men are not able, by justice, to make men unjust), of course, Socrates cannot reach his conclusion (C6) that it is in no way just to damage anybody. On Shorey's reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12, then, if we interpret P4 and P5 in such a way that it is plausible to suppose that they are true, we have to say that Socrates begs the question against Polemarchus.

On either of the standard readings of 335C9-10 and 335C12, then, Plato's argument is simply fallacious. In the remainder of this note I argue, on both textual and philosophical grounds, for a different reading of the lines: one which avoids this result.

First, we need not suppose with Cornford, Shorey, and the others that ἀφίππους in 335C12 modifies ἀνθρώπους (men) understood. The text in fact suggests otherwise. In the argument as originally presented, ἀδικωτέρους (more unjust) in C2 is surely equivalent, given that justice is (the) human virtue (P3), to εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ἀρετὴν χείρους (worse in the human virtue) in C1. So ἀδίκους (unjust) in C3 should be equivalent to εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ἀρετὴν κακούς (bad or deficient in the human virtue). And since we have χείρους . . . εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων (sc. ἀρετὴν) (worse in the virtue of horses) in P1, we could regard ἀφίππους in P5 as equivalent to εἰς τὴν τῶν ἵππων ἀρετὴν κακούς (bad or deficient in the

It would be a pun, of course, to appeal to the fact that music is practiced on (pre-existing) musical instruments and claim that music is a beneficial craft. Playing a musical instrument need not improve it; nor is the purpose of playing it to do this.

¹¹ This seems to be the sense of ἡ μουσική (music) involved at, e.g., *Gorgias* 449D, *Charmides* 170C, *Symposium* 187A-C and 205C, *Cratylus* 405D, *Theaetetus* 206B, and *Sophist* 253D. But see below, pp. 104-105.

¹² Perhaps recognition of this difference between music and horsemanship, on the one hand, and (Polemarchus' conception of) justice, on the other, is the reason Cornford gives the reading of 335C9-10 and 335C12 he does. The teaching of any craft could be said to be practiced on men, whether or not the craft itself is.

virtue of horses) and so as modifying ἵππους (horses) understood rather than ἀνθρώπους (men) understood. Doing this is supported, first, by Plato's characteristic use of ἡ ἵππικὴ (horsemanship) as a craft practiced on horses (see note 9 above), and, second, by the explicit mention of the virtues of horses and dogs, in connection with damaging, in P₁ and P₂. Thus I suggest that we understand 335C₁₂ in this way:

335C₁₂: Or are horsemen able, by practicing horsemanship, to make horses deficient in the virtue of horses?

On this reading, 335C₁₂ is an instance of general question Q₃ above.

To make 335C₉₋₁₀ fit Q₃ is somewhat more troublesome, though, since the context would seem to provide no word to be understood with ἀμούσους except ἀνθρώπους (men). Moreover, the words which it would be plausible to supply (the Greek equivalents of "melodies," "songs," and even "notes") have the wrong gender.¹³ The solution, I believe, is to recall that Plato uses ἡ μουσικὴ (music) in two different ways. He uses it, first, to name a productive craft which makes use of musical instruments to produce beautiful music (songs, melodies, and so forth). It was in terms of this use of ἡ μουσικὴ that I noted earlier (pp. 102-103) that the per se practice of music had no effect at all on men. But Plato also uses ἡ μουσικὴ to name another craft, one the per se practice of which *does* have an effect on men. This second craft, a beneficial one, makes use not only of the products of the first craft but also of stories (λόγοι) to produce a kind of temperamental harmony or order in those on whom it is practiced. Glaucon describes this second craft to Socrates at *Republic* 522A in the following way:

But [music] was a counterpart to gymnastics, if you remember, educating the guardians in habits (ἔθειαι), imparting by harmony a certain easiness of temper (κατὰ τε ἀρμονίαν εὐαρμοσίαν τινά), not a science (ἐπιστήμην), and by rhythm an orderliness (καὶ κατὰ ῥυθμὸν εὐρυθμίαν), and producing with stories (τοῖς λόγοις) some other habits related to these, both stories which are like fables and those which are more nearly true . . .

The idea, roughly, is that songs, melodies, and so forth, and stories can affect in various ways the range and intensity of the desires and emotions experienced by those who hear them. A man who has the beneficial craft, ἡ μουσικὴ, will know which songs and stories have

¹³ Plato does use φθόγγος in senses which are perhaps appropriate. For example, at *Phaedo* 86C, *Hippias Major* 298A, *Theaetetus* 206B, *Sophist* 253B, and *Laws* 812, forms of φθόγγος have the sense of "sound" or "note." It would be pure conjecture, though, to suppose that φθόγγος is understood at 335C₉₋₁₀.

which effects, and so will be able to affect those on whom he practices his craft in psychologically beneficial ways.¹⁴

Noting this second use of ἡ μουσική enables us to solve the problem of what to supply with ἀμούσους in 335C9-10, since Plato predicates μουσικός (musical) not only of a man who practices the productive craft and of a man who practices the beneficial craft, but also of a man on whom the beneficial craft is successfully practiced. In this third use, μουσικός means "musical" in the sense of "harmonized," "beautifully ordered," "in tune," and so forth, and not in either sense of "skilled in ἡ μουσική." Similarly, therefore, ἄμουσος (the contrary of μουσικός) can describe either a man unskilled in the productive craft, a man unskilled in the beneficial craft, or a man deficient in the quality which the beneficial craft produces.¹⁵ I suggest, then, that we invoke these distinctions in a natural way at 335C9-10, taking τῇ μουσικῇ (by music) to refer to the beneficial craft, οἱ μουσικοί to refer to those who practice that craft, and ἀμούσους to refer to those on whom that craft is practiced. Doing this enables us to continue to supply ἀνθρώπους (men) in 335C9-10, but to understand the line as an instance of Q3 in this way:

335C9-10: But are musicians able, by practicing music, to make men unmusical (out of tune, and so forth)?

Several considerations recommend these suggestions. First, if the suggested understanding is in fact what Plato intended, he certainly could have expressed that meaning with the Greek in the text. Second, the suggestions rest on distinctions which Plato acknowledged and which, in fact, he explicitly draws. Third, on the suggested readings all the crafts mentioned in P4, P5, and C3 are beneficial crafts. Fourth, all three of P4, P5, and C3 can be understood as claims about the per se practice of the crafts mentioned. Fifth, on the suggested readings C3 really does follow (inductively) from P4 and P5, since all three are instances of this principle:

¹⁴ For a fuller treatment, see W. Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. by G. Highet, II (New York, 1943), 211-231.

¹⁵ Forms of ἄμουσος meaning "unharmonized," "out of tune," etc., occur often in the *Republic*—e.g., at 411D, 486D, and 546D. See also *Theaetetus* 156A and *Sophist* 259E. At *Laches* 188D and at *Republic* 412A, Plato explicitly distinguishes the μουσικός who practices the productive craft from the μουσικός who practices the beneficial craft. The two uses of ἡ μουσική are contrasted at *Timaeus* 47C-D and, perhaps, at *Phaedo* 61; at *Laws* 673A the beneficial craft alone is involved. I should acknowledge, though, that most of the occurrences of these words in Plato take senses other than those required for my suggestion.

P: Craftsmen are not able, by practicing their craft, to make the object on which their craft is practiced deficient in the virtue or excellence which that craft produces.¹⁶

That is, 335C₉₋₁₀, 335C₁₂, and 335C₁₄ are all instances of general question Q₃ above. Finally and, I believe, decisively, on the recommended readings of the lines the argument involves no fallacy (at this stage).¹⁷ C₃ follows from P₄ and P₅ in just the sense which Plato requires to reach his conclusion. For it is a claim about the function of the just man and thus is in direct opposition to Polemarchus' claim that it is (paradigmatically) just to damage one's (real) enemies.

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¹⁶ It might be thought that, since practical crafts are ambiguous in their application (see J. Gould, *The Development of Plato's Ethics* [Cambridge, England, 1955], ch. II), P (and so P₄ and P₅) is false. Since, e.g., a horseman knows how to give horses their particular virtue, he also knows how to make them deficient in that virtue. Thus a horseman, for Plato, is precisely the man who *is* able to make horses ἀφιππους. I take it, though, that we can construe τῇ ἵππικῇ to exclude this. By horsemanship, a horseman gives horses their particular virtue; by acting contrary to horsemanship, he makes them deficient in that virtue.

¹⁷ Even on the suggested understanding of 335C₉₋₁₀ and 335C₁₂, the whole argument at 335B_{2-E5} might be criticized on several grounds, among them the following. First, the argument apparently exploits the ambiguity of βλάπτειν between "to harm" and "to damage." (See, e.g., R. C. Cross and A. D. Woozley, *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary* [London, 1964], pp. 20-22.) I have used "to damage" throughout this note. Second, the assumption (P₃) that justice is (the) human virtue is very broad. Since to damage a man is to make him worse in the human virtue (C₁), it would seem that justice consists in all those capacities, abilities, *et al.*, which are diminished when a man is damaged. On any natural understanding of "to damage," this is an enormous claim. And finally, the argument apparently equivocates between justice as a virtue (analogous to the virtues of horses and dogs) and justice as a practical craft (analogous to music and horsemanship). In particular, at C₃ Socrates seems to treat justice both as a practical craft and as the virtue which that craft produces.