

The background of the book cover features a photograph of classical architecture. On the left, a stone archway is illuminated from within, casting a warm, golden light. To the right of the archway, several tall, reddish-brown columns stand in a row, receding into the distance. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of red, orange, and yellow, with a vertical strip of teal on the far right edge.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DEMOCRACY

PLATO & FARABI

DR. MUHARREM HAFIZ

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DEMOCRACY:
PLATO and FARABI

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge and virtue are the basic elements in both Plato and Farabi's political thoughts. Both examine the corrupt and ignorant rules which oppose the principles and virtues of their ideal states ("just city in speech" of Plato and "virtuous city" of Farabi), and democracy is categorized by both philosophers among the corrupt (in Plato) and ignorant (in Farabi) cities. This work concerns their consideration of democracy and critique of it. Plato and Farabi investigate the principles of perfect, rational, and virtuous government by exhibiting an ideal state-model in their treatises. Democracy is criticized by both in terms of its principles and moral conception. Democracy which is the current regime in Plato's time is also discussed by Farabi who did not see any actual democratic pattern in his time. Accordingly, the direct inquiry to the comparison between Plato and Farabi's critique of democracy is necessary in the intellectual realm.

Democracy (*demos-kratos*: rule of people) is, on the other hand, the regime in which the principles of freedom, equality, and authority of the multitude are dominant in Plato's eyes. One of the most prominent features which Plato sees in democracy is the problem of *authority of the ignorant people over their rulers*. This problem is not only political but also moral, since a moral content of political science is present in Plato. In other words, the rulers must be closely concerned with the behavior and moral attitudes of their subjects, and must prompt them into the goodness, truth, and justice. This political approach, with which the modern reader is not familiar, is available for Farabi as well. The statesman is responsible for the moral education of the people, and when considering the examination of democracy in both, this togetherness of politics-morality must be considered.

The claim of the ignorant and incompetent people (*Sophists*) into the government is the head of their negative attitude toward democracy. As a matter of fact, this claim seems to render democracy ignorant and corrupt in both Plato and Farabi's eyes. The authority of the people is then a serious problem for both from the political and moral standpoints, because the authority and rule of ignorance is not only unsafe for the education of the individual's souls but also for the healthy and sound organization of the state. Both philosophers' criticism of democracy has the common notion on the same lines, namely, the authority of knowledge and virtue in both souls and states, for ignorance and bad upbringing is the basic characteristics of (the corrupt and ignorant) democracy. Therefore, we argue that the *content* and the driving power of their critique is the same: The state must be established on knowledge and virtue, not on the shifting and unreliable appetites of the people.

In addition to the Platonic elements in Farabi's treatises; *Virtuous City* and *Political Regime*, the place of democracy in his peculiar system (Farabian metaphysics and epistemology) must be elucidated in itself. In other words, this question is inevitable in the comparison between their accounts of democracy: Is the *principal* background of Plato's disagreement of (ignorant) democracy same as Farabi's system or not? What we mean by the principal disagreement is the *opposition* of the principles of their "ideal states" to democracy, and its deprivation of knowledge and virtue. And this distinction in their cognitive background of their political thoughts is the main problematic of this research.

Though Farabi's view of democracy is much more favorable than Plato does, this regime still exists among the non-virtuous and ignorant rules in his categorization of the rules. His favorable attitude to democracy does not change in his principal opposition to it, then why does democracy occur among the ignorant cities in Farabi's eyes, and from which standpoints is it deprived of knowledge and virtue? Does Farabi entirely imitate Platonic political philosophy and his account of democracy, or does his critique within his own philosophy differ from Plato's? Are there no differences in their model-rulers; i.e., the philosopher-king of Plato and philosopher-prophet-king of Farabi? If there is a difference in acquisition of these principles, does this distinction in approach to leading the people into knowledge and virtue exhibit the *form* of the critique? These questions

must be answered, and we will try to find some reasonable answers within this work.

In the first sections, we will try to see their ideal models as opposed to democracy, and its place within the other corrupt and ignorant cities. In the second sections, we will see why and how democracy opposes to their ideal states. In Plato, the critique has two aspects in itself, the first is the psychological (book I-IV), and second metaphysical background (books V-VI) in the *Republic*. Under the title “The Psychological Background of the Critique” it will be treated the necessity for the rational part to rule through the nature of the tripartite soul in which the *logistikon* (rational part of the soul) is ruling, since when the *logistikon* is not recognized as the proper and supreme guiding principle of life both in the city and the soul, the outcome is both an unjust city and an unjust soul. This is the critique in which Plato stresses the authority of reason and knowledge both in the soul and the state through the tripartite soul. Under the title “The Metaphysical-Epistemological Background of the Critique”, however, we will concern the necessity of acquiring philosophical knowledge (*episteme*) through the theory of ideas, and the distinction between knowledge-belief, philosopher-non-philosopher, which gives us the metaphysical content as opposed to democracy in which the appetites of the people are ruling. In Plato’s eyes, only with a philosophical knowledge can the state be just and perfect, and this point cannot be disregarded when examining his account of democracy.

Farabi’s psychology, i.e., account of intellect, cannot be abstracted from his metaphysics. Thus, while we will treat Plato’s disagreement of democracy as two subtitles, we will present Farabi’s disagreement in one field, which we will discuss under the title “The Metaphysical-Epistemological Background of the Critique”. In this second, it will be seen that Farabi negatively criticizes democracy on the ground that the multitudes do not possess the metaphysical principles and intelligibles which emanate from the *First Cause*. The metaphysical principles that holds the moral behavior of the people in unity are achieved by the conjunction (*ittisal*) of the First Ruler (philosopher-prophet-king) with the Active Intellect (*Akl al-Faal*), since the knowledge and principles of nature, cosmos, and human realm emanate from the *First Cause* (God). From this viewpoint, the social-political content of this conjunction (revelation: *wahy*) is at work in determining the

knowledge and actions which the citizens of the virtuous city must know. On the ground of the principles in the ideal state (“virtuous city”) and their acquisition, democracy exhibits an *ignorant* and *non-virtuous* character as opposed to the ideal state (*al-Medinetü'l-Fadila*).

Despite of all these negative approaches of Plato and Farabi, they allude to an *ideal* democratic model through educating *all* souls in the city through exhibiting the accessibility of virtue to all human beings, even philosophically or persuasively, in a rational and proper training. The educational project/model of both will be discussed in the third sections, and we will argue that they are not deeply anti-democratic thinkers, but tried to preserve it in its proper and genuine form, and establish a moderate democratic city through educating people with a rational and good training. We will see that, however, from the viewpoint of *the form* of their alternative educational model, they differ from each other again.

For this book, I owe thanks to some people. First of all, to my M.A. dissertation supervisor Prof. Barry Stocker, who showed his patience and helped me everything about this hard work. Second, to the father of all students at Yeditepe University Philosophy Department Prof. Saffer Babür (chairman) who also urged me to work on this subject and a comparison study between Ancient and Islamic Philosophy. I would also like to thank, especially, Prof. Türker Armaner with whom I have discussed the subject in detail and I will always remember his help during this process. Thank you very much. A special thanks to Prof. Geoff Bove who allowed me to utilize his enormous library. If his numerous sources did not exist, this work would be sterile. Thank you. My final words to my family members who brought me up and supported me in all my life, and my wife Hafsa who always calmed me down and handled my testiness while I was working on this research. Thanks a lot.

Muharrem Hafiz

PLATO'S CRITICISM OF DEMOCRACY

A. Democracy as a Corrupt Regime

Before examining his account of democracy especially in the *Republic*, it is safe to examine the ideal model, and the corrupt rulings opposed to it, so as to grasp his critique better. Although we will discuss the basis of this critique in the next chapter (with a view to see psychological and metaphysical background), it is beneficial to take into consideration the view of the Platonic state, and the decline of the corrupt regimes particularly from book VIII of the *Republic*.

To begin with, the ideal of the *Republic*, in our view, is not an ideal in the sense that it is divorced from actuality (as an unrealizable Utopia), but it is an ideal in the sense that it is an exhibition of what actual states should be.¹ For Plato,

“It was in order to have a model that we were trying to discover what justice is like and what the completely just man would be like, [...], but we were not trying to discover these things in order to prove that it is possible for them to come into being” (*Republic*, 472 c-d).

In the examination of the *Republic*, it is necessary to keep in mind that then it provides a standard or criterion in the light of which actual life

¹ Barker, Ernest, *Greek Political Theory: Plato and his Predecessors*, p. 243.

can be judged.² Therefore, Plato describes his model as,

“There is a model of it in the heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other” (Republic, 592 b).³

Plato’s ideal state is (or “just city in speech” at 472 e), then, a “state as such” or model/idea of all states. In other words, the general nature of the Platonic state as an idea is the subject of the *Republic*, and it is a secondary question whether actual states live up to this idea or not.⁴ Despite its hardly realizable qualities of the just city, he intended it to be a scientific approach to the discovery of truth.⁵ These scientific implications of Plato’s principles are vital in the *Republic*, since there is a *good* both for men and states, and it is a matter of scientific knowledge.⁶

Although this ideal model will be examined in the second section with a view to understand his principal disagreement of democracy in the psychological and metaphysical background, we will treat, in this section, the view of the Platonic State, and his judgment of actual states (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny) which take the form of description of the corruption, in successive stages, of that ideal.

To Plato, as for Farabi, it is inconceivable to establish the principles of the good life outside of the framework of the state⁷, in other words, the good life and the good citizenship meant very such the same thing.⁸ One

2 Barker also holds the view that this is one of the great functions of ideal Utopias, such as Plato’s State: even if they cannot be realized they can yet enable us to understand the real. By showing us what the State would be if its immanent principles were fully realized, they show us the real significance of the States it is. (*Ibid.* p. 244.)

3 This passage will be discussed in the third section “Education and Democracy” in detail for a better understanding whether Plato proposes a *democratic self-ruled soul* in the city or not by focusing upon the analogy between the just city and just soul.

4 Sabine, George, *A History of Political Theory*, p. 46.

5 Harmon, M. Judd, *Political Thought from Plato to the Present*, p. 31.

6 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 45.

7 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 30.

8 A contemporary effort to understand Plato’s such approach to politics and toward the Platonic end in the city (as politics-morality togetherness) would be far less

would hardly be possible without the other. Plato tries to justify it by assuming that there is a good and a truth which will create and preserve the good life in the good state⁹, and by supporting this view with a scientific approach to these concepts. Plato also prescribes his cure for corrupt and perverted organizations, namely; *the sovereignty and authority of reason*¹⁰, i.e., the training of reason with a scientific and philosophical education. Therefore, he attempted to formulate an art of politics (*politique tekhnē*)¹¹ in order to create and preserve the good life in the good state. In his scientific approach to politics, statesmanship or kingship is essentially exhibited as a kind of knowledge (*epistēmē*) (*Statesman*, 260 a-d).¹² Therefore ruling is nothing but a matter of knowledge.

Plato emphasizes the importance of knowledge in ruling by stating that,

“it must be the case that of constitutions too the one that is correct in comparison with the rest [corrupt states], and alone a constitution, is the one in which the rulers would be found truly possessing expert knowledge, [...], so long as they act to preserve it on the basis of expert knowledge and what is just, making it better than it was so far as they can, this is the constitution which alone we must say is correct” (*Statesman*, 293 c-e).

Consequently, the only proper ruling is that in which the possessors of the kingly art rule, provided their rule contributes to the benefit of the unity of the city, in both the moral and political sense.¹³

In his treatises, he deliberates on this ability to rule depending on the knowledge of principles which must be comprehended by intelligent men through the rational process. In Plato's mind, it is easy to stress, then,

meaningful, because the relationship between morality and politics has altered so greatly. For much more details of the modern attitude to this togetherness. (See; Humboldt, Wilhelm Von, *The Limits of State Action*, Chapter I, p. 6-10.)

9 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 31.

10 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 239.

11 See also; Parry, Richard, D., “The Craft of Ruling in the Euthydemus and Republic”, *Phronesis* 47, 2003, pp. 1-28.

12 Strauss, Leo, “Plato”, *History of Political Philosophy*, p. 44.

13 Strauss, *ibid.*, p. 48.

that this process is not an intuitive experience or divine revelation, but is entirely immanent to reason, and rational decisions.¹⁴ The highest form of the state is one in which the philosopher-king rules with his or her knowledge to control the affairs of state, and lead the multitude to the noble and good actions in the city. Therefore, we can state, then, that the vital Platonic judgment concerning the ruling a city is that “until political power and philosophy coincide, cities will have no rest from evils” (*Republic*, 473 d).¹⁵

This political competence is only achieved by an arduous training, and rational-philosophical educational process which includes the art of ruling which cannot be separated from philosophy. The healthy city can be realized only under such intellectual conditions. Plato considers the ideal state of the *Republic* as a unity which is established by this rational organization and as a product of mind.¹⁶ In this case, reason must be ruling over two powers of the soul and the city in order to organize and preserve the good and virtuous life in the city.¹⁷ In this rational organization, the philosopher-king is the incarnate sample of unchangeable and eternal rational principles.

Political competence is defined as knowledge (*episteme*) on two counts: First, it presupposes some kind of knowledge, and whoever engages in politics must know how to rule, and direct all the people into the goodness in the city. And secondly, it also produces some kind of knowledge by making the citizens knowledgeable with the method of persuasion.¹⁸ The art of ruling (politics) is thus defined by reference to this kind of knowledge on these levels which Plato never gives up in life: (i) the governing of a community of men requires the possession of some kind of knowledge, and (ii) an ability to use it to educate all members of the city.¹⁹

When the inevitable importance of education which is based on rational principles comes to mind as relevant to the Platonic state, it must

14 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 31.

15 The features of the ideal state and its rational principles as opposes to democracy will be discussed in the second subtitle in detail.

16 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 244.

17 Pradeau, Jean-François, *Plato and the City*, p. 43.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

19 The importance of education (*paideia*) and its relationship with democracy in Plato will be discussed in the third section.

be acknowledged that his argument is powerful and persuasive.²⁰ In other words, the principle that the city should be ruled by reason or those who know how to rule is not easily refuted. The emphasis laid on education is the logical result of the Platonic conception of state.²¹ The welfare and happiness of the state depends, then, upon the educational training of its citizens.²²

This main purpose of the *Republic* leads us to conclude that the ability to rule with the highest kind of knowledge is the basic argument in Plato, and the vital curse of both the individual and the state is the ignorance of such principles, in other words, none of the corrupted regimes bases its claim on this knowledge. In the *Republic* (VIII), the inferior cities (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny) are decayed forms of the good city, and are transformations of it. In other words, the ideal state may undergo four progressive stages of degenerative corruption, from the ideal to timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and finally to tyranny.²³

As in the degenerative process, there are five kinds of regimes, (i) aristocracy; the rule of the best man or the best men, that is directed toward goodness and virtue (the "just city"); (ii) timocracy; the rule of the lovers of honor; (iii) oligarchy; the rule of the rich men; (iv) democracy; the rule of the people; (v) tyranny; the rule of completely unjust man (*Republic*, VIII).

As in the democratic soul, the excessive unnecessary appetites are dominant in the democratic city in all its forms and phases, with freedom for each not for one only, and with equality for all. For Plato, these two principles of democracy are so dominant that every citizen in it orders his own life for himself as he pleases, and that every citizen is equal without regarding the hierarchical organization which is dominant in the ideal state. On the other hand, democracy is *anarchy*, or from another viewpoint, it is *polyarchy*.²⁴ It is anarchy, because there is no one competent dominant element in ruling; and it is polyarchy, because many incompetent elements

20 Harmon, *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

21 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 181.

22 At this point, we must remember J. J. Rousseau's words, "the Republic is the greatest treatise on education ever written." (See; Barker, *ibid.*, p. 181.)

23 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 40; Barker, *ibid.*, p. 243.

24 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 254; Harmon, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

are dominant in it together. (*Republic*, 557 d)²⁵ It is, as Plato stresses, “*a supermarket of constitutions*” (*Republic*, 557 d), and therefore, by its nature, democracy cannot long remain moderate, like the dominance of the democratic soul’s unnecessary desires. Under the influence of these principles, political competence, which means the knowledge of ruling a city, is disregarded in this city. (558 b) If the democratic statesman tells the majority that he wishes them well, he is the most honorable person in it (558 b), and nothing else. It is, for Plato, like “*a coat embroidered with every kind of ornament*” (557 c) hence there is no one type, but a multitude of types.²⁶

Plato seems to condemn the basic principles of democracy, i.e., freedom and equality, by identifying democracy with anarchy.²⁷ For, they are not *rational principles* in the sense that produce the good life of the soul as a moderate or in social hierarchy and order, and again, in the sense that democratic freedom is the abolition of moral values, and democratic equality is the refutation of social order and social hierarchy.²⁸ In the background of this antipathy to the variety of this democratic constitution, lies the fact that, Plato believes in the unity of a common *idea*²⁹, and not in the diversity of opinions. In democracy, on the other hand, it is impossible to speak of any common rule of life, and therefore, its account of goodness is different from Plato’s one.

Also, the scientific role of the art of ruling on which the Platonic *Republic* is based, as we call it later “political competence”, is disregarded in the democratic city (558 b). There are no rational principles and decisions in it, but entirely the dominance and authority of the appetites of the multitude, that is to say, incompetent ruling permits the individual to pursue excessive and useless desires for the whole city which is destructive of morality and justice.³⁰ The virtue of moderation is important for both the individual and the state, because, “excessive action in one direction usually sets up in the

25 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 254.

26 See for the detailed information; Rosenstock, Brace, “Athena’s Cloak: Plato’s Critique of the Democratic City in the *Republic*”, *Political Theory*, no: 22, 1994, pp. 363-390.

27 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 256.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

29 His theory of ideas and democracy will be discussed in the second section.

30 Pradeau, *ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

opposite direction" (563 e). The verdict of the *Republic* about democracy is negative then in its actual life, since it is not based on scientific reality, and, after its own life, it paves the way for tyranny.³¹

However, though Plato stresses that the good statesman should be an expert in ruling with his or her knowledge of how to rule (*Statesman*, 292 c- 293 e), the categories of classification which Plato describes in the *Statesman* shows that he takes some distance from his position in the *Republic*.³² At this point, democracy is given a more favorable place than in the *Republic*. While Plato's account of democracy in the *Republic* occupies a third stage in the classification, a more elaborate classification is attempted in the *Statesman*. The ideal state of the *Republic* ruled by the philosopher-king is perfect for human affairs, and it is distinguished from the corrupted states by the fact that knowledge is dominant and ruling in it, and there is no need for law.³³ But the classification of states is made in the *Statesman* by subdividing the traditional threefold division, i.e.; the rule of one which yields monarchy and tyranny; the rule of a few which yields aristocracy and oligarchy; the rule of many which yields, for the first time in Plato, two types of democracy: a moderate and an extreme democracy, dividing in each of its parts into a lawless and a law-abiding form.³⁴ Neither the ideal statesman nor the philosopher-king is to be found in the *Statesman*, the law is, though it is inferior to knowledge, considered in it as a necessity for the state.³⁵

This change does not, however, reflect the view that democracy is inherently or potentially virtuous³⁶, since Plato's democratic city in the *Statesman* is still defective (297 b-c; 300 e). But, at any rate, constitutional or lawful democracy is regarded by Plato as better than tyranny, oligarchy, and unconstitutional democracy.³⁷ Unlawful democracy is, on the other

31 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 258.

32 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 74.

33 *Ibid.*, 74.

34 Sabine, *ibid.*, 74-75; Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 43-44. See also; Stern, Paul, "The Rule of Wisdom and the Rule of Law in Plato's Statesman", *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 91, No.2, 1997, pp. 264-276.

35 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 43.

36 See the first section in Farabi for this discussion of possibility of virtue in democratic city.

37 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 75; Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 44.

hand, is the arbitrary and extreme rule of many, and thus bad, but less dangerous than tyranny and oligarchy. More interestedly, he makes democracy now the best of the lawless states, though the worst of the law-abiding. From these viewpoints, Plato seems to move toward the position taken later in the *Laws*, though Plato's principle of rule by the intelligent is still dominant in the *Statesman*, in which the second-best state is described which combines monarchy with democracy in his definition of the "mixed state".³⁸ A difference is that while laws in the *Statesman* are the elements which support actual states, and determine their values, they (laws) are the direct constitutive elements of authority in the *Laws*.³⁹

In the *Laws*, as in the *Statesman*, laws are now the surrogate for reason which Plato sought to make supreme and perfect in the ideal state. He seems to formulate the virtue of moderation of the *Republic* as the chief virtue and harmony in the state of the *Laws* by fostering the spirit of obedience to law.⁴⁰ This effort to harmonize the diverse principles or the diverse tendencies seems to be the main principle of the "mixed state" or "mixed constitution". In this respect, the mixed state of the *Laws* is said to be a combination of the monarchic principle of wisdom with the democratic principle of freedom.⁴¹ That means the state of the *Laws* must be monarchical, on the one hand, which contains the principle of wise and vigorous government subject to law, and, democratic, on the other hand, which contains the principle of freedom again of course, subject to law.⁴² Plato seems to show how the arbitrary power of monarchy and the tyranny that goes with it has a cause of decay, and how an unbridled democracy ruined itself by an excess of freedom.⁴³ In other words, had both of them remained moderate by supporting power with wisdom (in monarchy), and freedom with order (democracy); they might have been happy and good states.

38 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 77.

39 Babür, Saffet, *Plato: Yasalar*, Introduction, p. 24.

40 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 76.

41 In the transition from the ideal into the practical (from the principles of the *Republic* into that of the *Laws*), it can be argued for that the logical method of the transformation of the states, and their structures in the *Republic* is not at work in the *Laws*. (Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 78.)

42 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

Therefore, in our opinion, the idea which is the only natural claim to power that of *wisdom* over the *ignorant* is not changed even in the state of the *Laws*. However, differently from the state of the *Republic*, the problem is to select and combine these admitted claims in order to establish the entire law-abiding rule. Plato describes this project as a mixture of monarchy and democracy.

In the *Laws*, there are organizations of the assembly, council, and magistrates which also existed in every Greek city.⁴⁴ All citizens are entitled to be member of the assembly, but the most characteristic method of the election is that by which the council is chosen; the class structure, here, based upon a distinction in the holding of personal property, plays a role in this election.⁴⁵ In this respect, the whole body of the citizens is divided into four classes according to their personal property, and wealthier classes are far more represented in the powerful body than are the poorer classes. In the elections, members of the third and fourth class may also vote or not as they choose, but the first and second classes must vote in these elections, if not, severe penalties are levied for nonvoting on each of them.

From this emphasis on the personal property in elections, it can be said that, someone must govern the state of the *Laws*, but it must not still be the whole mass of citizens. The Platonic consideration of *equality* lies, in our views, in the background of this thought, since according to him, "to unequals equals becomes unequals, if they are not harmonized by measure" (*Laws*, 757 a). Therefore, Plato speaks of two equalities which are called by the same name, but are the opposite of one another in many ways. The first one is that absolute equality which means that becoming equal to all the masses of the multitude (in the case of election) without regarding them as truly equal or not. The second one is that proportional equality which is the distribution of natural equality among unequals in each case (*Laws*, 757 d). And, "this is justice, and is ever the true principle of states", and the legislator must look to this justice always, not to the interests of the tyrant, or that of the people. This kind of equality gives to the greater more, and to inferior less in proportion to the nature of each (*Laws*, 757 c). From these viewpoints, it is difficult to understand why Plato has regarded this

44 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 48.

45 Harmon, *ibid.*, 48; Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 82.

constitution of the *Laws* as a combination of monarchy and democracy, since it is nothing but oligarchy and democracy, leaning rather than to oligarchy.⁴⁶ Because the problem is that the difficulty to be conciliated the interests of property with the democratic interests represented by the multitude.⁴⁷ Democracy seems to be used with some concession to the lot for the sake of democracy “in order to avoid the discontent of the masses” (757 e).

Finally, the *Laws* end with the emphasis on the influence of the philosophers (like the philosopher-king in the *Republic*) in the state which is the Nocturnal Council. This Council is given control of, and directs all the legal institutions of the state. This body consists of the most important state officials, including the ten oldest guardians of the law, the high-ranking minister of education, a number of priests, and others. It surveys the whole sphere of law, and discusses all branches of study which sheds light on the subject of law, and, in this sense, it seems to be a brain, and controlling mind of the whole state⁴⁸, since “every living body needs mind for its direction”.⁴⁹ Now, as in the *Republic*, the directing and ruling element of the state is nothing but mind (*logos*), the body politics in the state of the *Laws* needs for its direction a reason/mind embodied in the Nocturnal Council.⁵⁰ Therefore, in this sense, the end of the *Laws* seems to be a return to the doctrine of the *Republic* which is the rule of genuine reason, by stressing the role of it in the framework of this intellectual council:

“If this our divine assembly can only be established, to them we will hand over the city; none of the present company of legislators, as I may call them, would hesitate about that. And the state will be perfected and become a waking reality, which a little while ago we attempted to create as a dream and in idea only, mingling together reason and mind in one image, in the hope that our citizens might be duly mingled and rightly educated; and being educated, and dwelling in the citadel of the land, might become perfect guardians, such as we have never seen in all our previous life, by reason of the saving virtue which is in them” (*Laws*, 969 b-c).

46 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 83.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

48 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 347.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 347.

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 347- 348.

Thus, the state of the *Laws*, like that of the *Republic*, becomes a model again “*laid up in the heaven*” which emphasizes the importance of the education of the soul, and that of directing them to the goodness and virtue in the state. Therefore, the verdict that the state must be directed by knowledge, and thus virtuous men, is not changed in the doctrine of the *Laws*. We argue that, from this viewpoint, the Platonic political essence of the *Republic*, the *Statesman*, and the *Laws* is this privilege of *episteme*.

The fact is probably that the majority of people are neither inept nor greedy, and that men cannot live without both authority and freedom. Here, the problem is to discover and establish the right amount and measure of each⁵¹, and it is never solved by proposing of a single formula in the political organization. Nevertheless, where *the self-ruled souls* of the city are concerned, all Platonic discourse is on the same line:

“There is a model of it in the heavens, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other.” (*Republic*, 592 b)⁵²

B. The Disagreement with Democracy in the *Republic*

The negative attitude toward democracy in the *Republic* must be understood in the theme of the ignorance of the basic principles of the ideal state (“just city in speech”). For a better understanding of his negative criticism of democracy, we think we should raise two arguments from within his own *Republic*: (1) Psychological, and (2) Metaphysical-Epistemological background of the critique.

1. The Psychological Background of the Critique

Plato’s *Republic* in which the authority and the excellence of reason are insistently emphasized through reason’s role both in the soul and the state seems to exhibit as an antidemocratic pattern in principle. That is, the principles of the *Republic*, and that of corrupt democracy are not the same from

⁵¹ Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵² Whether this model (the self-ruled souls of the state of the *Republic*) in fact exhibits an ideal democracy will be discussed in the third section, “Education and Democracy”.

the standpoint of the content of these principles, and of the acquisition of them. In other words, they do not inhabit the same cognitive world. We can see this difference in principle stressed by Plato in the psychological background, which means the authority of reason in both the soul and the state through the theory of tripartite psyche, in his account of democracy. Thus, we must examine the psychological background of critique via the soul-state relationship, and the emphasis upon the authority of reason in both in the first part of this section.

One of the most crucial points of the Platonic opposition to democracy and the democratic soul is, especially in the *Republic*, the emphasis upon the inevitable knowledge (*episteme*) of rule which the multitudes do not possess. From this point of view, ignorance is the basic characteristic of democracy in which the multitude determines their rulers without regard to the principle of knowledge and political competence. In this respect, Plato treats democracy as a corrupted regime, and criticizes the wrong methods of the *Sophists* who pander to the ignorant people only with their changeable beliefs (*Gorgias*, 471e- 472d). For Plato, the state cannot be established on the beliefs of the citizens concerning how to rule themselves, but it must be based .on the knowledge and the political competence of the philosophers who are endowed with a natural tendency, and an arduous educational program. Democracy is, then, the corrupt and ignorant regime due to its irrelevant character for the basic criteria of the government that are knowledge and political competence.

When the analogical structure of the *Republic* which is also available for political comment is taken into consideration, the soul-state comparison should be examined in Platonic political philosophy and hence in the background of his criticism of democracy. But before this, we must see the parts and the virtues of the soul.

Plato describes his own account of justice, as not something external to human nature, but basically as an *internal motive*.⁵³ According to Plato, the soul is the cause of good and evil, justice and injustice, like of the every opposition (*Laws*, 896 d). The Platonic account of soul which is dominant in the good or evil, just or actions (*ergon*) shows that the soul and the state are inseparable objects of thought.

53 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 161.

First of all, we must state that Plato presents the transformation of the state of souls as a “moral degeneration” starting with timocracy and culminating with tyranny. They are also presented not only as political corruption, but also as the decline of the soul so that, after the just soul and ideal state, comes the man and the city devoted to the pursuit of honor. The timocrat’s son degenerates into the oligarch who values money above everything, and the efforts to acquire it in his life. His son, in turn, becomes a democrat who wants all kinds of desires, freedom, and equality. In the final stage of the decline, the democratic man turns into a tyrant who is dominated by the worst kind of desire.⁵⁴ Such being the case, it is possible to maintain that the basis of the sketch of constitutional change and corruption is *psychological*, since we can see that the Platonic theory of the tripartite soul is at work throughout book VIII, in describing the perverted cities, in the basis of the individual and constitutional change and corruption.⁵⁵ Because, Plato acknowledges that constitutions are not born from “oak or rock, but from the characters of the people who live in these cities” (*Republic*, 544 e).

Briefly stating, in the psychological degenerative process; first the just soul is dominated by reason, and the ideal state is based on a harmonious union of the three elements of these powers, i.e., reason, spirit, and appetite, in which reason is ruler. Second, this process of transformation is obvious in the case of the timocratic man and city in which the spirited part -better than appetite is dominant but inferior to reason- is dominant. This form of state is, then, based on a less harmonious union in which reason has lost its vital place, and spirit has obtained control in it.⁵⁶ The three remaining characters and states (oligarchy, democracy, tyranny) are presented by Plato on the basis of the supremacy of the appetitive part of the soul in different levels: the oligarch is analyzed by the distinction between necessary and unnecessary appetites (*Republic*, 558 e-559 e), and is described as a man who restrains his unnecessary appetites by satisfying necessary ones (*Republic*, 559 c).⁵⁷ The oligarch’s son, for Plato, turns into the democratic

54 Scott, Dominic, “Plato’s Critique of the Democratic Character”, p. 21.

55 Scott, Dominic, “Metaphysics and the Defense of Justice”, p. 17.

56 Scott, “Plato’s Critique of the Democratic Character”, p. 21; Barker, Ernest, pp. 247-248.

57 Necessary appetites are, as Plato presents them, things that lead to or preserve health, food, or necessities of life in general, while unnecessary appetites are superfluous, and sometimes actively harmful (*Republic*, 558 d-559 d).

man who puts all appetites on an equal level. Finally, in the case of the tyrant, Plato makes a further distinction between those unnecessary appetites which are lawful and those which are lawless, and describes the tyrant as someone who gives his lawless appetites full rein.⁵⁸

We need to treat his account of the democratic soul in detail to understand the critique better. Plato describes the democratic soul by focusing upon the way he is transformed from his oligarchic starting-point. While the oligarchic man is engaged in acquirement of the necessary appetites, his son (the democratic man) is engaged in unnecessary appetites. Here, we must emphasize that appetites are not by their nature for the consideration of the good, and this psychological emphasis is the key to the understanding of the democratic soul as well.⁵⁹ In other words, to feel an appetite is to pursue it just because it offers one pleasure, not because of *independent* and *autonomous* goodness in itself; by contrast, the rational part of the soul pursues a desire for something in order to realize independently its “goodness”. When the criticism of the democratic soul in Plato is in question, they can be plausible in terms of the psychological theory (through the theory of the tripartite soul), and reinforced by the political analogy.

In the lower portion of the soul, which is submerged in the necessary or unnecessary appetites, then, there is no rational deliberation upon reality and truth, but they pursue the changeable desires based on the changeable and variable decisions in everything. At this point, Plato does not avoid examining the reasoning of these lower appetitive parts of the soul; we need to emphasize the democratic man’s father (the oligarch) first, for the sake of the argument, to understand their basis of reasoning well.

There are two passages to which Plato explicitly mentions the reasoning of the oligarchic soul, and his or her appetites.⁶⁰ One is that at 553 d:

“He [the oligarch] makes the rational and spirited parts sit on the ground beneath appetite, one on either side, reducing them to slaves. He won’t allow the first to reason about or examine anything except how a little money can be made into great wealth. And he won’t allow the second to value or admire anything but wealth or whatever might contribute to getting it.”

58 Scott, “Plato’s Critique of the Democratic Character”, pp. 21-22.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

In this case, the activity of the oligarchic soul is limited to a narrowly instrumental role.⁶¹ That is to say; the oligarch has a single goal that permits to reason by using it *instrumentally* to promote that goal. In this passage, Plato explicitly stresses that he (the oligarch) uses reason (*logistikon*) as a slave to his or her appetite. Under the dominance of necessary appetite, reason is prevented from reasoning in such a way as to produce judgments that conflict with the end of the appetitive part.⁶² Plato also stresses that flattering the appetitive part is characteristic of the weakest type of the soul by asking “aren’t flattery and slavishness condemned because they subject the spirited part to a moblike beast, accustoming it from youth on to being insulted for the sake of the money needed to satisfy the beast’s insatiable appetites, so that it becomes an ape instead of an lion?” (*Republic*, 590 b) The oligarch’s reasoning is, then, confined to the instrumental sphere in order to promote the appetitive goal.

Before passing to the democratic soul, we need to look at the second passage concerning reasoning and the oligarch at 554 d: “He holds [his evil appetites] in check, not persuading them that its better not to act on them or taming them with logos, but by compulsion and fear, trembling for his other possessions.” At this point, Plato makes two distinctions between the just soul and the oligarch: One is that the just person calms his appetites, by producing a *harmony* in his or her soul rather than the *conflict* that characterizes the oligarch. The other is that the just person’s restraint is achieved by *reason* which performs its function by purposing what the good of the whole soul is, and by governing in the light of this knowledge, while the oligarch uses his reason to promote his appetitive ends.⁶³ The necessary appetites in the oligarchic soul seem to be the cause of his or her restraints of his or her evil appetites. The power of the rational decision in the oligarchic soul is instrumentally appetitive, and is not autonomous rational reflection.⁶⁴

From now on, Plato describes the democratic soul who is the son of the oligarch. In the psychological analysis, there are two stages in his account of democracy. In the first stage, as a young man, the democratic soul

61 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

62 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

restrains his unnecessary desires, just like his father (558 d), and in the second stage, after giving up the oligarchic upbringing (or pre-democratic educational principles) by the influence of the drones, some of the evil unnecessary desires in his or her soul previously expelled are let back in. After this stage, the democratic man puts all his desires “on an equal footing”, and, “so he lives, always surrendering rule over himself to whichever desire comes along, as if it were chosen by lot. And when that is satisfied, he surrenders the rule to another, not disdaining any, but satisfying them all equally” (561 a-b). The democratic soul in the second stage (old democrat: my emphasis) is essentially appetitive and for Plato,

“He lives, yielding day by day to the desire at hand. Sometimes he drinks heavily while listening to the flute; at other times he drinks only water and is on a diet; sometimes he goes in for physical training; at other times, he is idle and neglects everything; and sometimes he even occupies himself with what he takes to be philosophy. He often engages in politics, leaping up from his seat and saying and doing whatever comes into his mind. If he happens to admire soldiers, he is carried in that direction, if money makers, in that one. There is neither order nor necessity in his life, but he calls it pleasant, free, and blessedly happy, and he follows it for as long as he lives” (561 c-d).

The references of this passage to military and political aspirations which gives the opportunity to the reader to evaluate the old democrat as someone who feels his or her enjoyment of the appetitive pleasures with the satisfaction of spirited desires as a cause and his pursuit of some sort of intellectual interest (philosophy) can lead us to think that he is someone who has this intellectual endeavor as a goal, and that he satisfies rational desires.⁶⁵ However, we will also see that this is not the case as soon as we take into consideration the impression of the democratic character a few lines later that “he is a complex man, full of all sorts of characters, fine and multicolored, just like the democratic city, and that many men and women might envy his life since it contains the most models of constitutions and ways of living” (561 e). He is someone in Plato’s mind, then, who has desires for many different things, not proper functioning of the two parts of the soul; reason or spirit, but the democratic soul is essentially appetitive

65 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

in these satisfactions of both spirit and intellectual activities.⁶⁶ Therefore, one way to tackle the problem raised above is to insist that the democratic soul can satisfy spirited or rational desires, but this fact cannot prevent us from describing his or her desires as appetitive, since his or her desires for welfare, politics, military or philosophy is not the same as those who motivate themselves for the sake of these elements themselves. The democratic soul's desires for warfare, politics and philosophy are different from those that motivate the just person or the timocrat.⁶⁷ Like the other activities such as military, welfare, and dabbling in philosophy can be easily evaluated as the satisfaction of an appetite. Thus, his changeable life-style is not the result of a rational reflection at all, and his life is under the influence of changeable and variable appetites. It is its reasoning that is confined to the instrumental sphere as in his or her father's soul, whereas, by contrast, the just soul is able to form a desire for something based on the realization of its "goodness".⁶⁸ The just and rational soul knows what the good of the whole soul is, and performs its function in terms of this goal.

Against the end (*telos*) of the rational part, then, Plato describes how internal and external components are at work to tempt the young democrat (in the first stage) to give up the restraint of his unnecessary appetites. (559 e-560 b) Plato stresses his or her state of mind as "inner conflict" by stating that "I suppose that, if any contrary helps comes to the oligarchic party within him, whether from his father or from the rest of his house hold, who exhort and reproach him, then there is civil war and counterrevolution within him, and he battles against himself" (560 a).

Plato begins to portray, after that, the process of transformation from the young democrat to the old/adult one by suggesting that these unnecessary desires draw him or her back, and occupy the citadel of the democratic soul with a multitude of desires. (560 a-561 a) The next result of this process is the establishment of the false beliefs in his or her soul, and the democratic soul refuses his father's efforts to return into the control the unnecessary appetites. (560 c) The result of this process is an entirely degenerative moral character, since Plato ironically asks the question that,

66 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

68 *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 31-32.

“Doing battle and controlling things themselves, won’t they call reverence foolishness and moderation cowardice, abusing them and casting them out beyond the frontiers like disenfranchised exiles? And won’t they persuade the young man that measured and orderly expenditure is boorish and mean, and, joining with many useless desires, won’t they expel it across the border?, [...], they praise the returning exiles and give them fine names, calling insolence good breeding, anarchy freedom, extravagance magnificence, and shamelessness courage” (560 d- 561 a)

After the liberation and release of useless and unnecessary desires, the young democratic soul who brought up with the necessary desires turns into the democratic soul in the strict sense. This passage also offers three reasons against the suggestion that the democratic soul’s rational part is active in this revolutionary transformation.⁶⁹ The first one is that the pressure is exerted by unnecessary appetites as an inner conflict, from within and without. It is impossible for the rational part’s to be an ally to the appetitive part in supporting the useless and unnecessary desires. The second one is that Plato never mentions any reflective rational activity in these lines concerning his or her transformation, and he (Plato) speaks of false *logoi* and opinions seizing the citadel of the young man’s soul (560c). However, this happens under the influence of these useless and unnecessary desires, not reasoning about the rational ends. For the third reason, the soul-city analogy must be remembered. It is very conspicuous that Plato gives great importance to this analogy in his analysis of the state, since we can easily find his account of the individual’s transformation in the background of political revolution. By presenting this transformation of the democratic character as *non-rational*⁷⁰, Plato stresses that it is the unnecessary appetites which paves the way for expelling the old rulers, i.e., oligarchs. In this transformation through the analogy, it is difficult to see the supremacy and the authority of the rational part, since the transformation in itself is not rational, but appetitive. Therefore, the democratic concerns both in the soul and the state do not arise from its *autonomous functioning*, but from a process of *non-rational belief formation*.⁷¹

69 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

71 We use these terms (borrowing from Dominic Scott) to stress that the importance of the goodness in both the individual and the state is vital in Plato’s mind. It will be discussed later

From the last point of the analysis of the democratic character, we need to see the soul-city analogy in order to see the psychological background of the critique better.

Plato explains that the soul has three parts (*meros*) (*Republic*, 43 9d-444e, *Timaeus*, 69c- 71d). They are the reasoning part (*to logistikon*), the spirited part (*to thumoeides*), and the desiring part (*to epithumetikon*). Reason is the part by virtue of which we *learn* and *rule* the other objects.⁷² Here, it seems to have two functions: One is that searching for the truth and increasing one's knowledge; it is the only part of the soul that searches the truth and the only part that enjoys by learning (581 b), and second is to rule the other parts in the soul. (441 e, 442 c) There are also two reasons⁷³ in the ruling of the soul, firstly, only the reasoning part cares not for itself (346 e), but for the interests of the whole soul (441 e).⁷⁴ Reason cares for the interests of the whole soul due to its power of judgment which means three aspects emphasized by Plato not to be mistaken in judgments: Experience (*empeiriai*), dialectical-thought (*phronesei*), and argument (*logoi*). If these are proper standards, we must favor the philosopher's life upon the relative pleasantness of other two parts: Thus, (i) he has *experienced* the pleasures since his youth (582 a-b), but "the pleasure to be gained from contemplating being cannot be had by anyone except the philosopher" (582 c), (ii) he alone has "gained his experience in the company of dialectical-thought" (582 d), and finally (iii) he alone is a master of argument (582 d-e).⁷⁵ The second ground for the reason's rule over the whole soul is that the assumption of the life and aim of it is better than the life and aims of the other parts. The reasoning part is always after the truth, the part which values least honor and money. Therefore, governing is the function of reason which

from the metaphysical aspect of the critique.

72 Armas, Julia, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, p. 125. This part is called not only the 'reasoning part' (*to logistikon*, 439d), but also, though at 581 b, 'the part that loves wisdom and learning' (*to philosophon*, *to philomathes*, 376 b).

73 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

74 This should be considered in a parallel with the Guardians who do not care for their own interests, but for the whole society.

75 Reeve, C.D.C., *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*, pp. 144-145. For Reeves, in a parallel to reason's power of judgment, the philosopher awards first prize to his or her own life and pleasure, second prize to the life of spirited part, and third prize to that of the desiring part, this is the authoritative and reasonable ranking of the lives and pleasures (583 a-b).

learns and knows on one side, and deserves to rule both in the individual and the state on the other side.

The most striking example which represents the tripartite nature of the soul is undoubtedly the myth of the winged chariot in the *Phaedrus* (246 a-c). In this myth, the charioteer represents the rational part of the soul, and his or her function is to lead the chariot in the right way by restraining the black horse. The black horse, which represents the desiring part of the soul, is unsafe for the unity and wholeness of the chariot due to its wild and effusive nature, on the other hand, the white and good horse, which represents the spirited part of the soul, desires the unity and wholeness of the chariot, and helps the chariot for this reason. According to Plato, for the safety of the chariot and the whole parts, the rational part must restrain and rule the effusive desires and pleasures of the desiring part, since none of us can be just unless we have within us a rational element which is capable of ruling (*Republic*, 441 e). Saying inversely, “they watch over it to see that it does not become so big and strong that it no longer does its own work but attempts to enslave and rule over the classes it is not fitted to rule, thereby overturning everyone’s whole life” (442 b).

That the desiring part does not have the authority to rule in the soul must be understood from the viewpoint that this part of the soul does not comprehend and reveal the objective nature of ideas such as justice, goodness, and propriety. These ideas are apprehended not by the desiring part, but by the reasoning part as we stated above with regard to its power of judgment in its ruling. On the other hand, it can be said that bodily desires cannot determine the content of these kinds of concepts.⁷⁶ If desires attempt to determine these moral concepts, there will be a chaos of values, as Plato stated, due to the desire of every desire to create its own variable and multiple truths in life, thereby being so fatal in both the individual, and the state that shows conflict in itself.⁷⁷ For, ‘desiring’ money, honor, or power is not the ultimate aim of life for Socrates/Plato, in other words they are not the real answers to the question “how should one live?” (*Republic*, 352 d; *Gorgias*, 487 e, 492 d)⁷⁸

76 Pradeau, *ibid.*, p. 54.

77 Stalley, R.F., “Plato, Reason and Democracy”; pp. 202-203, Boudouris, Konstantine, “The Kinds of the Ways of Life, Desire and The Good”, p. 42; Reeve, *ibid.*, p. 142.

78 Boudouris, *ibid.*, p. 32. Moreover for Boudouris, the greatness and significance of

When reason rules, which it is doing its own work, this is *proper rule*, whereas the other parts rule, when they are not doing their own work, hence this is *improper rule*.⁷⁹ At this point, the proper rule of the soul differs from the improper rule in two ways: The first one is a matter of *ends*, and the ways to achieve them, in other words only reason desires and cares for the goodness of the whole soul, that is to say, “it is wise, because it has within the knowledge of what is advantageous for each part and for the whole soul, which is the community of all three parts” (442 c). Ruling is the only function that the reasoning part can realize. The second difference is more a matter of *means* than of *ends*. This means that reason never forces the appetitive and spirited part into attaining its peculiar good, instead reason *persuades* them to consent to its rule through a process of training and education. This education begins in childhood and is designed by reason, and the Platonic emphasis upon it shows that in the ideal state there is no enlightened despot as a totalitarian, but “the rulers and ruled share a common belief that reason should rule” (442 c-d). This point must be understood as an antithesis to those who assert that the Platonic political philosophy is totalitarian.⁸⁰

The disharmony and the conflict of the parts of the soul with each other arise from the ruling of the untalented and ignorant part with its necessary or unnecessary desires in the soul. To Plato, if the desiring part is ruling, the result is the corrupt and unhappy, since “a bad soul rules and takes care of things badly and that a good soul does all these things well, [...], justice is a soul's virtue, and injustice its vice, [...], then it follows that a just soul live well, and an unjust one badly” (353 e-354 a).

The virtues of the soul can be examined from the viewpoint of the myth of the winged chariot. According to this, the virtue that is necessary for the charioteer who *knows how to rule the chariot and two horses* is the virtue of *wisdom* which belongs to the reasoning part. The question can

Plato's moral and political philosophy lies precisely in the fact that it is not merely a sterile and senseless enquiry into words, but rather it aims directly at the heart of man's moral acts and deeds, and depicts the best life that man can live in the correctly organized state.

79 Reeve, *ibid.*, p. 142.

80 See for the detailed information; Thorson, Thomas, *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?*, ed. Thomas London Thorson, New Jersey, 1963.

be asked as ‘what kind of knowledge that supplies us to call him or her the ruler of the chariot?’ Now, it can be said that wisdom is the knowledge of the justice, goodness, and propriety, but to Plato, the virtue of wisdom as a virtue of reason, as all the arguments indicate above, corresponds not only to the element of *learning* and *knowing*, but also to the element of *ruling* the whole soul. Therefore the point by which we call an individual wise is his or her knowledge and its application to the authority of ruling in the soul. In other words, wisdom includes not only the possession of knowledge, but also doing the right, good, and virtuous actions (*ergon*) in the light of this knowledge.

The virtue of courage is based on the right belief of what is to be feared, and what is not to be feared (*Laches*, 195 a). It involves judgment of good and evil, thus he says at 410d if the spirited part does not have the right sort of training, it can become rough and harsh, and near the reasoning part (440 b). The virtue of courage is again peculiar to the spirited part of the soul.

Moderation is the restraint of excessive desires and appetites (*Republic*, 430 e; *Gorgias*, 491 d). The right living of the soul, in Plato, is this restraint of the bad appetites, for, “the excessive increase of anything often cause a reaction in the opposite direction” (*Republic*, 563 e). Whereas wisdom is the virtue of reasoning and the courage is that of the spirited part, Plato states that moderation (self-control) is not a virtue peculiar to one part; however it is the agreement and harmony of all three parts as to who shall be in charge (It is likened to harmony and concord 430 e, 431 e- 432).⁸¹ It can be stated that moderation is the possession of a shared belief as to what is the appropriate function of both the ruler (reasoning part) and the ruled (spirited and appetitive part).⁸²

One problem with the account of moderation is the role played in it by “self-control” (430 e-431 a).⁸³ According to Plato, when the soul is concerned, moderation is “more like a kind of consonance and harmony” (430 e) than the other virtues, in this respect, it is “a kind of order, the mastery of certain kinds of pleasures and desires” (430 e). Plato also stresses

81 Annas, *ibid.*, p. 115.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

that “people indicate as much when they use the phrase ‘self-control’, and other similar phrases”, and we can interpret, then, this passage on the virtue of moderation, concerning the virtue of the soul, as meaning that in the souls of every person (431 a). There is a better part and a worse one, and whenever the better part is controlling/ruling the worse part, this soul is self-controlled, or master of himself or herself. However, when the evil part is controlling the good one, “because of bad upbringing or bad company” this soul is called, for Plato, self-defeated or licentious, and this one is reproached by Plato (431 a). That is to say, the virtue of moderation concerns for *all* souls so as to achieve internal justice through a rational and proper education and upbringing.⁸⁴

Finally, the individual is just and propriety when his or her soul does its own work. Whether it is ruling or being ruled, every part within the soul must do its own work, this very definition of Platonic justice (443 b-d). Thus, if reason is ruling, spirit is ensuring that reason commands, and desire is acquiescing in the control of the other two parts rather than pressing its own particular claims according to Platonic justice, a soul is just and virtuous.⁸⁵ After the examination of the soul, we need to see the parts and virtues of the state.

According to Plato, the first and the basic principle which constitutes society is the dependence of individuals on other people, and the individual cannot live in his or her own self-sufficiency (369 b). The more the requirements of the society increase, the more the nature of the state changes and the various kinds of characters needed. At this point, Plato states that there is a ‘noble lie’ which the state must impose on its citizens, this lie is a myth which emphasizes that there are different nature of individuals in such a way that they have different metals in them, “gold in those who are adequately equipped to rule, because they are most valuable, silver in those who are auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and other

84 We will discuss, in the third section, that whether the expression “model in heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen”, and this above passage (430e-431 a) exhibit an ideal democratic model in Plato’s thought.

85 Annas, *ibid.*, 132; Barker, *ibid.*, p. 177. Such a conception of justice is the final answer to the individualism in life. The conception shows a view of the individual not as an isolated self, but as part of an order. What is lacking in (corrupt) democracy is a unified, reasoned, and autonomous “goodness” as a final arbiter to adjudicate among competing individualistic views.

craftsmen” (415 a). This is striking point in the dialogue emphasizing that there are different classes and a hierarchical structure in society. According to myth, “the city will be ruined if it ever has an iron or a bronze guardian” (415 c). This is the structure of the *Republic* established upon the Platonic assumption that ruling is not the work of the multitude so as to prevent the producers from acting in any field of state activity, for “the majority cannot be philosophical” (494 a). Therefore, it can be said that, the excellence of the state, in Plato, depends on the basic principle which is doing its own work (*ergon*), and not meddling with others in both ruling and ruled groups.⁸⁶ As the myth indicates, there are three groups in the *Republic*, corresponding to the parts of the soul, as Rulers (true guardians), Guardians (auxiliaries), and producers.

Rulers are the *small* group who rules the city with reason and reasonable judgments; they correspond to the reasoning part and its virtue of wisdom in the soul. However, here, it is crucial that the city is not made wise by the mere presence of the wise souls, but in their active ruling.⁸⁷ If they did not rule, their presence in the state would not make the city wise. This assumption which depend on the fact that the government of the state, like the all kind of ruling, is the question of knowledge (*episteme*), and only a *few* possess it endowed with natural tendency and the arduous educational program. The rulers have not only the capacity of philosophically thinking, but also of seeing the whole and caring for the interests of the whole society. Moreover, the wisdom of the ideal state shows that only the rulers who *know how rule* can induce the people into moral actions with their ability to *learn* and *rule well*.⁸⁸ This point involves the Platonic assertion which shows that good government is nothing but a matter of knowledge, not contempt for the artisans and handicraft.⁸⁹

The emphasis of the art on ruling as an art which cares only for the goodness of its subject, as opposed to Thrasymachus (342 d-e), means that reason in the Platonic sense is the element which aims at the felicity and the unity of all groups of the society. Such a city is (“just city in speech”), in the

86 Before examination of justice as a virtue, Plato alludes to its consideration of justice as a principle of specialization (353 b, 370 b, 394 e, 395 b, 423 d).

87 Annas, *ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

88 Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 34.

89 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 54.

strict sense, the most excellent and the best, and deserves to be called a city. (422 e-423 a) Hence, the ultimate constitution of the state of the *Republic* is rational; the proper ruler is the *philosopher-king* who rules the state with his or her ability for philosophical knowledge.⁹⁰

This *mania*⁹¹ of reason for Plato, which represents here the political content, and the ideal state constituted in the light of philosophical reason in its highest form must be realized even if not *in deed*, but *in speech*.⁹² “There is a model of it in the heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and to make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees” (592 b).

The Guardians (Auxiliaries) do not directly participate in ruling, however, the philosopher-rulers come out of this group of guardians. This is only possible after the age of fifty which shows the endowment of a natural tendency, and an arduous educational and dialectical program. (540 a) “Philosophy, spirit, speed, and strength must all, then, be combined in the nature of anyone who is to be a fine and good guardian of our city” (376 c). The guardians correspond to the spirited part and its virtue of courage in the soul, and they possess the right belief about what is and is not to be feared. The most striking point about the guardians is that reason and the spirited parts are allies of each other, unless they grow up in a bad upbringing. (430 b, 441 a) Therefore Plato deliberates on the education of this group in detail.

The producers are the artisans producing the basic requirement of the society. This group does not have the right to join the political activity of the “just city in speech” because they lack knowledge of ruling, and from the viewpoint of the virtue of justice which indicates the importance of doing everyone’s own work without meddling with others. The work of the producers is not ruling, as the desiring part cannot rule in the soul. As was stated above, it must not be understood as contempt of the people, like despising the desiring part, but must be basically understood in the context

90 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 169.

91 According to Max Weber, science is such exalted and *maniac* activity, and no one sees it like Plato today. (See; “Science as a Vocation”, pp. 208-210)

92 At this point, some scholars state that Plato does not oppose democracy, but basically its corrupt application, and especially this and some other passages (which we will discuss in the third section) seem to exhibit an ideal democratic pattern as a model for *every soul* in the city.

of ruling which is nothing but a matter of knowledge in the advantage of the whole community.

The producers do not possess a particular virtue, as the appetitive part of the soul does not have it (432 a), this virtue is the common element of the society meaning restraint of the excessive and effusive desires and pleasures, and being harmonious and moderate. According to Plato, as a virtue of the ideal state (“just city in speech”) “the desires of the inferior many are controlled by the wisdom and desires of the superior few, [...], therefore if any is said to be in control of itself and of its pleasures and desires, it is this one” (431 c-d).

This point leads us to two elements of the virtue of moderation in the “just city in speech”.⁹³ One is that it is the *agreement* of all three groups in the “just city in speech” as to what should be in charge both in the ruling and ruled, since this virtue belongs to both the rulers and the ruled. It means that all groups, from whatever class, agree in their opinion that the right people are ruling. This involves the Platonic assumption that “*the naturally better must rule the naturally worse*”, and this can be formulated through the notions of ‘self-control’ and ‘self-knowledge’ as: (i) one thing cannot both control and be controlled, but what it must mean is that there are two aspects of what is self-controlled, and the better part (“the few people who are born with the best natures and receive the best education”, i.e., philosopher-kings) controls the worse, that is to say, when desires of the best group control those of the worse, the city will be just (“just city in speech”) and, (ii) the rulers know that they are the right people for the job, and the ruled know that they are not the right people for the job.⁹⁴ Secondly, there is the element of *deference*, which means that each desires different things which are appropriate to their nature; so moderation requires the rulers to impose their own desires, and the ruled to defer and acquiesce the desires and pleasures imposed on them. Plato states that the ruled characteristically exhibit a *chaos of strong desires* whereas the rulers impose desires that are rational and controlled by knowledge.⁹⁵

93 Annas, *ibid.*, p. 115.

94 *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.

95 Boudouris, *ibid.*, pp. 36-37; Pradeau, *ibid.*, p. 49; Annas, *ibid.*, p. 116.

To Plato, the multitude in the “just city in speech” of the *Republic* do not have ideal, unchangeable, and unified principles in themselves, they rather attempt to create their own various and different truths, contrary to pursuing the common good for the whole society. Therefore “the majority cannot be philosophical” (494 a). This is the very strict point which Plato insistently opposes to the corrupt regimes, including democracy, from the viewpoint of morality and politics, in other words, when the various principles of the multitude are dominant in the society, there won't be a moral and political harmony and unity of the state.

Finally, the Platonic political justice must be mentioned as a principle of expertise or specialization in the state. This virtue is again the virtue of the state which supplies the unity and the harmony in it. The city is just, in the Platonic sense, when the ruler is philosopher and shows his or her wisdom at work in the city, and the other two groups do their own work by deferring to his or her orders (434 c-d).⁹⁶ In this sense, justice is the condition of every other virtue of the state, since justice is the fulfilling of one's own duties, and not to meddle with the duties of another's work.⁹⁷ For Plato, meddling and exchange between these three classes, then, is the greatest harm that can happen to the city. In the “just city in speech”, then, he allows the producers no capacity for public service except their trades, thus there is no place in his ideal state for the “happy versatility” of Pericles which the Athenian democracy valued above everything; so far as the higher activities of life are concerned, they must live adhering to the education and the knowledge of the wiser men.⁹⁸

The identification of knowledge and virtue (still problematic in the epistemological sense), which emphasizes the reasonable knowledge illuminated by a principle that will master every demand of life, reflects also the importance of political competence, and such knowledge is a subject of proper instruction.⁹⁹ According to Plato, that political art in identifying

96 See also *Apology* (24e-25c), *Crito* (47a-48c), *Laches* (184c-e) in the context of the importance of the competence.

97 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 176; Sabine, *ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

98 Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 54. (See also; Monoson, S. Sara “Remembering Pericles: The Political and Theoretical Import of Plato's Menexenus”, *Political Theory*, vol. 26, no.4, 1998, pp. 489-513.)

99 This is the ultimate remedy to the corrupt and disorder characteristics of the states,

with virtue and in holding that virtue can be taught is a more arduous thing, and needs a more serious teaching.¹⁰⁰ The perfect virtue of the “just city in speech” is not an aggregate of the characteristics in which *all people* can participate (*Protagoras*, 319 a-e), but only the few (philosopher-kings) must rule the city; therefore ruling is a matter of knowledge.

The structure of the “just city in speech” includes the political content of knowledge, which implies that only in the ruling of either the philosopher-king or the king educated philosophically, and where political power and philosophy entirely coincide, the city is excellent and wise (473 d). The emphasis upon the authority of philosophical reason is properly the main theme of the dialogue, and also provides it with its overall plan.¹⁰¹ From this viewpoint, Plato’s *Republic* provides the psychological and cognitive definition of political competence through the soul-state analogy¹⁰², for the dialogue produces analogically the structure of both the soul and the city, and insists that the knowledge and virtue take both of them as its objects. The excellence of the just city cannot be distinguished from that of the soul only from the viewpoint of the authority of knowledge and perfection. However, we know that while only a few can rule in the “just city in speech”, there is not any view raised by Plato that only a few can attain virtue. Therefore, we will discuss this question in the third section that whether the principal disagreement of democracy is *operative* in the “just soul” or not.

The governing principle of the ideal state in the *Republic* is the conjunction of philosophy and political power in one person who must rule the city according to his or her knowledge. At this point, the arguments raised in opposition to democracy by Plato can be formulated as: The first one is that the government is a matter of knowledge which only the few philosophers possess with their natural tendency and their dialectical education. Democracy is the ruling (*kratos*) of the people (*demos*) who shape their lives with multiple desires and pleasures (561 c-d), and cannot have the capacity and knowledge to rule. Since “the majority cannot be

namely ‘bad upbringing.’ Plato mainly discusses the negative and critical side of the actual practice in the actual states in three dialogues, the *Meno*, *Protagoras*, and *Gorgias*. (See for the details; Barker, *ibid.*, pp. 127-144.)

100 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 132.

101 Pradeau, *ibid.*, 45 ; Barker, *ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

102 Pradeau, *ibid.*, p. 43.

philosophic" (494 a). Therefore, the "just city in speech" of the *Republic* opposes democracy through the authority and excellence of knowledge and political excellence. This opposition is not only political, but also psychological, since the corrupt rules in both the individual and state include psychological and political disharmony and the pathological expansion of the injustice in them. In other words, there is no one competent rule (*arkhe*) in a democratic soul, but various and changeable incompetent desires and pleasures are dominant in it (*Republic*, VII). The government of the ideal state cannot be based on the various kinds of the people; however it must be based on the unchangeable principles of the scientific knowledge. The happy versatility of Pericles which represents the developments of the trade by filling the city with harbors, dockyards, and walls without concern for about the soul of the state meant education of the citizens is precisely opposite to the ideal character of the state of the *Republic* (*Gorgias*, 503 a, 515 b-e, 518 d-e).¹⁰³

Therefore, in this analogy, we can see that the "just city in speech" is against the corrupt democracy in that ruling is a matter of knowledge (the function of philosopher-king), and that democracy is not based on this principle of *episteme*. Ignorance is the main curse of democracy, since multitude determines their rulers without regard to the principle of knowledge and excellence. In this respect, Plato treats democracy as a corrupted regime, and criticizes the wrong methods of the *Sophists* who pander to the ignorant people only with their beliefs (*Gorgias*, 471 e- 472d). Secondly, democracy is not a just and perfect regime according to the Platonic justice which represents the principle of specialization and expertise formulated simply as 'one person one job'. The whole state is just and perfect when each individual part of it operates as it should, consequently democracy is not a just and a perfect regime because the ignorant and inefficient elements rule in it, not the wise and competent. For Plato, "meddling and exchange between these three classes, then, is the greatest harm that can happen to the city" (434 b). This also leads us to conclude that Plato's ideal state opposes democracy. When the democratic individual is taken into account, it is also essentially opposite to the perfect soul in which reason rules, and the other parts are obedient to its orders; for, the democratic soul is not just in his or her life according to the virtue of justice. In other words, when the

103 Boudouris, *ibid.*, p. 44; Monoson, *ibid.* p. 491.

logistikon is not recognized as the proper and supreme guiding principle of the soul, the outcome is both an unjust city and an unjust soul like democracy and the democratical individual (Gorgias, 527 e). Thirdly, as indicated before, justice is the virtue that makes the other virtues possible, if the virtue of justice does not occur in the city or the soul, other virtues cannot be realized in both, thus both democracy and democratical individual are not virtuous. For, the highest form of the soul is the individual in whom appetite and spirit are dominated by reason, and the highest form of the state is one in which those who know rule.¹⁰⁴ Due to its lack of the virtues, democracy is not a harmonious and united regime, but it is rather an anarchy or polyarchy for Plato, therefore “it contains all kinds of constitutions, [...], as a supermarket of constitutions.” Finally, the democratic soul concerns both in the soul and the state do not arise from its autonomous functioning, but from a process of non-rational appetitive and belief formation. Thus, the transformation from him or her into tyrant is not rational, but appetitive. The result of this process is an entirely degenerative moral character (560 d-561 a). We can also see his account of the individual’s transformation in the background of the political revolution. By stressing this transformation of the democratic soul as non-rational, he tries to describe the unnecessary appetites which pave way for expelling the old rulers, i.e., oligarchs. Through the soul-city analogy, it can be said that it is not possible to see the supremacy and authority of the rational part in the democratic character. Thus, the democratic soul is not a just, perfect, and virtuous soul.

In conclusion, the principle of rule is not *logos*, but *demos* in democracy, Plato insistently opposes its principles, and criticizes it as an unjust and corrupt regime, additionally the democratic individual as an unjust and corrupt soul. Thus, democracy cannot be principally a perfect, excellent, and just regime in that respect as opposed to the principles of the “just city in speech”.

2. The Metaphysical-Epistemological Background of the Critique

We have examined above that how the *Republic* opposes democracy on the explicit level of argument rests on the threefold division of the population of the just city in speech into rulers, guardians, and producers. This

¹⁰⁴ Pradeau, *ibid.*, p. 52.

argument involves the psychological analysis which emphasizes the authoritative function of reason upon the other parts of the soul. In this respect, the rule of reason over spirit and appetite is the essence of order in the cosmos, the city, and the individual, in other words, when the *logistikon* is not recognized as the proper and supreme guiding principle of life both in the city and the individual, the outcome is both an unjust city and an unjust citizen. Thus, the inner harmony of soul's power constitutes the first and prime factor for man to be able to lead a life that will give him happiness, and the good of each individual human soul can be achieved only in so far as the power of reason rules within his or her soul. But it is not possible to reach this condition in isolation. Only when society as a whole is ruled by reason can human beings achieve the rational order that is virtue. Therefore, the aim of the statesman must be to bring about rational government within the state and the soul.¹⁰⁵

Yet, this psychological method is not satisfactory; we still need to form a clearer view about the subject in question. In other words, "we will never get a precise answer using our present methods of argument, although there is another longer and fuller road that does lead to such an answer" (*Republic*, 435 b). It seems that this method is suspended until book VIII where both the corrupt souls and states will be given their place. Over the three books (V, VI, VII), Plato makes Socrates use metaphysics to give a more definite and complete argument about the discussion. According to some interpretations, had *the Republic* ended here (book IV) it would have failed to eliminate the 'immoralist' ideal of Thrasymachus and his like.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, we need to explain every Platonic approach in *the Republic*, including the critique of democracy within his metaphysical-epistemological perspective.

It can be stated, from the critical viewpoint of democracy, that the reason why Plato indicates there can be no art or science in giving people whatever they want is not only that people's beliefs about what they want are complex and fluctuating but also the fact that they do not relate to *objective reality*.¹⁰⁷ While the former emphasizes the explicit level which opposes democracy within the framework of the account of tripartite psyche

105 Stalley, "Plato, Reason, and Democracy", p. 204.

106 Scott, "Metaphysics and The Defense of Justice in the Republic", p. 5.

107 Sharpes, R.W., "Plato on Democracy and Expertise", p. 50.

(psychological emphasis), the latter point which is even more fundamental and implicit represents the view that Truth is something eternal, unchanging and unchangeable, and the highest object of knowledge which is the Good itself can only be achieved through an arduous training reserved for the true select rulers (metaphysical emphasis). Therefore, the method employed in studying the virtues in Book IV is a psychological method (or it might be better to say that Plato is concerned with what we might call *moral psychology*), and that he seeks to exhibit the virtues in terms of the three aspects of the souls. While he moves, in book VI and VII, from the plane of *moral psychology* to *philosophy*, and asserts that if the virtues are to be fully understood, this can only be achieved by a rigorous training which the rulers of the ideal state must undergo.¹⁰⁸ From this viewpoint, it can be said that, the democratic crowd for Plato does not relate to objective reality and has no high principles, and does not look for these principles in its leaders.¹⁰⁹

In this section, it will be seen that how Plato opposes democracy on the metaphysical-epistemological level, and we will discuss the validity of these arguments. We will see first whether the theory of ideas opposes democracy or not, and this will, secondly, lead us to distinguish the philosopher (*philosophos*) from the non-philosopher (*philodoxos*) in the context of the different concepts: knowledge (*episteme*) and belief (*doxa*) and finally, these arguments will be supported with the figures of the Sun, the Line, and especially the Cave in their political and social aspects.

Although the theory of forms is difficult, and much of the difficulties arises from the fact that Plato's own thoughts do not form a single coherent doctrine (for instance in the *Parmenides*, the *Sophist*, and the *Philebus* he criticized the arguments and doctrines he had advanced in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*) it is not impossible to take some political and moral arguments from that theory.

In the *Republic*, forms are introduced to justify the claim that *the philosophos* should *rule* on the ground that the serious minded-intellectual differs from now-intellectual one in this way, because he *knows*.¹¹⁰ Forms

108 Cross, R.C. and Woozley, A.D., *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary*, p. 200-201.

109 McClelland, J.S., *The Crowd and The Mob: The Crowd in the Ancient World*, p. 40.

110 Mitchell, Basil and Lucas, J.R., *An Engagement with Plato's Republic*, p. 58.

are, as the objects of knowledge, essential to the argument of the *Republic*, especially after the important section 474b-480. Firstly, Socrates recognizes that on the popularly accepted view of the people of what is meant by a philosopher, the idea that philosophers must be kings can only incur ridicule.¹¹¹ Then, he makes clear what he himself understands by a philosopher, "the true philosophers are those who love the sight of truth" (475 e). The rest of the Book V is occupied with the distinction between those whose passion is to see the *truth*, and those who are lovers of *beliefs* (*doxa*). The outcome of the whole discussion is that the latter does not possess knowledge, and does not really know anything, but has only belief as a *philodoxos*, whereas the genuine philosopher possesses knowledge, is able to apprehend the truth, and only he deserves to be named as philosopher.

At this very point, forms as the objects of knowledge, are at work to state the distinction between the philosopher and non-philosopher in two points: (a) a distinction between the different sorts of objects with which the philosopher and the non-philosopher are concerned, and (b) a distinction between their different states of mind.¹¹² The objects of the philosopher are *reality*, of the non-philosopher *appearances*; and these two different classes correspond to the two different states of mind *knowledge* and *belief*.

The Form is the single unitary entity, the reality, the many instances of which would be appearances; for instance, the Form of Beauty would be the single reality of which the many beautiful things would be appearances (494 a). In the same passage, Plato also emphasizes that "it is impossible for the multitude to be philosophic" (494 a). In this respect, it can be said that the capacity and the faculty to reach the high intellectual apprehension is, metaphysically, essential to the few philosophers, not counterfeit philosophers and the multitude who are content with the *many* particular things without engaging in *one* single Form.

The access of the counterfeit philosophers (*Sophists*) and the multitude to the ideas or to the idea of the Good is, metaphysically, impossible, since they step their feet on slippery land of *doxa*, not on the stable ground of *episteme*. On this ground, it can firstly be argued that, "the theory of

111 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 138.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

ideas is not a democratic philosophy". Since for Plato,

"Not one of those paid private teachers, whom the people call sophists and consider to be their rivals in craft, teaches anything other than the convictions that the majority express when they are gathered together. Indeed, these are precisely what the Sophists can wisdom. It is as if someone were learning the moods and appetites of a huge, strong beast that he is rearing, how to approach and handle it, when it is most difficult to deal with or most gentle and what makes it so, what sounds it utters in either condition, and what sounds soothe or anger it. Having learned all this through tending the beast over a period of time, he calls this knack wisdom, gathers his information together as if it was a craft, and starts to teach it. In truth, he knows nothing about which of these convictions is fine or shameful, good or bad, just or unjust, but he applies all these names in accordance with how the beast reacts, calling what it enjoys good and what angers it bad" (493 a-c).

The huge and strong beast is, for Plato, the ignorant *people* of the Athenian democracy, and the *Sophists* are the counterfeit philosophers who have the wrong methods in the political realm. They do not possess the knowledge of how to rule the state; they have the unsound judgments which come from *doxa* in accordance with what the people say whether it is true or false, good or bad, just or unjust. In this respect, for Plato, what the mass of people determine as true, just, or beautiful cannot depend on the objective reality of Truth, since they have a multiplicity of such things or acts without seeing the Form of them as the object of knowledge. They may believe in (*dokein* or *doxazein*) their existence, but have no knowledge (*episteme*) of the objects of their belief. In contrast, those who can see the Forms themselves in their unchanging reality have knowledge, not belief, "the city will never find happiness until its outline is sketched by painters who use the divine model" (500 e).¹¹³

113 In this respect, Plato's *State* must be understood as a "state as such", a type or model of all states. The general nature of the state as a model is the subject of the *Republic*, and it is a secondary question whether actual states correspond to the model or not. Therefore, he tries to indicate that "what in principle a state must be"; if the facts are not like the principle, so much the worse for the facts. In other words, he assumes that the *good* itself is what it *objectively* is; whether men like it or can be persuaded to want it is another matter. (See; Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 46-47.)

The divine model is, then, the Forms of the many particular things in which only the genuine philosophers who must rule in the city engage in intellectual endeavor. Thus, Plato criticizes the wrong methods of the democratic spokesmen who consider the unsound judgments of the people which depend on the variable and changeable desires, not the unchangeable and wise judgment. There is, then, a good both for man and for state, and to grasp this good, to see what it is and by what means it is provided, is a matter of *episteme*.¹¹⁴ Some have all kinds of *doxa* about it, and kinds of convictions about how to achieve it, but there is no rational clarity in beliefs. Knowledge about the *good*, if it could be attained, would give some rational guarantee both for men and for states. The scientific ground which provided the rationale of the *State* is, metaphysically, to see the Forms which are the objects of knowledge.

As we stated, there are two different kinds of objects with which the philosopher and the non-philosopher are concerned; *reality* and *appearances* (*Republic*, 490 a-b; *Phaedo*, 79 a, 99 e-100 e). In the *Gorgias*, we can also see two kinds of methods in which these objects are used, the first one is flattery which the *Sophists* use without considering unchanging and unchangeable reality, the Forms; whereas the other which is admirable, that of getting the souls of the citizens to be as good as possible and of striving to succeed at what is best, whether the audience will find it more pleasant or more unpleasant (*Gorgias*, 503 a). According to Plato, truth (*aletheia*) has irrefutable nature in itself, and the function of the Forms is, as the objects of knowledge, revealing this truth and reality, since “what is true is never refuted” (*Gorgias*, 473 b). From these viewpoints of theory of forms, the capacity of the multitude for the ideas and the idea of the good is, metaphysically, not possible, hence, he states that “it is not possible for the multitude to be philosophic”.¹¹⁵

That is why we have stated that, “the theory of ideas is not a democratic philosophy”. For this argument, it must be suggested a hierarchy of intellectual skills justifies a hierarchy of political rule (the togetherness of intellectual and political power “until philosophers rule as kings or those

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹¹⁵ However, the metaphysical critique of democracy in Plato must be understood in the axis of the progress in the *rational understanding of the good life*, but not as despising and contempt of the people (Sabine, *ibid.*, p. 47).

who are now called kings and leading men are genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, [...] cities will have no rest from evils” (473 d). The highest level of intellectual skill is required for an apprehension of the forms, and democracy that distributes power *equally* to those who ascend to this intellectual endeavor and those who cannot must, metaphysically, fail.¹¹⁶ That the judgments and principles must be rational and the rationality which comes from the apprehension of the Forms and the Form of the Good explains that theory is, principally, opposed to democracy. In other words, the democratic principles which were determined by the variable criteria of changeable desires is also principally opposed to a theory which indicates the scientific necessity to relate to the unchanging and unchangeable reality and truth.

Furthermore, according to Plato, all men desire the good, which every soul yearns for and tirelessly pursues, though he or she may not grasp what it is (505 e- 506 a). For Plato, man, also, must organize in unity and harmony, and apply the powers and inclinations of his or her soul, and the ruler must know what it is for the sake of the whole (506 a). It follows that the desires that men have and seek to satisfy in his or her life, should be judged on the criterion of objective and strict morality, the criterion of the good which is the Idea of the Good.¹¹⁷ Plato believes that it is necessary to judge and evaluate desires on the objective criterion and the standard of the Good, and that, if this does not happen, we cannot live in a harmonious and organized political society that serves the *common good*.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it can be stressed that the common good of the state is not whatever is preferred and desired by the majority of the citizens, but what is judged on the objective criterion of the idea of the Good which is dictated by reason. Democracy, in this respect, does not seek to establish a common good or to impose something objectively on someone a good.¹¹⁹ If there is disagreement between the citizens as to the common and objective good, then the principle of the majority prevails in democracy, because “the majority believe that pleasure is the good, while the more sophisticated believe that it knowledge” (505 b). What is lacking in democracy is a unified, reasoned,

116 Saxonhouse, Arlene, W., “Democracy, Equality, and Eide”, p. 273.

117 Boudoris, *ibid.*, p. 40.

118 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

universal, and objective “good”, as final arbiter to adjudicate among various and competing viewpoints of life.¹²⁰

We must say that the state comes into being in order to promote the virtues of the citizens, therefore, there is a common good which is something more than the sum of the interests of the individuals, and the common good is harmonious relationship among all those parts of which society is composed. It must also be considered that it is not, however, the good of some *super-entity* [transcendent: my emphasis]¹²¹, since for Plato, “the good is not being, but superior to it in rank and power” (509 b). It is a kind of moral unity which supplies the harmony of the various desires of the individuals, and can be perpetuated by education.

He recognizes, critically, the importance of the unity of moral purpose where he is discussing the various corrupt forms of society, and the ways in which they come into being. (Republic, VIII) Although this part of the book includes psychological not metaphysical arguments¹²², the deprivation of the common good and moral unity leads him to the conviction that the right kind of politics can flourish only within a good moral climate.¹²³ Therefore, he opposes the conventional view of his time that politics is directed towards the acquisition of power by *giving the masses what they want* and find most pleasant. We can conclude that, from all these aspects, the forms and the form of the good are, metaphysically, opposed to (corrupt and ignorant) democracy and democratic institutions. The inferior capacity of the multitude and its corrupt democratic spokesmen, i.e. *Sophists*, cannot ascend to apprehend the forms, and objective common good; thus, it is, principally, opposed to democracy.

As we have seen above, there are two distinct objects with which the philosopher (*philosophos*) and the non-philosopher (*philodoxos*) are concerned, that is, the objects of the non-philosopher are appearances, while that of the philosopher is reality. These two different objects correspond to the two different states of mind, in the case of the non-philosopher; belief (*doxa*), and in the case of the philosopher; knowledge (*episteme*).

120 Westra, Laura, “Plato, the Good and Modern Democracy”, p. 235.

121 Hallowell, John, H, *Plato and his Critics*, p. 279.

122 Scott, Dominic, “Metaphysics and the Defense of Justice”, pp. 18-19.

123 Hallowell, *ibid.*, p. 280.

While the non-philosopher who is engaged in the many particular things, namely appearances, and mistakes them for the reality lives in a dream (476 c), the genuine philosopher who distinguishes between reality and appearances lead a waking life (476 d). Only the latter has knowledge, since he knows the reality (the Forms) of which the many particulars are appearances. The non-philosopher, on the other hand, who is engaged in the many particular things does not have knowledge, his state of mind is belief.

Here, we need to examine the Greek noun *doxa* to have the opportunity for a political understanding and interpretation of it. *Doxa* which Plato uses to describe the state of mind of the non-philosopher is a difficult word to translate. It is connected with the Greek verb *dokein* ‘to appear’ or ‘to seem’, which are used to express something in constructions such as ‘it appears or seems to me’, or ‘it’s my belief or opinion that’ which in 476 d Plato directly associates with his use of the noun *doxa*¹²⁴: “So then would we not be right in saying that the state of mind of the philosopher is knowledge because he knows, while the state of mind of the other is belief because he believes.” This is the explicit meaning of *doxa*.

On the other hand, it has the implicit meaning which includes the political and social aspects of the state of mind. For Murphy, in some certain parts of the *Republic*, Plato uses *doxa* in a specialized sense, and translates it as ‘*unreflective acquiescence*’; and at the same time, he suggests that it is associated by Plato with an “*unreflective and uncritical condition of the state of mind*”.¹²⁵ That is to say, there is one thing which occurred in both the explicit and implicit meaning of *doxa*, which is clear when Plato uses it in contrast with *episteme*: it is always in some sense or other, an inferior state of mind.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, belief is an intermediate state of mind between knowledge and ignorance, obscurer than knowledge but brighter than ignorance (477 b). What are, then, the intermediate state of mind, and its objects? Plato now proceeds to discover such objects after 479 a: the non-philosopher

124 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 143.

125 Murphy, N.R., *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic*, p. 103; Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 144.

126 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

denies the existence of Forms, for instance, the Form of Beauty or the Form of Justice, which remain always same and do not change, and instead believes in a multiplicity of particular things (479 e- 480 a).

Plato likens its ambiguity to one of the riddles of children about the eunuch “who threw something at a bat, the one about what he threw at it and what it is was in, for they are ambiguous, and one cannot understand them as fixedly man or not man or as both, or neither” (479 c). Therefore, according to Plato, if they (beliefs) cannot be fixedly conceived as either being or not being, then, they should be assigned to an intermediate state of mind between being and non-being. Hence, we can infer that the many conventional unreflective and uncritical beliefs of the mass of people about Forms are, metaphysically and epistemologically, inferior to the philosophical knowledge which depends on the unchangeable and eternal one. In this respect, those who engage in the multiplicity of particular things or acts but cannot apprehend the Form of them may be said to believe, but they have no knowledge of the objects of their belief.¹²⁷

We must also mention that the theory of Forms figures in Plato's ethical views, in that they have special relevance as *ideal standards*.¹²⁸ In this respect, the theory of Forms is an attempt to account for absolute moral standards. Plato was, in this sense, strongly opposed to relative understanding of morality, which has no absolute right or wrong, and no unchangeable currency in life. The theory of Forms in its ethical aspect is an attempt to account for absolute moral standards, and it holds that there are Forms of moral characteristics (e.g. of Justice, Goodness, etc.).¹²⁹ It must be seen that Plato's ethical theory is tied to his metaphysics and epistemology, and that his political theory in the *Republic* cannot be isolated from these. Therefore, absolute certain knowledge is possible, in morals, as well as in politics and elsewhere. However, it requires an arduous and long training to achieve it, and those who are

127 At this point, we must distinguish between *the political wisdom* and *technical knowledge* which also correspond to the distinction between the philosopher-ruler and the producers (the people). Only the philosophers have knowledge to rule and in human problems qua beings. The craftsman, on the other hand, has no all-comprehensive understanding of the society of which he is a part, but only limited knowledge of a technical usage. (See; Ebenstein, William, *Great Political Thinkers*, p. 24.)

128 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 185.

129 *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

trained with *philosophical knowledge* know wherein and how the good life can be attained in the moral-political realm.¹³⁰

According to Plato, “knowledge is the most powerful of all the faculties” (477 d), and he also argues in the *Timaeus* that rational understanding or knowledge and belief differ in that the former is produced by instruction, the latter by persuasion, and, moreover, knowledge cannot be shaken by persuasion whereas belief can be. What is more, knowledge always gives a true account of itself, belief give none (*Timaeus*, 51 c-52 a). Plato, then, claims that, knowledge can be distinguished from belief as states of mind in that (i) belief is liable to error, knowledge not, (ii) belief can be produced and changed by persuasion, knowledge not, (iii) in the case of belief we do not understand and comprehend why a proposition is true, but we do in knowledge.¹³¹

Similarly, these two cognitive powers produce a different sort of work: knowledge always produces the true judgments, while belief produces sometimes true judgments and sometimes false. Therefore, epistemologically, when non-philosophers (including both sight-lovers; *Sophists* and producers; folk) judge that a proposition is F, they merely believe that it is F, while the philosopher, on the other hand, judge that a proposition is F *if and only* it is F itself. For, when the latter judge that a proposition is F, they know that it is.¹³² Thus, knowledge includes the reflective and critical cognitive status, while belief not.

There is a political and social analogy in the beginning of the Book VI which reflects these cognitive statuses, that is the parable of the ship (488 a- 489 a):

“Imagine then a ship in which there is a captain, who is taller and stronger than any of the crew, but he is hard of hearing, a bit short-sighted, and his knowledge of navigation is not much better. The sailors are quarrelling with one another about steering the ship, each one has belief that he has a right to steer, though he has never learned the art of navigation and cannot tell who taught him or when he learned, and will further assert that it cannot be taught, and ready to cut to pieces anyone

130 Boudouris, *ibid.*, p. 40.

131 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

132 Reeve, *ibid.*, p. 63.

who says the contrary. They are always crowding about the ship-owner, begging him and doing everything possible to get him to turn the rudder over to them. And sometimes, if they do not succeed in persuading him, they execute the ones who do succeed or throw them overboard, and then, having stupefied their noble ship-owners with drugs, wine, or in some other way, [...], the true captain must know the seasons of the year, the sky, the stars, the winds, and all that pertains to his craft, if he is really to be the ruler of a ship.”

In this simile, at first, there is the ship-owner (the people) who surpasses all others in strength but is slightly deaf and blind, with an inadequate knowledge of navigation, and second, there are sailors who are fighting for control of the ship, though none of them knows the art of navigation nor do they have any desire to learn it. This simile is, then, showing his attitude to Athenian democracy, the democratic politicians (sailors-demagogues), and the master which is the mass of the people. The main aim of the democratic politicians is, as indicated in the simile, to control the state and the people without *knowing* what is right and wrong, just and unjust, etc. Therefore, for Plato, the art of ruling is something only to be acquired by instruction that the philosopher takes, and his main anti-democratic approach is, particularly, that they have fail to recognize this.¹³³

They are, as stated in 484 c and 492 a, only using appearances, like “*blind men cut off from the knowledge of reality*”, and have no real and scientific pattern to rule the state and guide the people, since the *Sophists* depend only on the floating and baseless desires and moods of the “beast animal” (the Athenian people) without *knowing* which of these is good or bad, just and unjust, but only use these concepts in accordance with the *beliefs* of the people. Plato is concerned to remove any elements that might corrupt the city and the unity in it.¹³⁴ Therefore, the city and the masses of people, for their own advantage, must be guided by philosophical knowledge (*episteme*), and it can only be achieved by the few philosophers who turn their sights toward the Forms which are not changeable.

We must state that, the objects that we think and the objects that we believe are different from each other. The necessary statements must

133 Cross, R.C. and Woozley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 198.

134 Scott, *ibid.*, p. 7.

be, then, different from the contingent statements of the sensible world. The states of mind or faculties which correspond to their objects, namely knowledge (*episteme*) and belief (*doxa*) differ from each other in this respect, and the former is always A (permanent) and not to subject to change, while the latter is sometimes is A, and sometimes non-A. From these viewpoints, according to Plato, where the high values of life are concerned, they cannot be established upon changeable, unreliable, and different *doxas*, but must be based on scientific, unchangeable, and stable grounds. Therefore, his anti-democratic bias must be understood on this *philosophical* ground which cannot be destroyed in any way, since “what is true cannot be refuted” (Gorgias, 473 b).

After the examination of the distinction between the philosopher and the non-philosopher, their cognitive objects and states of mind; he explains the “highest kind of knowledge” (504 a), in three connected similes, the simile of the Sun (505 a-509 c), the simile of the Divided Line (509 c- 511 e), and the simile of the Cave (514 a- 521 b). Here, we will be concerned with the cave allegory which we think is the most important one in our present inquiry. Before the cave allegory, we must shortly see the Sun and Line figures.

At 505 a, Plato explains what he means by the highest kind of knowledge which the rulers must have, the knowledge of the Form of the Good. We have stated that it can be interpreted as a moral unity of the society above, and in this sense, it is something from which all right and just acts derive. Plato repeats the very distinction between the many particular things and the single Form, and while the latter are objects of world of thought, the former are objects of world of sensible. Therefore, the Sun simile is an analogy stressing the importance of the intelligible world in contrast to the visible one. “What the good itself is in the intelligible realm, in relation to understanding, and intelligible things, the sun is in visible realm, in relation to sight and visible things” (508 c). Here we must emphasize that, it is not *being* for Plato but superior to it in rank and power. (509 b) At 509 d, Plato begins by recalling the distinction in the Sun simile between the visible world, and the intelligible world, takes a line and divides it into unequal parts (509 d), the one part representing the visible world and the other the intelligible. Plato divided each of these two parts in the same proportion, and at 511 d, states that the four sections of the

Line corresponds to states of mind as intelligence (*noesis*), understanding (*dianoia*), belief (*pistis*), and illusion (*eikasia*).¹³⁵

Before we discuss the cave allegory in context of our present subject, for the sake of our argument, we must imagine those people who live in an underground cave, with an entrance to a long way. Those who are strange prisoners like us, as Plato says, have been there since childhood, chained in the same place with their necks and legs, their chains and bonds prevent them from turning their heads around, and can see only the shadows that the fire cast on the wall in front of them. Then, the prisoners would in every way believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts, they would recognize as reality nothing but the shadows. Plato also says that when the person who was released from his or her chains, and cured of his ignorance tries to free the others in the cave and lead them upward would kill him. Nevertheless, this person (philosopher) must return to the cave to free the other people in it to turn the stage of darkness to enlightenment.

The Cave allegory is concerned, as Plato tells us at 514, with the *enlightenment* and *lack of enlightenment* of our human condition.¹³⁶ We can say that here the Cave is Plato's most prominent picture of the power of philosophy for freedom and enlightenment.¹³⁷ From this viewpoint, the person (philosopher) who starts to think is shown who breaks the bonds of conformity to ordinary experience and received opinion, thus the progress of this kind of enlightenment is pictured as a journey from darkness to light.¹³⁸ On the other hand, it can be seen in the cave allegory, as we stressed in context of the distinction between *episteme* and *doxa*, that his antipathy is to the passive and unreflective-uncritical acquiescent state of the majority in which the unenlightened state is presented as being rationally baseless and substandard.¹³⁹ Thus, the enlightened and unenlightened states of mind do not inhabit the same cognitive world, being in the case of appearances and reality, knowledge and belief.¹⁴⁰

135 Cross, R.C. and Woozley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 202.

136 Cross, R.C. and Woozley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 206; Annas, *ibid.*, p. 252.

137 Annas, *ibid.*, p. 253.

138 *Ibid.*, p. 253.

139 *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

140 *Ibid.*, 254.

Yet, though this distinct state of mind in Plato's emphasis in the cave, the philosopher is compelled¹⁴¹ to descend to the cave, and cannot be allowed to stay in the upper world of contemplation.¹⁴² As soon as he has ascended to the realm of contemplation, he is bound to return to the affairs of human beings, namely to his or her society in order to realize the rational organization of politics which means combining the work of philosophy and ruling that must belong to the rational or ruling class, the philosopher-king.

It follows from all these aspects of the cave allegory, then, that we can easily state that it is *apolitical allegory* whose purpose is to compare two ways of life; which is the life of politics on the one hand, and outside the cave, i.e., the life of philosophy.¹⁴³ In this respect, the prisoners in the cave represent men engaged in the activities of democracy of Plato's own time, and he regards it as perverted and corrupt, and its end as wrong, since political power was divorced from *genuine philosophy*.¹⁴⁴ Only if the philosophers rule in the state, would it be good, but wherever the states are controlled by men who despised philosophy and who had no knowledge of the real end of human life, they will have no rest from evils (473 d). This corrupt state of affairs is what the cave allegory is intended to represent.

The state of mind of the prisoners in the cave is not, then, even one of belief, but one of perverted belief.¹⁴⁵ The cave as perverted and unenlightened state of mind which depends on corrupted and false belief, and on the other hand its outside as real and enlightened are compared and contrasted with each other in a political and social sense by Plato. Plato seems to prove what he said about the necessity of philosopher's ruling at 473 d in the just city in speech by applying this allegory to it as a whole. Hence, in this allegory, philosophy and political power must be united in the leadership and authority of philosophical reason, and this process which is itself rational

141 See for the detailed inquiry of compulsion of the philosopher due to returning to the cave; Brown, Eric, "Justice and Compulsion for Plato's Philosopher's Rulers", *Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2000), pp. 1-17.

142 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 203.

143 Ferguson, A.S., "Plato's Simile of Light. Part II. The Allegory of the Cave", p. 15; Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 211.

144 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, p. 211; Barker, *ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

145 Cross, R.C. and Woosley, A.D., *ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

is nothing but what Plato has regarded “*dialectic journey*” (532 b) which is also nothing but the activity of “turning the whole soul to the one we call the Good” (518 d). Therefore, the fact that the necessity of orienting the unenlightened human beings to justice, propriety, and goodness, and that of the establishing the political organization in accordance with this understanding of philosophical education culminates in this marvelous allegory. The rational capacity to rule is, then, not something ‘given,’ but received by the right kind of upbringing and education, and the true freedom is not dependent on the variable favor of the multitude, but is, indeed, the breaking the chains of reason to ensure that the political choices can purely be derived from the “Good”, instead of attempting to make this or that group happy, at the expense of another.

The cave simile introduces a new point, the contrast between the de-based world of politics with its corrupted *doxas* inside the cave (darkness), and the sunlit world of the philosopher who ascends to the intelligible outside the cave (enlightenment). Hence, Plato emphasizes the excellence and authority of philosophical reason against the inferior state of mind which is used by non-philosophers in the political realm. For, *ruling is nothing but a matter of knowledge*. It cannot be based on *corrupted beliefs*, and unreflective-uncritical state of mind of the majority and its spokesmen (sophists), but must depend on the objective criteria of *episteme* which is acquired only with reason.

Consequently, Plato's antipathy to democracy must be understood on the basis of the fact that the ability to rule depends upon knowledge of principles which must be apprehended by intelligent men through a rational educational process. This man can no more gain such knowledge through religious intuition, such as divine revelation in Plato, but through philosophical endeavor which cannot be united with any divine beings.¹⁴⁶ It follows that Plato considered public opinion and the views of many as incompetent and quite incapable of directing policy for the state and society, and democracy is, in this respect, devoid of these powerful principles. Only a *few* who are the genuine philosophers can rationally develop the affairs of human beings and ruling in the just city, after a hard and arduous training, for the advantage of the whole society, not only for a group or part of it (419

¹⁴⁶ Harmon, *ibid.*, p. 31.

b). This power cannot be kept outside the cave, and in a passive intellectual contemplation, but an active one which is required to return to the inside of the cave (which is the political realm); thereby both the individuals and the states can attain real happiness (473 d).

C. Education and Democracy

It is true that Plato establishes an “anti-democratic just city in speech” in the *Republic* by stressing the main features of democracy as an uncontrolled constitution where unscrupulous and uneducated demagogues compete for power by pandering to an ignorant populace.¹⁴⁷ Plato is commonly regarded in this sense as a deeply anti-democratic thinker, and this view is based on the bitter and rigid criticisms he made in the *Republic*. We tried to reveal the background of this negative attitude toward democracy in the previous section. Basic opposition to democracy in the *Republic* depends on the scientific ground from which the objective standards of what is good and right and these standards flourish, and these principles can only be known by people who have the ability to receive a proper and rational training.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the tension between the principles of the “just city in speech”, and that of democracy can be formulated as either one can adopt the Platonic metaphysics and epistemology, thus committing oneself to the position that government should, so far as possible, be left to experts or one can agree with democrats that everyone has the right to the participate in government.¹⁴⁹ However, this formulation is *only* at work in the comparison between the principles of the “just city in speech” and that of democracy.

It is also true that “there is a model of it in the heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other” (*Republic*, 592 b). From this and many other passages we argue that that the “just soul” is in fact the main object of the inquiry of the *Republic*, and indeed has a much more realistic goal in its realization than the “just city in speech”.

147 Stalley, “Plato, Reason, and Democracy”, p. 201.

148 *Ibid.*, 201-202.

149 *Ibid.*, 202.

Despite the psychological background of our argument in which we tried to defend the disagreement of the ideal state with *corrupt* and *ignorant* democracy, we can only solve the tension between his rigid criticism he made, and his implicit endorsement/favorable attitude toward democracy with a possible interpretation of education and democracy in his own thought.

Before discussing our argument in detail, we must mention that some commentators suggest that Plato was a deeply anti-democratic thinker, for example Karl Popper¹⁵⁰ who accepts that absolute truth cannot be known, but anyone who thinks that he knows it will inevitably attempt to impose it on everyone else. Popper finds Plato's metaphysical doctrines almost wholly erroneous and their political consequences altogether pernicious. Plato's absolute truth and its regimented society are, in Popper's eyes, the very antithesis of the proper scientific attitude and of democratic government.¹⁵¹ Karl Popper accused Plato of using "*propaganda lies*" in order to convince the citizens of his ideologies. Someone who thinks of Plato's *Republic* as a deeply fascist and anti-democratic state is R.H. S. Crossman¹⁵² who sees a comparison between Hitler and Plato's philosopher-king, the organic Nazi state and Plato's perfect state¹⁵³, and considers the city described in Plato's *Republic* to be "*a polite form of Fascism*"¹⁵⁴ by "*cajoling the civilian masses into obedience*". There are also more contemporary critiques such as those suggested by Jean Bethke Elshtain, Benjamin R. Barber, and Cynthia Farrar, who sees Plato as an "undemocratic and politically alienated thinker".¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, some scholars have also found an indirect and subtle agreement with democracy in the *Republic*, such as Leo Strauss¹⁵⁶ who sees the *Republic* as a treatise which is less about founding the ideal regime, since such a rule is impossible to realize; it is, however, relevant how best to secure the possibility of the best life in imperfect regimes, namely, a life of philosophy. The impossibility of the city in speech leads Strauss to

150 Popper, Karl, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: The Spell of Plato*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973.

151 Thorson, Thomas, L., *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?*, p. 9-10.

152 Crossman, R. H. S., *Plato Today*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1937.

153 Thorson, *ibid.*, p. 10.

154 Deneen, J. Patrick, "A Pattern Laid Up in Heaven: Plato's Democratical Ideal", p. 277.

155 *Ibid.*, p. 277.

156 Strauss, Leo, *The City and Man*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964.

suggest that there is only one realizable regime in which the philosopher could survive: democracy.¹⁵⁷ According to Leo Strauss, “democracy is the regime which fosters the greatest variety: every way of life, every regime can be found in it. Hence, we must understand, democracy is the only regime other than the best in which the philosopher can lead his peculiar way of life without being disturbed”.¹⁵⁸ In this respect, democracy, for Strauss’s Plato, is not positively valued as a regime in itself, but only the philosopher may pursue his search for knowledge so long as he does not too publicly reveal his activity, as was the unfortunate case for Socrates. Democracy is, then, the best possible regime, not for its citizens but for the philosophers.¹⁵⁹

After briefly evaluating two different approaches to Plato’s account of democracy, we need to pass to discuss whether we can argue for a positive aspect of democracy raised, even indirectly and ideally, by Plato or not. For such an interpretation, we must, in our view, take his account of education (*paideia*) in order to solve the tension between the Platonic principles and democracy. Thus, we will discuss his educational process for establishment of the “just souls” who *govern* their souls with a rational decision, even philosophically or persuasively.

Education (*paideia*) is the most comprehensive issue in Plato’s thought. However, in the framework of our argument (the critique of democracy) we will discuss the importance of education in establishing goodness and virtue in *all* souls, and its relation to democracy in this section. After this examination, it will be clear whether Plato has attempted to establish the virtuous democratic souls as a democratic ideal, in the sense that “self-ruled souls” with the support of the importance of *paideia*.

In the previous section, we have seen that the “just city in speech” (ideal state) is nearly impossible to establish in reality, and Plato himself stresses this fact in various passages in the *Republic* as “it was in order to have a model that we were trying to discover what justice itself is like and what the completely just man would be like, [...], but we were not trying to discover these things in order to prove that it is possible for them to come into being, [...], we say that we were making a just city in speech” (472 c-d).

157 Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 278.

158 Strauss, *ibid.*, p. 131.

159 Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 278.

Also Plato stresses that in the end of book IX, “there is a model of it in the heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other” (*Republic*, 592 b). From this, and many other passages, we can conclude that it is the case that the “just soul” is, in fact, the main object of the inquiry of the *Republic*, and indeed has a much more realistic goal in its realization than the “just city in speech”.¹⁶⁰ This point leads us to ask the question whether a regime composed of the moderate souls (in the case of all souls, Plato stresses that it is *self-control* soul) would present an alternative ideal democracy or not. Is this *model/form* of moderate self-rule, and a democratic model in such a way as to avoid the excesses, conflicts, and abuses describes in book VIII that lead it transform into the downfall of democracy and the rise of tyranny? It must be stated that although it is neither directly suggested nor established by Plato in the *Republic*, the possibility of such a model is, as given in the above passages, intimated in the light of the importance of training and education of *all* souls.

To raise a positive view of Plato's political philosophy when the account of democracy is concerned, we think we should argue that there is a possibility to solve the tension between the Platonic principles and democracy in such a way that the discussion will culminated in the inevitability of the education of souls. For such an interpretation, it is safe to stress that the *Republic* is not a straightforward textbook of political philosophy.¹⁶¹ Although the account of the “just city in speech” (the ideal state) seems plausibly to be intended as a guide for political practice, it must be, in fact, be introduced as a “pattern/model” (*Republic*, 592 b) for discovering and establishing the nature of virtue in the individual soul.¹⁶² Nevertheless, his accounts of justice in the soul and the city are, of course, as was discussed in the second section, closely parallel to one another, but a very big difference is that the principles of the “just city in speech”, and its structure are opposed to the principles of democracy, and we tried to stress this point as a psychological background of the critique. Thus, it must be stated that that the nature of the “just city in speech” is *principally* opposed to democracy

160 *Ibid.*, p. 280-281.

161 Stalley, *ibid.*, p. 202; Barker, *ibid.*, p. 181.

162 Stalley, *ibid.*, p. 202; Barker, *ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

in the background of the analysis of tripartite *psyche*, i.e., the “appetitive” or “desiring” (*epithumetikon*), the “spirited” (*thumeides*), and the “rational” (*logistikon*). Plato insistently opposes the principles of democracy through the soul-state analogy which emphasizes upon this tripartite soul, and criticizes it as an unjust and corrupt regime, and thus, democracy cannot be principally a perfect, excellent, and just regime in that respect, since the principle of rule is not *logos* like the “just city in speech”, but *demos* in democracy.

Now, here, we argue that this analogy cannot reflect the absolute reciprocity/equivalence between the “just soul” and the “just city in speech”.¹⁶³ We have tried to establish, before, the ideal principles of the “just city in speech” as principally opposed to democracy by giving weight to the wholly *undemocratic* depiction of the structure of the *Republic*. And through just a comparison, it was stressed that in both “just soul” and the “just city”, reason and virtue must rule. Nevertheless, if both the just city and the just soul require that the more numerous “desiring” classes must be ruled by the “rational” with support of the “spirited”, it is evident that there is no equivalence/reciprocity between the souls of the people of the just city and the requirements of the just soul.¹⁶⁴ That is to say, the only class that exhibits the *proper* just soul is (proper: which knows, as we have stated in the second section, how to rule in the soul) that of the Guardians who are ruled by reason in the arrangement of their souls (philosopher-kings in the “just city”). The philosopher-king governs the multitude in the just city whose souls are either governed by an excess of *thumos* or *epithumos*. Justice in the “city in speech” is, then, found between the *classes*, not in the *souls* of each of the citizens itself.¹⁶⁵ The spirit part of the just city (Auxiliaries) comes from the part whose souls are dominated by *thumos* (535e), just as the multitude of the city which is the subject of the wise class. Only the guardians whose “rational” faculties order their own souls reflect *equivalence* between the just soul and the just city.

163 We mean by this emphasis that in the framework of the above passages which refer to the inevitability of the looking at the *model* in the individuals’ soul, (even if we know that the “just city in speech” is nearly impossible to be realized); we must also consider that while only small group can rule in the “just city in speech”, there is not any view raised by Plato that only few souls can attain virtue.

164 Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 283.

165 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

When we stated that, then, the *proper* ruling is the work of the rational part of the soul, it can be accepted, also, that, the “just city in speech” is dominantly constituted with the unjust soul whose proper function is not *reasoning* and *ruling*; i.e., “desiring class” and “spirited auxiliary class”. Standard readings of the *Republic* claim that Plato does not have an exalted and favorable view of the multitude of the people, because of a life of obscurity and subservience under the luminous rule of the Guardians (the wise) and the Auxiliaries (the courageous). After discussing the three parts of the city and the soul in Book IV, we have seen that the “desiring” class of artisans and workers are entirely neglected for the remainder of the *Republic*, presumably because the main issue is that they must be governed by the guardian class, requiring foremost the creation of such a guardian class (Books V-VII) In fact, the soul-state comparison is just an comparison for our understanding of the principles of the “just city in speech”, and, it does not reflect the absolute equivalence between the just city and the just soul. Such being the case, we should not neglect the vital feature of the *Republic* which is explicitly a treatise to seek to define “justice” in souls. Again, that the *Republic* is explicitly about the composition of the just soul, and the extensive discussion of the just city, in fact, is intended first to serve as a means of better perceiving and understanding the *internal* organization of the soul.¹⁶⁶ For Plato, the individual soul *is just* when the reasoning element within it rules over other parts (441 d-e). This seems to imply that none of us can be properly just, unless we have within us a rational element which is capable of controlling/ruling.

However, it creates a problem at this point.¹⁶⁷ If we assume that all or most souls have some chance, even “ideally”, of achieving justice, virtue; and then it must follow that all or most of us have the capacity to achieve a rational understanding what is good and right. There are two possible interpretations for this problem: (i) This seems to suggest that the capacity to rule is not limited to a small/few group of people, thus on this reading, the conception of the *Republic* concerning the “just soul” would seem to be at odds with the key principles of the “just city in speech”. On the other hand,

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 282. See our first emphasis made in the first lines of the second section that Platonic account of justice is entirely internal which exhibits an opposition to the other theories of justice in the first book of the *Republic*.

¹⁶⁷ Stalley, *ibid.*, p. 203.

(ii) the alternative view is that only the few (the Guardians (philosopher-kings) of the *Republic*) are truly just, since only they possess the rational power of rule. The second view (ii) generally supposes that there is a possibility for the justice of the individual souls in the “just city in speech”, in that reason rules within their souls, not because they use their own rational powers, but because they follow the directions of the guardians. However, the second view seems to undermine the main arguments of Plato who shows that justice is valuable for its own sake as well as for its consequences. Therefore, the second view cannot be compatible with Plato’s own view relevant to the accessibility of justice and virtue to *all* or most individual souls. This is a tension between the account of the “just soul” and the “just city in speech”. Nevertheless, it is safe to consider that Plato’s conception of justice in the soul would make sense if one assumes that *all* or *most* people have within them a power of *rational self-direction/rule*¹⁶⁸ and the account of the “just city in speech” seems to presuppose that most people do not have that power.

From this viewpoint, given the thoroughly anti-democratic character of the “city in speech”, the *Republic* is entirely about the formation and establishment of the just soul. So, at the conclusion of the conversation in book IX, in response to Glaucon who supposes that the “just city” exists only in speech, Socrates responds to him by stating,

“But in heaven perhaps a pattern is laid up for the man who wants to see and found a city within himself on the basis of what he sees. It doesn’t make any difference whether it is or will be somewhere. For, he would mind the things of this city alone and no other” (592b).

Here, we argue for that the emphasis upon “*this model*” which is laid up in heaven concerns the “justice of the individual souls”, not the “just city in speech”, and if we consider that this model which is proposed by Plato is for the “just city in speech”, it would be implausible, since the emphasis here is upon the model for the individuals in order to harmonize their souls in accordance with this *rational model*. (591 e) On the other hand, we can interpret Plato’s emphasis on this model here, in this passage (590 d-592 b), on the lines that it doesn’t make any difference

168 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

whether the “just city in speech” exists or not, for all *souls* should care for the things of this *model* alone, and no other. Therefore, Plato seems to stress, that this “model” can be used as a guidance for actual souls in the attempt to achieve a form of internal justice, in other words “for the consonance in his soul” (591 d). Justice is achieved only by this arrangement of the three elements within each soul, by means of weakening the desiring part of the soul; only in this case, can the rational element rule over the *many*.

Moreover, we also know that the harmony (591 e) of the parts of the soul in any soul is only possible with a proper and arduous training, not with any given position in Plato. When this process of rational education is concerned, the question becomes vital whether the general form of virtue (in the sense that constitute the goodness of the soul in general, i.e. the just arrangement of the soul) is available to *all humans*, or only a *select few* who exhibit the proper self-rule in his or her soul.¹⁶⁹ Now, while the above passages of the *Republic* embrace the former, it is entirely plausible that we have no the final word in the *Republic*, concerning the virtue for all humans.¹⁷⁰ Thus, we need to turn to the question of the virtue for *all*, and explore the question of *teachability of virtue*, especially in the *Meno*, and *Protagoras*.¹⁷¹

The *Meno* begins unexpectedly with an unusually direct question by Meno: “Can you tell me, Socrates, can virtue be taught?” (70 a) Meno answers the question himself, and says that “there are very many other virtues, so that one is not at a loss to say what virtue is. There is a virtue for every action and every age, for every task of ours and every one of us” (71e-72a). However, Socrates ironically responds him, and says that “virtue” must refer to some common feature of the many “virtues”, and eventually Socrates makes Meno share the conclusion that *all humans*, regardless of individual distinctions such as age, gender, or political position, each at least potentially possesses the same general form of virtue and knowledge, in the sense that in the arrangement of the just soul: “All human beings are good in the same way, for they become good by acquiring the same qualities, [...], and they would not be good in the same way if they did not have the same

169 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

170 *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

171 *Ibid.*, p. 292.

virtue” (73c). Meno is, after this point, encouraged to determine the common notion of virtue, and he defined it as “virtue is to be able to rule over people” (73 d). Socrates asks, after this definition, “is the virtue the same in the case of a child or a slave, namely, for them to be able to rule over a master, and do you think that he who rules is still a slave?”, and responds to it by himself by stressing that “it is not my good man” (73 d). That is to say, the unity of virtue (in the sense of the arrangement of the just soul) is not the ability to rule over people, since Socrates proposes that all humans/souls, including the *slave* of Meno, share a similarly *equal* understanding of virtue, but that each must come to this apprehension only through the process of *anamnesis* (“recollection”). (81 d)¹⁷²

Now, while many philosophers are interested in the validity of this theory, the identity and significance of the interlocutor with whom Socrates speaks, that is, Meno’s *slave*, is utterly neglected.¹⁷³ Why did Socrates/Plato choose a slave to demonstrate the validity of that theory? Or, why did Socrates/Plato test the universality of virtue which indicates that *all* humans share a similarly *equal* understanding of virtue on a slave? The attempt to answer this question leads us to conclude that Plato seems to endeavor to discover and establish the equally availability of virtue and knowledge for every human being, since the demonstration of this theory is made by him under the conditions in which the feature and the description of the soul is entirely irrelevant, i.e., more importantly on a slave. This is, in our view, the most important point in the accessibility of virtue (knowledge) for *all human souls*, for Socrates’ declares that the demonstration has proven existing knowledge in all human beings: “He [the slave] will perform in the same way about all geometry, and all other knowledge (*kai ton allon matematon*)” (85e). Thus, Socrates does not claim only that such knowledge is limited solely to geometrical subjects, but to all other knowledge.

¹⁷² Socrates here portrays his theory of recollection in the mythical background (81 c-e). Moreover, what Socrates demonstrates in the case of the slave’s knowledge is open to dispute in the epistemological sense among particularly the philosophers interested in his theory of epistemology (See; Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 295). But the epistemological content of this theory is not the subject of this work.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

Plato nevertheless seems to doubt this theory himself in stating that,

“I do not insist that my argument is right in all other respects, but I would contest at all costs both in word and deed as far as I could that we will be better men, braver and less idle, if we believe that one must search for all things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find what we do not know and that we must not look for it. [...] We must, therefore, not believe in that debater's argument, for it would make us idle, and fainthearted men like to hear it, whereas my argument makes them energetic and keen on the search. I trust that this is true, and I want to inquire with you into the nature of that virtue” (81c-e 86 b-c).

However, there is certainty for Plato that though the “theory” is not without substantial difficulties, about the belief in the accessibility of all humans to knowledge whatever so as to shape their lives in accordance with it. And again, as the passage itself shows, Plato ends the description of “recalling” by stating that “I trust (*pisteuon*) that this is true”.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, as we know the status of *pistis* (opinion) among the other forms of intellection in book VII of the *Republic*, Plato implicitly admits that the theory of recollection rests on an imperfect and manner of knowing, nevertheless, explicitly insists on the importance of this *pistis*, and its possible positive influence of people's lives.¹⁷⁵ Plato's main concern here is, then, that the “faith” in this process of *anemnesis* will “make us better men, braver and less idle, if we believe that one must search for the things one does not know” (86 c). Otherwise, all humans might be, then, inclined toward a lazy acceptance of the inaccessibility of knowledge, with the exception of a very few people, which is the condition of lethargy, a total absence of justice and moderate in each soul (81 c-e).¹⁷⁶ This Platonic effort leads us to believe in the existence of comprehensible knowledge and virtue, while at the same time denying us its easy apprehension.

The same problem is also animates the *Protagoras*, namely the problem of virtue's nature and its transmissibility. Protagoras' myth tells us that at 322 d- 323 a, all humans are given an equal share of shame (*aidos*) and

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

justice (*dike*) by Zeus, to explain the origin of virtue of all souls, and the method of its transmission. Only with the sharing of virtue by all human beings, can the state continue its existence (323 a). “Therefore, by my argument, the Athenians are among those who think that virtue is acquired and taught. So it is with good reason that your fellow citizens accept a blacksmith’s or a cobbler’s advice in political affairs” (324 d). While the arts had each been the property of a favored *few*, Zeus gave the virtues to *all*. Therefore, it is that the Athenians listen to the tailor, blacksmith, and cobbler’s advices in the affairs of the state.¹⁷⁷ In fact, the few aggregations of men do not form a state in this sense, what is needed is a common mind/view to pursue a common purpose of a good life for the “*life-breath*” of the state.¹⁷⁸ Here, the key seems to be the accessibility of virtue and knowledge to *all*, for the Athenian democracy accepts the opinions and advices of whole citizens in the city. However, we possess virtue and knowledge, in the sophistic view, as a matter of divine inheritance (given by Zeus), as was stated in the *Meno* (as a gift from the gods, 100 b), and its transmission proves wholly unproblematic as long as humans live in the cities (*Protagoras*, 322 d). Therefore, virtue can be *ironically* taught, by the leading teachers of virtue who are the *sophists* (*Protagoras*, 323 c, 328 b, c, 349 a), and the main method in teaching the virtues is, again, only that of *Sophists*. This teaching is also echoed in the *Meno* by Anytus (and by Meletus in the *Apology*, 24 d-25 a) stating that teachers of virtue are none other than the citizens of Athens (*Meno*, 92 e). In each case, Protagoras, Anytus, and Meletus insist that the acquisition of knowledge and virtue can be achieved by *all humans*, and its transmission is realized by means of interactions by all people with the sophistic methods within the city.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, “by my argument” says Pratogoras, “the Athenians are among those who think that virtue is acquired and taught. So it is with good reason that your fellow citizens accept a blacksmith’s or a cobbler’s advice in political affairs” (324 d).

However, in our view, when pandering of all people to the good, justice, and virtue is concerned, it is the question for Plato *what* the content and nature of the driving power concerning the people’s life is, and whether it is a reasonable knowledge illuminated by a principle which masters

177 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 130.

178 *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

179 Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 301.

and governs every demand of life with a proper and genuine training, or an “*ability to persuade the crowds only by speeches*” without depending on the stable and unchangeable truth (*Gorgias*, 452 e, 459 a-c). While the former corresponds to the philosophical knowledge (*episteme*), the latter is the oratory/sophistry which does not “have any knowledge of the state of their subject-matter; its only needs to have discovered some device to produce persuasion in order to make itself appear to those who do not have knowledge, that it knows more than those who actually do have it” (*Gorgias*, 459 c).¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Socrates/Plato did not oppose the teachability of virtue¹⁸¹, i.e., the identity of virtue and knowledge, but to the wrong methods of *Sophists* who give false principles to regulate the growth and action of the soul, and declare that they are the teachers of virtue (*Gorgias*, 464 b-466 a). Sophistry is, in this respect, deprived of the philosophical knowledge (*episteme*) which apprehends and examines the whole life and world in the light of truly educated souls in the city, and is based on scientific and rational principles.¹⁸² Plato seeks to thwart all the wrong sophistical methods which represent the unexamined/unreflective and uneducated state of mind, and lead the people into *laziness* (*Meno*, 81 d), ignorant and unexamined ways of life. All individuals' soul are prompted to interrogate the whole of life, and engaged in the persistent search for knowledge in order to “*make them energetic and keen on search*” (*Meno*, 81 e). Accordingly, Socrates stresses the “concern for the soul” (even in the passages of *Republic* that given above), and urges his fellow Athenian citizens not to live an *unexamined life*.¹⁸³ This examination must continue, for Socrates,

180 The distinction between the philosophers who depend their principles on reason and truth, and the non-philosophers (the sophists) who bases their methods on changeable and provisional appearances, had been discussed in the second section.

181 In fact, the *Protagoras*, *Meno*, and *Gorgias* seem to have negative views concerning the identity of virtue and knowledge, i.e., the teachability of virtue; however, as Barker truly states that these dialogues represent the negative and critical approaches of Plato. The three dialogues which it contains are all addressed to actual facts, and states; and the main aim in these dialogues is to explain and uncover the principles on which such practice (like the claim of *Sophists* by themselves as the teachers of virtue), and to show the inevitability of truth and genuine reasonable methods (which is of philosophy) for any true and proper action (See for more detailed information; Barker, *ibid.*, p. 127).

182 Barker, *ibid.*, p. 134.

183 Boudouris, *ibid.*, p. 32.

until it becomes clear that “*how man should live?*” (*Republic*, 352 d) When the significance of Plato’s moral and political thought is concerned, we must keep in mind that it aims directly at the soul of man’s moral acts and deeds, and depicts the best way of life that man can live in the truly organized society.¹⁸⁴ By means of the “concern for the soul”, we must ask the question again: Did Plato point out that, even indirectly, how this activity can be pursued by every human being who consequently can and should become “*self-ruled/self-control*” moderate souls in which the “higher” part of the soul (*logistikon*) that *rules* the other parts elements? Is Plato’s model in the life of the people (“*a pattern which laid up in heaven for the man who wants to see and found a city within himself*”), the harmonious and virtuous life of a man who dies for the state (its laws and democracy), and who is characterized by a profound love of the soul of each young men by searching after the “Truth”, and the “Good”?

When considering both the discussions in the background the soul-city analogy, and the more egalitarian conclusions to be drawn from the *Meno* and *Protagoras* concerning the accessibility of virtue to *all* souls, as the dialogues about the education of the soul; it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Plato emphatically concerns the genuine training of the just soul (*Republic*, 588 b- 592 b). Plato describes the soul, then, in which the “ruling” rational element in the soul will always represent the justice of the soul, and thereby need a *rational* training in order to weaken the dominance of the desiring element. “A soul which has its order is better than a disordered one, [...], and orderly soul is a self-controlled one, [...], so a self-controlled soul is a good one” (*Gorgias*, 506 e- 507 a). Therefore, since the Platonic concern for the just and ordered soul, and the claims of the analogy between the “just city in speech” and the “just soul”; one cannot conclude that Plato justifies only limiting a ruling the “just soul” to a few guardians¹⁸⁵, and this is the big difference between the “just city in speech” and the “just soul”. The “city in speech”, as Plato emphasizes, then, serves as a “*pattern laid up in heaven*” for one who rightly seeks to found “*a city within himself*”. In other words, the proper aim of the *Republic* seems to be the establishment of “the just city within the soul”. Accordingly, “it does not make any difference whether it [“the city in speech”] is or will be

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁸⁵ Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 303.

somewhere. For, he would mind the things of this city [as we stressed as “*the just city within the soul*”] alone and of no other” (592b).

This interpretation is only plausible if we conclude that the establishment of the “just soul” is not limited only to a *select few* fortunate or naturally endowed humans, but to *all* humans with a proper *rational training* in their life.¹⁸⁶ The conclusion which suggests that only small portions of the people are capable of achieving a “just soul” appears incorrect since the *Republic* points us to a consideration of both how the just soul might be properly arranged (in the passages of book IX (588 a-592 b), and additionally, like the *Meno*, insists by means of an emphasis on the “achievability” of the just soul that such a pursuit should be a common undertaking, and not solely that of a select few.¹⁸⁷ Like the *Meno*, the *Republic* aims to make us “eager” (“spirited”, 81 e) in the pursuit of the rational education of the soul in virtue. The end of the dialogue which turns the attention of the interlocutors into the establishment of the just soul (588 b) guides us toward an embrace “*pattern laid up in heaven*” within *all* souls, not a limited few souls.

When considering the analogy between the democratic soul and the democratic city in book VIII of the *Republic*, as we have discussed in the previous sections, it is true that one can argue that the incommensurability of both can lead us to conclude that while the democratic city can contain a perfectly arranged soul within itself, one cannot be a philosopher with a democratic soul, since it is entirely unordered. That is to say, even if the “just souls” do not rule in the democratic city, reason rules within the soul of these just people who lives in a democracy. By contrast, reason can never rule in the soul of the democratic man, however, we must state that the important point for Plato’s transformation process in both the soul and the city is that the driving power (motor) is the same for all souls (for timocrat, oligarch, democrat, and tyrannical) which is “*ignorance*”, “*lack of education*” and “*the bad constitutional arrangement*” (*Republic*, 552 e, 554 b). Since each soul is more disorderly than the one before, but the cause of disorder in the soul lies in a bad upbringing. If these views are intended, then the implication would seem to be that all or most of us have the rational capacity to *rule provided that* we receive the right kind of upbringing and

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

education. The good of each individual can be achieved only in so far as the power of reason *rules* within his or her soul.

The inevitability of education and training in the establishment of the just souls is also dominant in the book VIII of the *Republic*, as we had tried to see in the second section, in the exploration of the transformation process of the souls. In this process, again, the timocratic soul turns into the oligarchic, the oligarch into the democrat, and so on, because of the lack of education, and the bad constitutional arrangement. So as a result of the absence of aristocratic educational principles, the timocratic man is prepared within the aristocratic soul; as a result of the absence of the timocratic educational principles, the oligarchic man is prepared within the timocratic soul; as a result of the absence of the oligarchic education principles, the democratic man is prepared within the oligarchic soul; and finally, as a result of the absence of the democratic principles, the tyrannical man is prepared within the democratic soul.¹⁸⁸ This is the case when we remember the position of the young democrat (“*the junior democrat*”) who represents the first generation of the democratic soul, and who is rooted in oligarchic values in the first stage, so the transformation is realized after the disregard of the *pre*-democratic educational restraining (in turn, that of the aristocratic education in the timocrat; that of the timocratic education in the oligarch; that of oligarchic education in the democrat). In fact, these three stages seem to correspond to the arrangement of the “just soul”, in which the rational part rules over the other parts of the soul. Therefore, when the *Republic* is regarded as a book about achieving a just soul, and Socrates resorts to a description of the “city in speech” in order to clarify the composition of that soul, the question can be asked that, what the resulting of a regime (ruling) composed of such just souls would be?

In our view, though a regime composed of a citizenry of “just souls” is not directly explored by Plato, such a regime in which the “souls” rules themselves justly (i.e., the rational part rules over the other parts in a harmonious and virtuous way) is implied even in the *Republic*. But this *ideal* democratic regime can only be possible on condition that the *rule* of the rational element in the souls; which means the realization of the “self-ruled souls” in the city.¹⁸⁹ According to Deneen,

188 Arends, J. Frederick, “Plato, an Ally against the Decay of Democracy”, p.24.

189 Deneen, *ibid.*, p. 309.

“This regime is neither kallipolis, where only a select few guardians rule over spirited and desiring classes by means of a founding deceit, nor democracy, in which an endless variety of conflicting souls stake equal claim to rule, [...], such a regime would be democratic -ruled by the moderate/self-control people- but in a manner wholly at odds with that democracy in which rule is disorganized and souls are varied and equal. Instead of either demokratia or kallipolis, a self-ruled city of self-ruled souls might be called a kallidemokratia.”¹⁹⁰

Accordingly, the reasons why Plato has spoken of the “*model laid up in heaven*”, i.e., “a just city within the just souls”, and the accessibility of virtue to *all* human beings (even to an unnamed slave of Meno) can be plausible in the potential presence of educated and self-ruled souls, and this aim is also plausible when we consider the Socratic endeavors for pandering/provoking everyone he meets toward the achievement of a best possible soul, as stressed in the *Apology*:

“As long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy, to exhort you and in my usual way to point out to any one of you whom I happen to meet: Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation and honors as possible, while you do not care for nor give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?” (29 d-e)

Therefore, Plato emphasizes *this potential* excellence of the democratic Athens, when it is equipped with the rational principles in the self-ruled souls, and Athens is, in this respect, “great and noble” by its nature but disregards that nature by supporting the “*flattering*” demagogues induced by lack of training (*Gorgias*, 463 b). He seeks, then, the awakening of the entire city by means of an awakening of each citizen to the potential excellence of his or her own soul.¹⁹¹

Consequently, the principal disagreement of democracy from the viewpoint of the principles of the “just city in speech” is not operative in the “just soul”, even in the *ideal* sense. However, this ideal is no more hard

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

to realize than in the “just city in speech”, since there is a “*pattern laid up in heaven for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other.*” When this “great and noble” pattern of each soul is realized, the imperfect democratic Athens will be ennobled “*from within*” the self-ruled just souls. The potential for the transmission from the corrupt *demokratia* into the *kallidemokratia*, in which “the self-ruled souls” are dominant, is relevant to the educational process within the souls of individuals.¹⁹²

Therefore it is, likewise, a process of rational *paideia* of all souls of the citizens, and Plato’s emphasis upon the accessibility of virtue to all with a proper rational training seems to be summarized in these words: “If you *have* democratic citizens, and if you want to *keep* democratic citizens, you have to educate your young people with rational principles.” Education and ruling seems to be in the same line in Plato’s thought in both political (the importance of political competence) and moral sense (the importance of the establishment of the just souls in the city). From this Platonic viewpoint education is used then as an instrument against *the post*-democratic regime (tyrannical), and the condition of the stability of democracy is the establishment of the moderate self-controlled (just self-ruled) citizens, which may have the capacity for the rational discussion of practical matters though an educational process.¹⁹³

If the arguments we have used are true, the central concern of Plato’s political philosophy is with the role of *reason*. We can also conclude then that the aim of politics is to establish the rational government in action; and thus, there is nothing intrinsically undemocratic about this view.

192 This emphasis will be much clearer when the Farabian verdict on the transformation model from imperfect and ignorant democracy is taken into consideration. The comparison between the Plato’s favorable verdict on democracy which is educational constitution of the souls of the citizens, and the Farabi’s favorable and positive verdict on it (as examined in the first and third section) will be discussed in the conclusion.

193 Stalley, “Plato, Reason, and Democracy”, p. 208.

FARABI'S CRITICISM OF DEMOCRACY

A. Democracy as an Ignorant Regime

The central theme of Farabi's political thoughts is the virtuous regime (ideal state), and the political order whose main principle is the realization of human excellence and happiness.¹ The ultimate perfection is for him identical with the supreme happiness which is also "the good desired for itself, and there is nothing greater beyond it that man can achieve" (*Medine al-Fadila* -The Virtuous City- 207, *Siyasa al-Medeniyye* -Political Regime- 34). The regime cannot be ideal and virtuous, if the citizens of the states do not regard these basic principles of the virtuous regime, i.e., perfection (*kemal*) and happiness (*saadah*), therefore Farabi refers these regimes as non-virtuous regimes. The virtuous city (*medinetü'l-fadila*) is, then, the regime in which men come together, and cooperate with the aim of becoming virtuous, performing noble activities, and attaining happiness.

Yet these noble activities and the attainment of happiness can be realized, only through acquiring the highest arts and sciences.² Such art and science can be obtained by the rare few who possess the best natural ability, knowledge to rule, and guide the rest of men in the city. No doubt, this art is political art (*mihnetu's siyasiyye* or *mihmetu'l medeni*) which investigates the various kinds of voluntary actions and ways of life (*Ihsa al-Ulum*:

1 Mahdi, Muhsin, "Al-Farabi", *History of Political Philosophy*, p. 185.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

The Enumeration the Sciences, 24). It explains that the ones through which genuine happiness is attained are the goods, the noble, and the virtuous, while the rest are the evils, the base things, and the imperfections; and that they must exist in man in such a way that the virtuous actions and ways of life are distributed in the cities and nations according to a certain order. It explains that this comes about only through a government (*riyasa*) by which the ruler establishes these actions, ways of life, and virtue in the cities and nations. This is the royal craft or kingship, and politics (*siyasa*) is the operation of this craft (*Ihsa*, 24-25).

According to Farabi, political science explains that the rule is of two kinds in general: (a) the rule that establishes the actions and ways of life with which to attain what is truly happiness. This is the *virtuous rule*; the cities and nations that submit to this kind of rulership are the virtuous cities and nations, and (b) the rule that establishes actions and states of character with which to attain the things that are presupposed to be happiness although they are not. This is the *ignorant rule* (*Ihsa*, 26). This kind of rule has many divisions, and each of them is designated by the purpose it seeks, and they are opposite to the virtuous city in purpose and end. But before examining the non-virtuous cities (and democracy) we must take into consideration the virtuous city for a better understanding of Farabi's criticism of democracy.

The city, in which people aim through association at cooperating for the things by which genuine happiness³ can be attained, is the excellent and virtuous city (*Medine al-Fadila*, 231). "The society in which there is a cooperation to acquire felicity is the excellent society; and the nation in which all of its cities cooperate for those things through which felicity is attained is the excellent nation. In the same way, the excellent universal state will arise only when all the nations in it cooperate for the purpose of reaching felicity" (*Medine*, 231, *Siyasa*, 37). The virtuous city resembles, for Farabi, the perfect and healthy body, and all of whose organs help each other to make its life perfect and healthy, and preserve it in this city. In other words, its parts are different by nature, and their natural dispositions are unequal in perfection and excellence (*Medine*, 233, *Siyasa*, 36). Therefore, as in the example of a healthy body, there is a man in the city who is the ruler, and

3 The metaphysical content of happiness and perfection will be evaluated in the second section.

there are others who are close in rank to the ruler (the auxiliaries of the ruler). Every art is not suitable for rule, most of the arts, indeed, are suited for service within the city (*Medine*, 239).

The art of ruling in the virtuous city cannot be any chance art or due to any chance habit whatever (*Medine*, 241). This art must be an art towards the aim of which all the other arts tend, and for which they endeavor in all the actions of the excellent city. The ruler (philosopher-prophet) is, then, a person over whom nobody has any authority whatsoever. The ruler of the virtuous city is in union with the Active Intellect (*Akl'ul Faal*), and he is the one who receives "revelation" (*wahy*) (*Siyasa*, 36). It is, "the power which enables man to understand how to define things and actions, and how to direct them toward happiness" (*Siyasa*, 36). According to Farabi, then, this emanation from the Active Intellect to the passive through the mediation of the acquired intellect, is revelation. Therefore, the rule of this man is the supreme and perfect rule; and all other rules are inferior to it (*Siyasa*, 37, *Medine*, 243).

The men who are ruled by this ruler (philosopher-prophet) are virtuous, good, and happy (*Siyasa*, 37). On the other hand, each citizen of the virtuous city is required to know the highest principles, happiness and the actions that, when performed lead to the attainment of happiness, the beings and their rank of order (*Siyasa*, 40). These noble and virtuous actions are not merely to be known; they should be done, and the citizens of it should be directed to do them.⁴

Furthermore, we must also stress that there are two ways of making a thing comprehensible: (a) By causing its essence to be perceived by the intellect, and (b) by causing it to be imagined through the similitude that imitates it (*Tahsil*, 44). Assent is also brought about by one of two methods, either the method of certain demonstration (*burhan*) or the method

4 It is important, because the factor which renders the city good and virtuous is not only the knowledge of the highest principles in Farabi, but they should be realized in practice. When this point is taken into consideration, it will be easily understood why he distinguished the non-virtuous cities into ignorant (*cahil*) in which the unchangeable and basic principles cannot be known and immoral ones (*fasik*) in which all these principles are known but are not their practical counterpart. This also shows the fact that there must be a unity of knowledge and action in the city in terms of Farabi's political thought.

of persuasion (*iqna*). When one acquires knowledge of beings with his or her intellect, and if his or her assent to them is by means of certain demonstration, then the science that includes these cognitions is *philosophy*, but if they are known by imagining them through stimulates that imitates them, and assent to what is imagined of them is caused by persuasive methods, then it is *religion* (*Tahsil*, 44-45). Both supply knowledge about the first principle, and cause of beings. “In everything of which philosophy gives an account based on intellectual perception or conception, religion gives an account based on imagination” (*Tahsil*, 45). The person who possesses the science that encompasses the intelligibles with certain demonstrations belongs to the elect (philosophers), while the rest are the multitude on which only the method of persuasion and imaginative representation employed (*Tahsil*, 42). Therefore, it will be absurd to employ the method of certain demonstration upon the multitude to direct them to the good and just actions in life. For, the methods of persuasion and imaginative representation (religion) are employed only in the instruction of the multitude, while the certain demonstrative method (philosophy) is employed in the instruction of the elect rulers (*Tahsil*, 42-43).⁵ According to Farabi,

“Most people who strive for happiness, follow after an imagined, not a cognized, form of happiness. Similarly, most men accept such principles as are accepted and followed, and are magnified and considered majestic, in the form of images, not of cognitions. Now the ones who follow after happiness as they cognize it and accept the principles as they cognize them, are the wise men. And the ones in whose souls these things are found in the form of images, and who accept them and follow after them as such, are the believers” (*Siyasa*, 41).

On the other hand, there may be a number of virtuous cities and nations whose religions are different, even though they all purpose the same kind of happiness (*Siyasa*, 41). But when philosophy has no share in the government, and the city remain without a truly king; the city will

5 The distinction between the elect and the multitude was traditionally present in the Islamic world, in the name ‘*hukema*’ (philosophers: it comes from *hikma* in Arabic which means philosophy) and ‘*amm*’ (multitude). This distinction, for instance, corresponds to the groups in Gazali, as ‘*arifun*’ (wise people) and ‘*mukallidin*’ (the people who adopt an opinion without reflecting it, it comes from ‘*taklid*’ meant imitation. (See; Aydın, Mehmet S., “Farabi’nin Siyasi Düşüncesinde Saadet Kavramı”, p. 17.)

undoubtedly perish (*Medine*, 253). Therefore, philosophy is necessary for a city to be excellent and virtuous, and “this is the first condition for being a ruler” (*Medine*, 247).

In addition, like Plato, Farabi also stresses that there must be the principles of division of labor and specialization. “Everyone in the ideal state, must have a single art in which he is unique, and a single work to which he attends either in the class of servant or master, he cannot go beyond it” (*Fusul al-Medeni: Aphorisms of the Statesman*, 117). No doubt, it reminds the virtue of justice (*dike*) in Plato’s thoughts, and Farabi also emphasizes the importance of this principle in the political and social realm. For this reason, “there must be assigned to each one of the actions one man, that each of them may be overtaken as its own time and not fail to be performed” (*Fusul*, 117).

Farabi says that the rulers of the virtuous city are of four descriptions (*Fusul*, 112): (A) The first or true king in the city (the philosopher-prophet⁶), and he is who is supposed to combine six conditions: (1) wisdom, (2) practical wisdom (intelligence), (3) excellent in persuasion, (4) excellent in imagination, (5) power to fight in a war, and (6) he should be (when it is necessary) of tough physical conditions in order to shoulder the tasks of war.⁷

(B) The second case is when no man is found in whom all these features are united, but they exist separately in a group, such that one of them provides (1), the second person provides (2), and etc.; so this group together take the place of the king for Farabi, and they are called the best rulers.

(C) The third case is when this is not available either. The ruler of the city is, then, the man in whom are united: (1) that he should know the ancient laws and traditions which the earlier ruler introduced, (2) that he should have excellent discrimination of the places and times in which these traditions must be employed, according to the purpose of the earlier rulership, (3) that he should have power to produce what is not clear in the earlier laws and traditions, even in oral or written, extracting the general sense

6 The metaphysical and epistemological content of the knowledge of this first ruler (conjunction of him with the Active Intellect) will be discussed in the second section.

7 Fakhry, Majid, *Al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neo-Platonism: His Life Works and Influence*, p. 106.

of the ancient traditions (4) that he should have excellence of ideas and intelligence so as to preserve thereby the continued existence of the city, (5) that he should have excellence in persuasion and imagination, and finally (6) he should be tough in physical condition so as to fight in a possible war against the city. Such a one is called a traditional king (*melikü's-sünne*), and his rule is called a traditional kingship (*mülken-süneniyyen*).

(D) Finally, for Farabi, the fourth case is when no man is found in whom all these are united, but they are divided among a group. So they take the place of traditional rulership, and this group is called a traditional aristocracy (*rüesaü's-sünne*). Consequently, we can state that the virtuous city is not only the rule of one person (monarchy), but also the rule of select people in the city (aristocracy) in which the best rule in Farabi's thought (*Fusul*, 114-115).⁸

In opposition to the virtuous city, there are three kinds of non-virtuous cities in general: The ignorant city (*al-medinetu'l cahiliyye*), the wicked or immoral city (*al-medinetu'l fasıka*), and the erring city (*al-medinetu'l dalle*).

The ignorant city is the city whose inhabitants do not know the supreme happiness and perfection (*Medine*, 255). The only good things in these cities are some of those which are apparently (superficially) thought of as good, such as indispensable necessities, wealth, enjoyment of pleasures, honor, domination, and freedom to follow one's desires (*Siyasa*, 42, *Medine*, 255). According to the citizens of the ignorant cities, each of them is a kind of happiness, and the perfect and greatest one is the total of all of them (*Medine*, 255). As for the citizens of the ignorant cities, since they are political beings, their cities and political organizations are of many kinds which comprise as: (a) the indispensable city (*al-medinetu'd-daruriyye*), (b) the vile city (*al-medinetu'n-nezzale*), (c) the base city (*al-medinetu'l-hassa*), (d) the timocratic city (*al-medinetu'l-kiramiyye*), (e) the despotic or tyrannical city (*al-medinetu't-tagallub*), and (f) the democratic city (*al-medinetu'l-cemaiyye*).

(a) The indispensable city is that which establishes cooperation to acquire the bare necessities for the subsistence and the safeguarding of the body. The people of this city regard the best man to be a ruler who is the

8 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 187.

most excellent in skill, management, and obtaining the bare necessities through the way of acquisition that they employ (*Siyasa*, 42-43; *Medine*, 255).

(b) The vile city (oligarchy) is that whose members cooperate to acquire wealth and riches for no reason other than the love and covetousness of wealth (*Siyasa*, 43). The purpose of its ruler and people is to work together in the acquisition of wealth, not in order to enjoy something else which can be reached through wealth, but because they regard it as the sole aim in life (*Medine*, 255). They also regard the perfect man to be the wealthiest and the most skillful in the acquisition of wealth (*Siyasa*, 43).

(c) The base city is that in which the citizens cooperate to enjoy sensual pleasures and imaginary pleasures like play and amusement (*Siyasa*, 43, *Medine*, 257). The main purpose of this city is to enjoy the pleasures of food, drink, and copulation, and they also regard whoever possesses more resources for all these pleasures as the best, happiest, and the most enviable man in life.

(d) The city of honor (timocracy) is that in which the citizens of it cooperate to be honored, and the aim of its people is to cooperate to attain honor and fame either among themselves or in the eyes of other people (*Medine*, 257; *Siyasa*, 44). Therefore, the one who has more honor rules over the one who has less of it in this city. By virtue of this, the ruler of it ought to be of greater competence (*liyaka*) than all the rest, and in this city whoever lacks wealth and ancestry will have no claim to any rule or honor. (*Siyasa*, 45) The political competence of this city is, then, for Farabi, not based on virtue and perfection, but on honor and a distinguished ancestry in the city of honor. In addition, in the eyes of the citizens of the ignorant cities, competence in general, and political competence in particular, are based on the dominant components in these cities, like necessities of life, wealth, possessing the means of pleasure and play, honor or domination (*Siyasa*, 44).

Furthermore, Farabi stresses that when merits are based on matters that are good to their possessors alone (only to the ruler), this kind of ruler is the lowest among timocratic rulers, and such is the case for the city as well (*Siyasa*, 45). On the other hand, when the ruler is honored because of his usefulness to the citizens of the city in their pursuits and wishes,

they consider him to be the best among the other ignorant cities. Therefore, Farabi states that this city can be likened to the virtuous city in respect to (i) honors and men's ranks of order in this city (hierarchical orders), and (ii) the possibility of the usefulness of the ruler to the citizens of this city. For these reasons "this city is the best among the ignorant cities" (*Siyasa*, 46).

(e) The despotic city (tyranny) is that in which the members cooperate to prevail over other people and achieve domination. They seek, for Farabi, different kinds of domination and different things for the domination of other people, for example, some like to dominate others to spill blood, some like to take his property, or some aims to possess him so that they may enslave him (*Siyasa*, 46). Their only purpose in life is the enjoyment which they get from power (*Medine*, 257). Therefore, their ruler is the one who shows greater strength in ruling well with a view to employing the citizens to dominate others, and who has the soundest judgments about what they must do in order to prevail over others forever, and never be dominated by others. For all these reason, they are the enemies of all other people (*Medine*, 257, *Siyasa*, 46).

(f) The democratic city is that "the one in which each one of the citizens is given free rein, and left alone to do whatever he likes, its citizens are equal and their law says that no man is in any way at all better than any other man" (*Siyasa*, 50). He seems to agree with Plato in its basic principles of freedom and equality, and moreover in finding democracy superficially attractive, "like an embroidered garment of colored figures and dyes" (*Siyasa*, 51; *Republic*, 558 c). Due to this colorful nature of democracy, everyone wants to reside in it, because there is no human wish or desire that this kind of city does not satisfy.

Following Plato's description of democracy in the *Republic* (VIII), Farabi insisted that the basic principles of democracy as freedom and equality. Freedom is the ability of everyone to pursue anything he wants and that he should be left alone to do as he chooses in the pursuit of his or her desires. Equality means, on the other hand, that no man is superior to another in anything at all.⁹ These two basic principles determine the basis of authority, the relation between the ruler and the ruled. In other words, no one has any claim to authority unless he or she works to increase

9 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 200.

their freedom and equality in the democratic city (*Siyasa*, 50). Authority is justified only on the basis of the preservation and promotion of freedom and equality.¹⁰ Therefore, as for Plato, there is a great deal of freedom and equality, and very little authority in the democratic city in such a way that “multitudes have the upper hand over the rulers” (*Siyasa*, 50).

This point seems to be the main trouble in democracy for Farabi, since “the people who do not possess whatever the rulers [must] possess have the authority over those who are called their rulers” (*Siyasa*, 50). This statement primarily shows that Farabi’s vital critique of democracy is relevant to its paradoxical principles that are “the authority of ignorance over knowledge”; hence, the fact which points out the necessity of rule of knowledge in both the individual and the state opposes the basic principles of democracy. Basically, this kind of political incompetence, which was formulated above as ‘*the authority of ignorance over knowledge*’, seems cause to categorize it among the ignorant cities in Farabi’s thought. The ignorance of democracy is, in this respect to the authority of incompetent multitude over their rulers, the ignorance of the necessary principles which are supposed to be known in political realm and that of true felicity, i.e. the most important aim in life.¹¹ This term (*cehale*: ignorance) must especially be understood, then, due to the democratic citizens’ indulgence in desires (as especially “morally” for Plato), and their lack of rational capacity (in political sense). It is based on absolute freedom, complete lack of discipline, and self-control. Hence the ability of all citizens to satisfy their desires and passions indicates that the city as a whole is not ruled by reason.¹² For, they subordinate the moral and higher faculties to the lower appetitive actions; that is, they subordinate their rational faculty to the appetitive faculty (*Siyasa*, 52).

In this free and an equal authority of the democratic city, on the other hand, there is no distinction between rulers and ruled in the eyes of the democratic people in governing. (*Siyasa*, 50; *Medine*, 257) The citizens of the democratic city honor and praise those who lead them to all these factors, i.e., freedom, equality and authority, but not to reason and rational decisions. In fact, there are no rulers and ruled; there is one supreme will,

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

11 Walzer, Richard, *Al-Farabi: On The Perfect State*, a revised text with introduction, translation, and commentary, p. 452.

12 Khalidi, Muhammed Ali, “Farabi on the Democratic City”, p. 385.

which is that of the multitude which does not possess whatever the rulers must have for ruling the state, and the rulers seems to be instruments serving the desires and wishes of the citizens.¹³ So, as to any other ruler, he or she is inferior to them and their rulers, and absolute freedom, equality, and authority of multitude over rulers are inevitable principles in the democratic city. Furthermore, a moral understanding built on appearances, changeable desires, and appetites in democracy will gratify the irrational faculties of the soul, i.e., those which Farabi calls *ghadab* and *shakwa* which render Plato's *thymos* and *episthymia*¹⁴ and in addition to this, it will impair the growth of the intellect (*aql*) which is the supreme faculty of the soul. Democratic man is, then, unable to live in accordance with the true laws of Reason, and below the level of producing the unchangeable and sound judgments both in private and social life.

In the eyes of the democratic citizens, the virtuous ruler is the one who has the ability to judge well, and to contrive what enables them to attain their variable desires and appetites (*Siyasa*, 51). If the true virtuous ruler, who determine and direct them toward true felicity and perfection, as stated above in the virtuous city, were to rule them, they do not make him a ruler in this city. Farabi states that, if by chance he comes to rule, he will find himself either deposed or killed. Therefore, each one of the democratic people wants only the ruler who facilitates the attainment of its desires and wishes whatsoever, not the attainment of happiness and virtue, and they refuse, then, the rule of virtue and virtuous men (*Siyasa*, 51-52).

Farabi's democratic city is also characterized by political corruption.¹⁵ He states that since all are equal and "*no one has a better claim than anyone to a position of authority*" (*Siyasa*, 51), political positions can be "*bought for a price*" (*Siyasa*, 51). He thinks that it is a direct consequence of the extreme egalitarianism of democracy that political progress can be corrupted in this city.¹⁶ For there is no authority over the power of people, and when someone holds a position of authority, it is either because the citizens have favored him with it, or else because they have received money from him (*Siyasa*, 51). Therefore, for Farabi, the positions of authority in the

13 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 201.

14 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 452.

15 Khalidi, *ibid.*, p. 385.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 385.

democratic city can be brought for a price, and such a political process is, then, corrupted by money.¹⁷

According to Farabi, “all the endeavors and purposes of the ignorant cities are present in this city in a most perfect manner; of all them, this is the most admirable and happy city” (*Siyasa*, 50-51). Rendering Plato’s terms ‘*peplos*’ (cloak)¹⁸ it looks like, for Farabi as well, an embroidered garment full of colored figures and dyes, and all kinds of wishes and ways of life are to be found in this city. Unlike the other ignorant cities, there is no single dominating end in this city, and they form countless groups with, a variety of characters, interests, aims, and desires.¹⁹ Therefore everyone wants to live in that city, and the nations emigrate to it, so the city grows beyond measure (*Siyasa*, 51). People from very different races multiply in it, and this comes about by all kinds of marriages, resulting in children of very different dispositions with extremely varied education and upbringing. The democratic city develops, then, into many cities in itself (*Siyasa*, 51). It may include philosophers, rhetoricians, and poets on account of its nature of differences in itself. To Farabi, this feature of democracy and the democratic city is “*the best thing that takes place in it*” since “*parts of the virtuous city*” may exist in it. (*Siyasa*, 51) So, democracy is a composite regime; various individuals and groups can exist and pursue their ways of life and appetites, and they are free to fulfill their different ends independently or incorporated with others.²⁰

In this respect, it contains more evil and vice than the other imperfect cities for Farabi, and the good and evil increase proportionately with the size of the city, degree of civilization, population and productivity. For Farabi, the bigger, the more civilized, the more populated the more productive, and the more perfect it is, more prevalent and the greater are the good and evil it possesses. Farabi’s city contains more virtue, though it

17 In opposition to Farabi’s democratic city, Plato never mentions this kind of feature of the democratic city. On the contrary, for Plato democracy comes about when the poor are victorious, killing some of their opponents and expelling others, and giving the rest an equal share in ruling.

18 Rosenstock, Bruce, “Athena’s Cloak: Plato’s Critique of the Democratic City in the Republic”, p. 364.

19 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 201.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

accommodates evils in it, than the other imperfect and non-virtuous cities. The virtuous individuals are, then, able to reside and flourish within the democratic city, since all citizens in this city are allowed to pursue their own favored lifestyles.²¹ Because the democratic city makes possible, preserves, and promotes every kind of desire, everyone comes to reside in it, and pursue his or her ways of life. The result is the greatest possible diversity of character, ways of life, and ends in this city.

From now on, Farabi emphasizes his salient judgment: “The construction of virtuous city and the establishment of the rule of virtuous men are more effective and much easier out of the indispensable and *democratic* cities than out of any other ignorant city” (*Siyasa*, 51-52). That is to say, of the six ignorant regimes opposed to the virtuous city, the city of necessity and *democracy* occupy a privileged position, and the best potential for the establishing of the virtuous city, and the rule of virtuous men.²² Though Farabi is not explicit concerning this process of transformation, his emphasis on the presence of virtuous individuals and groups in it may play a role to in converting the democratic city into the virtuous city, and the establishment of the rule of virtuous men in it.²³ The replacement of the democratic accepted opinions of multitude by wise political knowledge, and by the truth or an approximation to the truth in the city is inevitable to discuss in Farabi’s reading of democracy.

At this point, we must take into consideration his emphasis on the distinction between Socrates’ attitude toward the opinions and ways of life of his fellow-citizens, and Plato’s attitude towards it (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 64-19/5). According to Farabi, Plato’s first account of the way of Socrates

21 Khalidi, *ibid.*, p.385.

22 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 200. Here, we must take into account the distinction between the virtuous city and the rule of virtuous men in Farabi’s emphasis. In our view, the virtuous city was, which we explained the features of it above, the establishment of ideal of Farabi’s mind, and the first ruler of it is the philosopher- prophet who theoretically combines with the Active Intellect. However, the emphasis of the rule of virtuous men in the democratic city for Farabi, we think, contains the possibility of the presence of these philosophers in the city. The question of how to establish the *virtuous democratic city* in actual for Farabi is important question, and we will try to find answer to it in the third section, named “Education and Democracy”.

23 *Ibid.*, 393. At this point, as we have seen in the first section of Plato, Farabi breaks with Plato who explains his transformation model differently. (See also; Fakhry, Majid, *Al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neo- Platonism: His Life Works and Influence*, p. 113.)

deals with Socrates' attitude to opinions and habits of the multitude, and the second account, on the other hand, deals with his own attitude.²⁴ According to Farabi, Socrates did not look beyond this alternative: either to comply with the accepted opinions or openly challenge them, and expose him to death. As a consequence of his uncompromising attitude, he felt victim to the rage of the multitude.²⁵ When Socrates knew that, as Farabi says, he could not survive except by conforming to false opinions and base ways of life, he preferred death to life (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 64-19/10). However, Farabi suggests that Plato had a different attitude towards the opinions and the ways of life of multitude, since Plato did not prefer death to life as Socrates did. Farabi defends that then Plato devoted his life to the replacement of false accepted opinion in his time by the truth or an approximation to the truth. In this respect, though the philosopher is in grave danger in their cities, Plato ought to devise a plan (by living in corrupt this city) for moving the multitude away from their false opinions and ways of life to the truth and virtuous ways of life in both moral and political sense (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 67, 22/15).

Hence, Farabi stresses that one needs *another city* which is different from the cities existing at that time, and he (Plato) investigates what *that city* is 'in speech' (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 64-65, 10/15). Because the things and actions that are good and useful in the eyes of multitude are not *truly* good and useful (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 58, 10/5). Plato, as Farabi emphasizes, investigates the truly good, gainful things, and actions which can be realized in *that city* in the *Republic* (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 65, 20/10). Therefore, as in Plato, Farabi sees the very distinction between the virtuous way of life which leads to the true happiness and non-virtuous way of life which leads to the apparent happiness.

The problem is here that whether Plato sees democracy like Farabi does, as a potential and easily transformable to the virtuous city or the rule of virtuous men. Though Farabi is not explicit concerning this model of transformation in his works, he clearly indicates that Plato endeavored in his life to change and reform the corrupt ways of life, laws in his time (Farabi says in his [Plato's] "democratic Athens": *The Philosophy of Plato*, 67,

²⁴ Strauss, Leo, "Farabi's Plato", p. 382.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

23/5), moving their false opinions and corrupt ways of life to the virtuous life, and the truth (*The Philosophy of Plato*, 67, 23/5). The book also ends with the sentence, “this, then, is where the philosophy of Plato terminated”.

After mentioning his reading of Plato’s attitude toward the false opinions of people in moral and political sense, we can turn to the Farabi’s vital judgment that “the construction of the virtuous city and the establishment of the rule of virtuous men are more effective and much easier out of the indispensable and democratic cities than out of any other ignorant city” (*Siyasa*, 51-52). And we can also state that, when combining this judgment with his reading of Plato’s attitude to opinions of multitude in *The Philosophy of Plato*, Farabi seems to evaluate his account of democracy on the same level as Plato’s. In other words, in terms of Farabian view, whereas Socrates did not provisionally conform to the corrupt/false laws and opinions of the democratic city, and finally preferred death; Plato devoted his life to convert and change these degenerate ways of life into the virtuous and good ones. Therefore, though the true philosopher is *grave in danger in the democratic city* in his or her time, and while democracy is an ignorant regime, the city itself has also a potential in itself (due to its basic principles and multi-colored character) to turn to the virtuous and perfect city or the rule of virtuous men. Therefore we can say that the democratic city is a potentially virtuous city in itself for Farabi.

Now, we must consider that there are three possible reasons for Farabi’s surprisingly positive verdict on democracy on these lines (with a more favorable attitude than Plato): The first reason for Farabi’s positive attitude towards democracy, though not actually virtuous itself, concerns the fact that there are virtuous individuals and groups in the democratic city. Farabi follows, as shown above, Plato’s remarks about the variety of constitutions and ruling, but he takes matters much further. These individuals and groups (like civil democratic institutions) can simply arise in democracy, because the individuals are free to pursue whatever lifestyles, and set up voluntary associations they choose. Farabi does not say anything about these associations, but he may be thinking of professional, guild associations or religious, and Sufi orders (which originated in Mesopotamia in the early tenth century, around the time Farabi was writing), or looser groups,

and associations of similar-minded individuals.²⁶ Therefore, the first reason for Farabi's judgment that the democratic city is easily transformable to the virtuous city or the rule of the virtuous men is that it contains in itself certain microcosms of the virtuous city, as "parts of the virtuous city" (*Siyasa*, 51). Consequently, "it is quite possible that, with the passage of time, virtuous men will grow up in it" and this is the best feature that takes place in this city. However, it must be stated at this point that Farabi also considers the difficulty of the rule of virtuous men (being in grave danger) in the democratic city, states that,

"As for the truly virtuous man, namely the man who, if he were to rule them, determine and direct their actions toward happiness; they do not make him a ruler. If by chance he comes to rule them, he will soon find himself either deposed or killed or in an unstable and challenged position, [...], therefore, they refuse the rule of virtuous men and resent it" (*Siyasa*, 51).

Farabi seems to follow Plato's main remarks about the position of the true philosopher in the democratic city, but he departs from him with regard to the possibility of its transformation into the virtuous city or the rule of virtuous men. In our view, the second emphasis (the rule of virtuous men) is not a *literally* emphasized distinction, it may refer to the philosophers who live in the democratic city, and this point render the judgment problematic in itself with the question of *how*: i.e., how is possible to establish the rule of virtuous men in democracy? However we must state here that Farabi favors democracy for the reason that it is quite possible for virtuous wise men to flourish within the democratic city, this is the first reason for his favorable and positive attitude towards democracy.

The second reason for Farabi's favorable attitude to democracy concerns the ease of the transformation of it into the virtuous one; hence Farabi somewhat seems to concern with the question of *how* to set up a virtuous regime from one of the imperfect cities. At this very point, democracy occupies a privileged position among the imperfect and non-virtuous cities. Since the democratic city has a potential to turn it into the virtuous and perfect regimes. We must mention here that this (the ease of transformation)

²⁶ Khalidi, *ibid.*, p. 388.

is quite different from the question of how close the non-virtuous city is to the ideal one, in terms of the degree of perfection and happiness.²⁷ For, a city may be close to the ideal in nature, but it may be very difficult to make the transformation from it to the ideal city. A city, on the other hand, may be far from the ideal in nature, but it may be easy to make the transformation from it to the ideal. Therefore, there are two criteria for evaluating a city or regime: (a) How closely a city approximates to the virtuous regime, i.e., to the ideal, and (b) how easily it can be transformed into the virtuous regime, i.e., to the ideal. Farabi privileges, then, timocracy as a superior regime according to the first criterion, and democracy according to the second one. Moreover, the first and second reasons for Farabi's privileging the democratic city are not unconnected. It is precisely because it contains virtuous individuals and groups that carry some potential and hope for being transformed into the virtuous city and the rule of virtuous men in it.²⁸ Though Farabi stresses its potentiality of transformation to the ideal, and does not directly tell us *how* it might be actual; he alludes to his virtuous-ideal democratic model in all his works by suggesting the priority and authority of philosophy and education.²⁹

We think we can say that this is particularly true for the *ignorant* democratic city whose citizens have no knowledge of virtue, goodness, or ruling a city, but not for the *immoral city* whose citizens know what virtue is and the main principles for ruling a city, but have turned their backs on it (recall Farabi's distinction of the non-virtuous regimes: ignorant, immoral, and erring). Hence, though Farabi is not explicit about the question of *how* to set up a virtuous ruling and ways of life in democracy, he alludes to the model of transformation of the *ignorant democracy* in his most works, through the establishment of the rule of the philosophers who truly judge and know how to rule. Therefore the distinction of the ignorant and immoral regimes is vital in Farabi's judgment, and paves the way for overcoming the contradictory statements concerning his account of democracy.³⁰

27 *Ibid.*, p. 389.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.

29 Rosenthal, "The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of al-Farabi", p. 166; Khalidi, *ibid.*, p. 390; Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 202.

30 Khalidi, *ibid.*, p. 391.

The third and final reason for Farabi's positive attitude to democracy may be concerned with the historical matters of Farabi's time. Though Farabi did not see any actual democratic example in his time and the place in which he lived; Baghdad, the city Farabi grew up in, was a multi-cultural and multi-colored city.³¹ This fact may play a role in seeing democracy as a potential virtuous regime and a second best city, since the main feature of Baghdad may affect Farabi's thought in general, and his account of democracy in particular because of the ethnic diversity of Islamic society and geographical difference of people who constitute it during Farabi's time.³² In other words, there were no rigid distinctions in his time and land between the members of the different ethnic groups, and there were no legal restrictions attached to ethnically mixed marriages. However, this affinity to ethnic diversity in Farabi is not a tolerance of diversity in the sense of disregard of truth and the ignorance of virtue.³³ In his account of a virtuous city (*medine al-fadila*), he states that all residents of the perfect city must hold the same opinions and actions, however it is possible to stress that, in our view, diversity in culture and ethnicity has influenced his more favorable verdict on democracy, due to the affinities (in thought) between a democratic tolerance for cultural pluralism and universalistic Islamic approach of his own time and land.³⁴

In conclusion, we have proposed three explanations for Farabi's favorable verdict on democracy and for the tension in the text regarding the democratic city. Firstly, the democratic city contains different individuals and groups, including the free associations of virtuous individuals, constitute 'parts of the virtuous city' in itself. Secondly, as a result of this reason, this kind of city is most easily transformable into a virtuous city and the rule of virtuous men. This fact is also, we have stated, particularly true for the *ignorant* democratic city whose the citizens have no knowledge of virtue, but not for the *immoral democracy* whose denizens know what virtue is and the main principles for ruling a city, but denies the realize them in action (recall that the Farabi's distinction of the non-virtuous regimes:

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 391-392.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 393.

34 The comparison between Plato's favorable attitude toward democracy and Farabi's attitude will be discussed in the conclusion in detail.

ignorant, immoral, and erring).³⁵ Therefore, though Farabi is not explicit about the question of *how* to establish a virtuous regime and ways of life in democracy, he alludes the model of transformation of the *ignorant democracy* in most of his works, through the establishment of the rule of the philosophers who truly judge and know how to rule, therefore the distinction of the ignorant and immoral regimes is vital in Farabi's judgment, and leads us to overcome the contradictory statements and tension concerning his account of democracy. Finally, his favorable attitude toward democracy can be also explained by the historical fact that it accords with the universalistic features of Islamic doctrine as well as his own multicultural experience.

B. The Disagreement with Democracy in the *Virtuous City*

1. Metaphysical-Epistemological Background of the Critique

The negative criticism of democracy in Farabi's eyes must be understood, as in Plato, on the basis of the ignorance of the non-virtuous regimes (ignorant democracy) as opposed to the necessary principles of the *Ideal State* (*medine al-fadila*: virtuous city).³⁶ For a better understanding of this principal disagreement of (ignorant) democracy, we need to see the metaphysics-politics togetherness in his system. After this analysis, it will be clear that why Farabi categorizes democracy among the ignorant cities, since ignorance is the deprivation of knowledge (*'ilm*), and perfection (*kemal*).³⁷

In Farabi's system, as in Plato's, it's not possible to abstract politics from epistemology and metaphysics. The relation of politics and metaphysics in both should be considered in order to present the criticism of democracy of both.

35 Khalidi, *ibid.*, p. 391.

36 We must state that, first of all, while Plato examine the nature of soul in his analysis of corrupt cities through a comparison, Farabi begins his *Virtuous City* and *Political Regime* in which his account of politics is revealed with metaphysics. Thus, we cannot see in Farabi's thought a psychological background of criticism of democracy in principle, since his psychology (the analysis of the intellect) is inseparable from his metaphysics, therefore we can establish only a metaphysical-epistemological (which includes psychology in itself) criticism from the viewpoint of the intelligibles and principles.

37 Aydın, "Farabi'nin Siyasi Düşüncesinde Saadet Kavramı", p. 312.

First of all, Farabi deliberates on what true happiness is, and supporting it with the idea of perfection of human, he insistently stressed that it can be possibly seen in a society and a political organization with its social-politic existence. However this political organization is established in the way that modern readers are not familiar within which there is a clear resemblance between the human and the cosmos in general. At this point, the most important issue which attracts attention is the fact that the problem of politics or government, especially as stressed in the *Virtuous City (Medine al-Fadila)* and *Political Regime (Siyasa al-Medeniyye)* of Farabi, initiates the research of how such a political organization as a whole comes into existence from the First Cause by emanating the existing diversity in the cosmos, whereas Plato's *Republic* starts with the discussion of justice and the resemblance of the individual and the state.³⁸ This is the point that should be emphasized, because it is inevitably necessary to consider his philosophy as a whole in order to come to conclusions about it.³⁹ The point that we deal with is the close relation between politics and metaphysics, through the metaphysical-epistemological background, because *this principally* determines the view of democracy of Farabi.

Furthermore, what is meant with the metaphysical-epistemological background of the critique is, as he evidently does in his fundamental treatises especially in *Medine el-Fadila* and *Siyasa el-Medeniyye*, the fact that he explain his opinions about politics through his opinions about metaphysics, so the idea that politics, in fact, also provides research for principles of metaphysics in the hierarchical order of beings derived from the "First" to the primary matter, which leans on Aristotle's matter-form view, is important at this point comes into prominence. In addition to this, the idea that politics also offers the extent and content of *transcendent* relation between human and divine carries weight seriously, too. Actually such an understanding of *transcendence* is characteristically a precondition for human to attain all principles and knowledge.⁴⁰ Here, this point also should be understood as a vital point that separates his concern of democracy from Plato's. In other words, this is also the main point that separates the political philosophy of Farabi and indirectly his view of democracy from Plato's.

38 Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 117.

39 Aydın, *ibid.*, p. 303.

40 Galston, Miriam, *Politics and Excellence: The Political Philosophy of Alfarabi*, p. 72.

As indicated above, whereas Plato's *Republic* starts with the theory of justice and the resemblance of soul and state, Farabi starts his *Siyasa* and *Medine* with the First Cause (*as-sabab al-awwal*) and emanation of other beings from Him. According to Farabi, "the substance of the First is a substance from which every existent emanates" (*Medine*, 95), "he is the close cause of the secondary causes and the Active Intellect" (*Siyasa*, 32), "and the existence of other beings depends on the existence of the First" (*Siyasa*, 47). Farabi presents six principles (*mabadi'*) of being in his system: (1) The First Cause, (2) the Secondary Causes, i.e., incorporeal Intellects, (3) the Active Intellect governing the sublunar world, (4) Soul, (5) Form, and (6) Matter.⁴¹

The First Cause is of the highest excellence and perfection, and nothing equals it in essence and ranks (*Medine*, 57). It is immaterial and, and hence without form, and the First, for Farabi, is perfect, in the strict meaning of the term, and he is no way deficient (*Medine*, 59). The First is unique and one, inasmuch as it is utterly distinct from anything else. (*Medine*, 61). The First Cause is unique and one, again, inasmuch as it cannot have a contrary, otherwise, it could be neither a self-sufficient nor the First Cause, nor could it exist eternally. (*Medine*, 63) The greatness, majesty, and glory of the First Cause can be reduced to the perfection which is characteristic of being the *first*, since he needs no outward support to be great, majestic, and glorious (*Medine*, 83).⁴²

Farabi sets out to explain the emanation in which the universe above and below the moon is linked with the First Cause. The First Being is neither a matter nor a form, from the point of view of its substance, it is actually Reason. Due to the plenitude of its being and perfection, entire order of beings comes into existence from it with causality as its will and choices are completely independent.⁴³ At this point, Farabi turns to the act of knowing which has as its subjects only the First Cause itself for the existence of all beings. According to this, all beings and intellects emanate from the First Cause knowing himself, the first intellect derives from that the First Cause knows itself, and the second intellect derives from that this intellect knows the First Intellect and itself. The second intellect permanently emanates

41 Adamson, Peter and Taylor, Richard C., *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, p. 56-57.

42 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 349.

43 Fakhry, *ibid.*, p. 118.

from the First Cause; the passage from the *transcendent* cause to an inferior realm of reality is a metaphysical process.⁴⁴ In this way the ten intellects occur, and the tenth intellect is Active Intellect (*Akl al-Faal*). The emanationist scheme presented by Farabi is, then, a hierarchical from the First Cause through secondary causes or intellects associated with the nine celestial spheres, to a final tenth intellect which governs the world of generation and corruption.⁴⁵ The crucial element in the scheme is the presence of the Active Intellect governing this world (including in the moral and political sense). The source of all moral and political human acts is this intellect, and the political function of the Active Intellect, which turns a possibility to an activity, is very important for Farabi.⁴⁶

Farabi describes the process of emanation as a permanent source of being into the world. Whereas the First Cause (principle) is one and unique, the existents which emanate from him are numerous and very different in excellence and quality (*Medine*, 95). The First is perfect, necessary, self-sufficient, eternal, uncaused, and immaterial. There is a graded descent from the highest to the most inferior existent, and man is encouraged to arrange his individual life to which he belongs according to that rank (Farabi says it is "justice" in *Medine*, 97) which is manifest in the cosmos and the souls of the beings altogether.⁴⁷ The powers or divisions of the human soul, in Farabi's eyes, constitute an ascending series; the lower faculty is material for the higher, and again is the form for the first.⁴⁸ Thought passes judgment on good and bad, and gives to the will its motives. All perception, representation or thought is attended with a certain effort to reach the necessary consequence.⁴⁹ But this transition from possibility to actuality, i.e., the realization thus of experience, is not man's own act, but is brought about by the *superhuman spirit*, which has sprung from the last sphere-spirit, that of the Moon. In this way man's knowledge is represented as being a contribution from above and not a knowledge which has been acquired in human mental struggle. We must state here that Farabi does not examine the

44 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 355.

45 Adamson, Peter and Taylor, Richard C, *ibid.*, p. 57.

46 Rosenthal, Erwin, "The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of al-Farabi", pp. 158-161.

47 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 357.

48 De Boer, T.J., "Farabi", *History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 118.

49 *Ibid.*, 118-119.

function of the Active Intellect (*Akl al-Faal*) in his metaphysical analysis, but in his political one. Man now receives information from this *transcendent* spirit; it is only by means of their influence that his actual experience becomes explicable to him.⁵⁰

According to Farabi, the relation of the First Cause to the cosmos is similar with the relation of the First Ruler to the city/state (*Siyasa*, 84). This can be understood in two different ways: The first one is that the First Cause's ruling the cosmos as a whole with his divine omnipotence is similar with the First Ruler's ruling the state with the first principles he possesses. Therefore, as with all intellects that emanate from First Cause, the principles of the state as a whole are the same with the first and unchangeable principles which come to the Active Intellect. This means that all transcendent principles and knowledges have a political content in the personality of the First Ruler. The second one is that the hierarchy of beings, which starts with the First Cause and extends until primary matter and four elements, necessitates principally a hierarchy of ruling in the state. "Thus, the city becomes similar to the natural beings; the ranks of order in it similar to the ranks of order of the beings, which begin with the First and terminate in prime matter and the elements" (*Siyasa*, 39). The virtuous city (ideal state) is the place in which this hierarchy is preserved, and everything happens appropriately to it. The idea that the perfect human association, the best/ideal state, should imitate the hierarchical order of the universe, and of nature is dominant in Farabi's political thought.⁵¹ People who are ignorant of this truth are unaware of the divinely established order, and their views are introduced by Farabi as opposed to this metaphysical truth as explained in the *Virtuous City* (*Medine*, 287).

The cosmos-state analogy, and the relationship between the First Cause and the First Ruler is an analogy that emphasizes the togetherness of politics-metaphysics, and should be considered.⁵² The First Ruler may be compared to the First Cause, who presides over immaterial entities, beneath lie the heavenly bodies, followed by material entities.⁵³ The man in

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-121.

⁵¹ Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 358.

⁵² Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵³ Fakhry, *Al-Farabi, Founder of Islamic Neo-Platonism: His Life, Works and Influence*, p. 102.

whom these divine conditions are fulfilled must be, then, the ruler of the city, since he is able to identify every action conducive to happiness, and guide others to true happiness and actions leading to it.⁵⁴ According to Farabi, politics gives the individual the form and principles of advancing from the physical realm to the divine one. Politics, from this aspect, can be accepted as a progression or an extended part of metaphysics or divination.⁵⁵ Such an interpretation as follows can be made as, from this aspect: if political science determines what true happiness is, and if true happiness consists of knowledge, principles of formation of First Cause, beings and cosmos, political science should deal with the divine one (*Siyasa*, 35, *Tahsil*, 24-25).⁵⁶

When the togetherness of politics-metaphysics is discussed, the account of happiness which is vital for philosophy of Farabi should be considered. He stresses that human (can be “political” here as well) happiness is identical with theoretical happiness especially in his three works.⁵⁷ In the *Virtuous City*, Farabi says that the soul which is independent from matter will reach the degree of perfection in argument of link between human and divine, and he insistently stresses that happiness consists of existence of human and his connection with divine as a transcendent being (*Medine*, 263). According to Farabi, “felicity means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in its existence where it is no need of matter for its support” (*Medine*, 207). This can come true through the Active Intellect which provides connection between divine and human (*Medine*, 207). According to this view, virtues and good actions are explained with their reciprocity to “the happiness which should be desired only for itself” (*khayr*) (*Medine*, 204). These parts of *Medine* are understood as identifying theoretical happiness with transcending of matter, and ideal of transcendence.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

55 Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 132.

56 Fauzi, Nejjar, “Siyaset Biliminde Farabi”, p. 207. There is a danger of what can muddy the difference between the practical and theoretical sciences is such a determined political science’s undertaking of the functions of theology and metaphysics. Therefore, political science seems as if it intervenes area of theoretical sciences and metaphysics. However, Farabi gives the clue of existing connection between metaphysics and politics by the way political content of Active Intellect and conjunction of First Ruler with it. This issue will be discussed later.

57 Galston, *ibid.*, pp. 60-64.

It is seen in *Siyasa* that happiness is mentioned with regard to its theoretical aspect, too. According to this, the function of the Active Intellect is to make the human reach to the highest degree of perfection, in other words, to the degree of becoming a substance on his or her own, and its function is making human reached to the degree of ability to exist independently from matter (*Siyasa*, 34). This degree is the position that human soul has the highest happiness. According to Farabi,

“Man knows it [happiness] when he makes use of the first principles and the primary knowledge given to him by the Active Intellect and “since what is intended by man’s existence is that he attain happiness, which is the ultimate perfection that remains to be given to the possible beings capable of receiving it, [...] man can reach happiness only when the Active Intellect first gives the first intelligibles, which constitute the primary knowledge” (*Siyasa*, 35-36).

One of Farabi’s studies which includes only theoretical analysis of happiness is his work of *Fusul al-Medeni* (*Aphorisms of the Statesman*), and Farabi emphasizes here that they have a common belief about theoretical aspect of happiness by giving a direct reference to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. He also emphasizes that highest happiness is related to the definitive perfection and the absolute good (which means “khayr” in Arabic words) (*Fusul*, no. 28, *Risale fi’l Akl*, 26-27).⁵⁸

Furthermore, Farabi has also works which emphasize not only the pure theoretical aspect of happiness but also the practical-political aspect of it, and *Tahsil as-Saade* (*Attainment of Happiness*) comes first from these works. In fact, it can be said that this work completely support that opinion.⁵⁹ In the first section of this work, it is stressed that theoretical happiness also need practical as well as theoretical philosophy. *Tahsil* starts with that sentence: “The human happiness through which nations and citizens of cities attain earthly happiness in this life and supreme happiness in the life beyond are of four kinds: theoretical virtues, deliberative virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts.”

58 Galston, *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

According to this approach, the dimension of happiness is not comprehension of pure theoretical principles and knowledges but it is the phenomenon of that making these functional in practice is necessary. In other words, the class of the wise who comprehend the first principles and knowledge by an excellent ability of comprehension should be effective in politics, and only in this case, a virtuous and ideal state and society can be talked about (*Tahsil*, 42). In addition, supreme moral virtues and political skills (*mihne*) cannot be separated from theoretical perfection/metaphysical one.⁶⁰

In the togetherness of politics-metaphysics, Farabi's claim, which makes his political philosophy original, is surely that he gives the definition of happiness that means human soul's advance to this perfection, to only one person as the first and founder element.⁶¹ Now, what should be mentioned is that how the ruler of the *Virtuous City* described as the First Ruler attains these primary knowledge and principles.

Theoretical philosophy is, according to Farabi, useful because it makes truly virtuous or excellent action possible. Virtuous action presupposes real virtue, and real virtue presupposes knowledge of real happiness (*Fusul*, no. 94-95)⁶² As well as such happiness, and the knowledge that is necessary for ruling also can be reached, by gaining the first metaphysical principles, in the *Virtuous City*.⁶³ The problem of what the content of that knowledge is, and how that knowledge would be obtained, must be discussed here for a better understanding of this critique.

The art of ruling in the ideal state cannot be any chance art, the ruler is a person over whom nobody has any authority whatsoever (*Medine*, 241). There is not any other skill superior to the art of politics in ideal state, and

60 Mahdi, *History of Political Philosophy*, pp. 185-186.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

62 Galston, *ibid.*, p. 64.

63 As we have studied in Plato's psychological analysis of democracy, the issue of that ruling is a matter of knowledge and knowing superior principles is available also in Farabi. What determines their principal challenge to democracy is the scientific prerogative they give to ruling (management). However, as we will discuss in this chapter, the content of political knowledge (*episteme*) in Plato is not same with the content of that knowledge ('ilm) in Farabi. This is the point that differentiates challenges to democracy *inform*. It will be discussed in the comparison chapter.

everyone cannot have this skill (*Medine*, 239, *Siyasa*, 36). The norms of human behavior in society are derived from the divine norms of the universe through this art, and then, the cosmic order is the model of human life.⁶⁴ The imitation of the higher entities by the lower grades should reign supreme in the perfect state as well. The views of the ignorant states (including democracy) are based on wrong principles in this sense. For a perfect and virtuous organization of both the states and souls, Farabi suggests that the ruler of this city must unite with the Active Intellect, and therefore, the first and the most important qualification that ruler of the state (the First Ruler: philosopher-prophet) should have is his conjunction (*ittisal*) with Active Intellect (*Medine*, 245-247).

For Farabi, the conjunction of the First ruler with the Active Intellect is presented as principles and knowledges given by the First Cause, that is to say revelation (*Medine*, 245, *Siyasa*, 36). One aspect of what provides the politics-metaphysics conjunction/togetherness mentioned above is based on “*nous poietikos*” of Aristotle and his interpretation of “*acquired intellect*” in Alexander of Aphrodisias, and other aspect of it is based on revelation (*wahy*) which is a religious term and the transcendent conjunction point of divine and human. The content of the principles and knowledges given by the First Cause is not entirely metaphysical, but also political and ethical. Thus, the effect of the First Cause to the human/political one via the Active Intellect is very important for political philosophy of Farabi.

Farabi displays the excellence of the First Ruler (philosopher-prophet) in action and as well as in contemplation, by guiding the people towards truth and perfection (*Medine*, 241). Whereas Farabi stresses and establishes the position of the Active Intellect as a cosmic entity in its metaphysical extent in the first chapter of *Virtuous City*, he is now concerned, (in the third chapter, politics), with introducing the supreme intellect which man acquires on the highest level of human existence (*Medine*, 240). It is the intellect which, as a result of man’s conduct with the Active Intellect, enters the human mind from the *outside*.⁶⁵

According to Farabi, contacting between divine and political realm with each other means to stress the political and intellectual importance

64 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 436.

65 Walzer, *ibid.*, pp. 439- 446.

of knowledges relating to the First Cause and the divine beings⁶⁶, and the majority of the people who are not able to acquire directly such a knowledge should be ruled by person who is the receiver of principles that determines their real life as well as their intellectual life. They should acquire supreme happiness and virtue by this way, therefore the First Ruler is also "real teacher and guide for this purpose" (*Siyasa*, 35). Because the most people need a person who would lead and instruct them the first principles and knowledges (*Siyasa*, 40-41). This person is the First Ruler of the state who, as with the sun which makes eyes see and makes colors seem, sets a conjunction with the Active Intellect which turns possible intellect to state of action.⁶⁷ Thus, the Active Intellect, as a *transcendent* intermediary between divine and man, is the most important element of Farabi's political thought.⁶⁸

It follows that, from this point of view, the description of the intellect whether as epistemological, cosmological or metaphysical is not a complete description with guidance of principles and knowledge which emanates from the First Cause. According to Farabi, in the legitimate base, the intellect can be discussed from moral or political point of view.⁶⁹ From the standpoints of happiness, perfection and virtue, the formation and foundation of the state can be realized by the way of acquirement of those knowledges.

What is understood from the social-political content of revelation is the importance of the emphasis which Farabi makes through the togetherness of politics-metaphysics, in other words, importance of the functionality of divine and political in the same axis.⁷⁰ In fact, while Farabi was

66 Mahdi, "Al-Farabi", p. 188.

67 Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 162.

68 Revelation is, in this context, kept separate from 'religion', and to be taken together with philosophy instead, and to be connected with the highest human knowledge which only the metaphysician is able to attain. (For a detailed comparison between religion and philosophy see; Walzer, *ibid.* p. 441.)

69 According to Majid Fakhry, the content of togetherness of politics-metaphysics, the principal classification of the state and society, and the content of the intellect should be carefully taken into consideration in terms of Farabi's whole philosophy. (Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, pp. 139-140.)

70 Close relation between politics and metaphysics in Farabi's thought finds its expression also in Islamic belief system, it is that relation between God, cosmos and human can not

expected to allocate the content of revelation to metaphysics and theology in his works *Medine* and *Siyasa*, he does not mention even revelation and prophecy in his expressions about metaphysics, and he raises such an argument only in his political books.⁷¹ Thus, revelation and prophecy are subjected to the political philosophy rather than the theoretical philosophy by Farabi.⁷² Establishing an ideal state and the frame of the constitutional law of the ideal state consist of this transcendent content and this can be formulated like that: “The person who makes conjunction with the Active Intellect (the First Ruler) should rule the state like the First Cause’s ruling of cosmos.”

The basic feature of the First Ruler is his thinking and comprehension of first knowledge and principles. The Active Intellect which is in a position of mediatory between divine and human gives the principles and knowledges of the First Cause to the First Ruler:

“This man who receives divine revelation, and God Almighty grants him revelation through the mediation of the Active Intellect, [...], thus, he is, through the emanation from the Active Intellect to his passive intellect, a wise man and a philosopher, and an accomplished thinker who employs an intellect of divine quality. [...] This man holds the most perfect rank of humanity and has reached the highest degree of felicity. His soul is united as it were with the Active Intellect; [...] He is the man who knows every action by which felicity can be reached. This is the first condition for being a ruler. [...] He should be able to lead people well along the right path to felicity and to the actions by which felicity is reached” (Medine, 245- 247).

In this respect, the First Ruler is at first sight a philosopher in the metaphysical context, and without philosophy the city will remain without a king, and undoubtedly perish (*Medine*, 253). Farabi calls the comprehension of those principles of the First Ruler and his followings as *philosophy* and *wisdom*. Other citizens learn what to know and what to do through

be abstracted from political area. Therefore, the first principles and knowledge of the First Cause should be reported, through revelation acquired as a result of the conjunction between the Active Intellect, by the First Ruler, and the state should be ruled appropriately to this.

71 Nejjar, *ibid.*, p. 208.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

the First Ruler who is the source of knowledge and the power of the state. Farabi understands religion from the entirety of those images and symbols as a result of that mediatory.⁷³ Rather than comprehension of truth intellectually, the imaginary and symbolic representation of it is in question for a majority of people (*Medine*, 279; *Tahsil*, 44-45).⁷⁴

The First Ruler, who is the receiver of transcendent and supernatural principles and knowledge which the majority cannot have, provides them with a practical version of theoretical action.⁷⁵ In other words, “*seeking for truth which provides the opportunity for happiness*” or “*seeking for happiness which depends on truth*” in his personality are two sides of the same science, and this is the First Philosophy.⁷⁶ Like Plato, Farabi had to admit that the appearances and the rule of such an extraordinary man (philosopher-prophet) is a rare event.⁷⁷ However, he did not despair of associating philosophy with the actual government, and again lists one of the features of the rulers (*melik as-sünne*) after the First Ruler as philosophy again (*Medine*, 251).

In Farabi's thought, the subject of ruling is related to the moral virtues of human and therefore, actions and behaviors of human. The transcendent conjunction (*ittisal*) with the Active Intellect which everyone cannot make is the basic feature of ideal state/virtuous city, and from this view, the *transcendence of matter* in Farabi's state should be understood as the contact with divine of the First Ruler, who is also the founder element of the state, and as his guidance to true, good and justice for majority of people whether from the political and moral point of view.⁷⁸ Thus, political scope of finally acquiring the highest and perfect happiness is determined through revelation in ideal state/society. The inhabitants of the virtuous state have to know the First Cause and his feature and epithets, non-material divine beings, virtuous actions, the knowledge of what revelation is,

73 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 189.

74 Sharif, M. M., “Farabi”, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, p. 465.

75 Walzer, “Al-Farabi's Theory of Prophecy and Divination”, p. 143.

76 Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 115.

77 Walzer, *On the Perfect State*, p. 447.

78 From this point of view, there is a *formal* difference between principal critique of democracy of Plato and that of Farabi from the standpoint of the *content* of the principles in the context of transcendence and politics.

and how it happens.⁷⁹ This inseparable togetherness between theoretical-practical, metaphysics-politics, and divine-human, which appears with rigid marks in Farabi, determine his view of the ignorant (*cahil*) societies. The most prominent of those is surely democracy though there was no any actual example of it in the era of Farabi.

The virtue and the art of the ruler is, then, exercised by directing those who have the lower virtues or arts, whom he uses to instruct and form the character of the various kinds of citizens by persuasion (*Tahsil*, 45-46). In using persuasion, the prince/ruler should go back to the things he studied demonstratively, and look for persuasive arguments and devise methods of political oratory. Since it aims at the perfection of all mankind, philosophy seeks political power.⁸⁰ The attainment of happiness means the perfection of that power of the human soul that is specific to man.⁸¹ This fact also requires the discipline of lower desires to cooperate with and aid reason to perform the *proper* activity and such discipline can be accomplished only by the rare few, as in Plato's view. The rest of men (the multitude) can only attain some degree of this perfection.⁸² Happiness, on the other hand, cannot be achieved without knowing of these principles that come from the First Cause to the First Ruler through the Active Intellect. Moreover, they must be performed leading to the achievement of happiness.⁸³

According to Farabi, all the citizens of the virtuous city must have some common notions about the world, man, and political life:

“The things in common which all people of the excellent city ought to know are: in the first place to know the First Cause, and all its qualities, then the immaterial existents, and their specific qualities and the order of rank of each of them, until one reaches among these immaterial exis-

79 It should be mentioned that Farabi makes a rigid distinction between the methods of the philosophers and the methods of people (believers). While the rulers use philosophy, ruled ones use religious symbols (images). That is to say, while one aspect of revelation depends on the certain philosophic knowledge and evidences, other aspect of it consists of illusions/ images of the first knowledge and principles (*Siyasa*, 41, *Tahsil*, 44-45). For the distinction of philosophy-religion in Farabi see; Mahdi, *ibid.*, pp. 189-192, Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 163.

80 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 183.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

82 *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 185.

tents, the Active Intellect, [...], the celestial substances, and the qualities of each of them, then the natural bodies which are beneath them, and how they come to be and pass away, [...], then, the generation of man, and how the faculties of the soul come to be and how the Active Intellect sheds light on them so that the first intelligibles and will and choice can arise, then, the First Ruler and how revelation is brought about, then the rulers who have to take his place, [...], then the excellent city and its people, and the felicity which their souls ultimately reach, and the cities contrary to it.” (Medine, 278-279).

These people ruled by the supreme ruler, are virtuous and good, whether they live together in one community, or separately in distant cities (*Siyasa*, 36-37). The relation of the Active Intellect to the potential intellect is also similar to that of the sun to the eye (*Medine*, 203). Farabi uses the analogy of the sun and the eye in some detail, and argues that just as the eye is potentially incapable of vision, and will only actually see the light of the sun dissipating the darkness, so is the Active Intellect in relation to the potential intellect, to which it imparts that power of apprehension.⁸⁴ Despite this exalted role ascribed to the Active Intellect, Farabi regards it as subordinate to the First Principle, from which the intellectual world directly, and material world indirectly emanate.⁸⁵

This conjunction (*ittisal*) of the First Ruler with the Active Intellect has a social-political content in the individual's life, since it determines the guiding principle, which is true knowledge and virtue. Thus, Farabi examines the character of the citizens which is formed with a view to attaining the lower ends of life among the *ignorant* and *non-virtuous* rulings.⁸⁶ Now after the examination of Farabi's metaphysics, and its influence upon his political views; we need to see the ignorant democracy of Farabi as opposed to these principles.

As we have stated before, Farabi speaks of three types of rulings opposed to “the virtuous city” (*medine al-fadila*): They are the ignorant, the wicked, and the erring cities and societies (*Medine*, 253-259).⁸⁷ Democracy

84 Fakhry, *Al-Farabi Founder of Islamic Neo-Platonism: His Life Works and Influence*, pp. 73-74.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

86 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 454.

87 Farabi also mentions the changed city (*mübeddele*) only in the *Perfect State*, which

is among the *ignorant* regimes, and here the content of this ignorance of the metaphysical-epistemological principles, and its political extents must be evaluated. The quality of this content determines, in our view, the *principal* contra-argument of democracy in Farabi.⁸⁸

For Farabi, ignorance is in the most salient character of democracy as in Plato.⁸⁹ Ignorance is also the deprivation of perfection and happiness.⁹⁰ Farabi emphasized its principal opposition to the “virtuous city”, and the most important characteristics of democracy is the *ignorance* of the metaphysical principles and intelligibles from the viewpoint of the theory of “emanation”. Because ruling in (ignorant) democracy is determined in accordance with the desires and appetites of the multitude, not with the concepts of knowledge, virtue, truth, and real happiness which are the expansions of these principles. In other words, this regime is opposed to the “virtuous city” in *principle*, on account of the ignorance of the primary principles and knowledges in the “virtuous city”.

On the other hand, the whole metaphysical-epistemological principles which assign the Farabian political conception is entirely disregarded in democracy. There is one, unique, and supreme will and authority, which is that of the citizens (*Siyasa*, 50). The rulers are the instruments serving the desires and wishes of the citizens, from this viewpoint it is the ignorant government due to its deprivation of the primary principles, which is necessary for the real happiness. Such ignorance includes not only the ignorance of the rulers, but also that of the citizens as well.⁹¹

Moreover, the opposition of the “virtuous city” to democracy can be examined from the standpoint that the latter is not established on the knowledge and the competence which is inevitable for ruling, contrarily,

is a city that is used to be like the virtuous city in action and ideas, but changed its features in the course of time.

88 One of the most crucial paradox in Farabi’s account of democracy is, though mentioning the democracy as an ignorant and opposed regime to the virtuous city, that emphasized its (and necessary city’s) closeness to the ideal state as an potential regime transformable to it. This discussion will be evaluated in the conclusion with a comparison between Plato and Farabi.

89 Khalidi, “Al-Farabi on the Democratic City”, pp. 390-391.

90 Aydın, *ibid.*, p. 312.

91 Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 201.

“they praise and honor those who lead the citizens of the city to freedom and to whatever the citizens like and desire, and who safeguard the citizens’ freedom and their varied and different desires against infringement by one another and by outside enemies; and who limit their own desires to bare necessities” (*Siyasa*, 50). By the same token, there is no difference between the ruler and the ruled from the standpoint of the political competence, for the factors which determines the rulers of democracy are not the supreme principles and knowledges of which Farabi takes into consideration. One of the most important Farabian dictum in ruling is *philosophy* (comprehension/reasoning-*taakkul*) and *power of imagination* (*tahayyul*). While the former manifests the methods and rules of the wise people (rulers), the latter manifests the methods and rules of the religion which is the symbols and images of the truth itself. One of the most salient impasses of democracy is this ignorance of the power of philosophy and science.

Without philosophy, in the way Farabi understands, the city will undoubtedly perish; and from this standpoint of the authority of philosophy and its principles democracy seems to be categorized among the *ignorant cities*. Because of the ignorance of the basic principles established in the “virtuous city”, democracy and the democratic city is non-virtuous and ignorant city, since it is deprived from the knowledge (*ilm*) and perfection (*kemal*). In other words, its principles are exhibited by Farabi as an ignorance of his metaphysical truth, and Farabi seems to mean its ignorance in this way.⁹²

The opposition of Farabi’s “virtuous city” to democracy can also be understood in the axis that that the relation of the ruler and the ruled in the political organization must be “hierarchical” as in the rank of the souls and the intelligibles in the theory of “emanation”.⁹³ Since according to Farabi,

“The ranks of order among the citizens of the city, as regards ruling and serving, vary in excellence according to their natural dispositions and according to the habits of character they have formed. The supreme ruler is the one who orders the various groups and every individual in each group, in the place they merit, gives each a subservient or a ruling rank of order. Therefore, there will be certain ranks of order that are close to

92 Walzer, *ibid.*, p. 358.

93 Sharif, *ibid.*, p. 458.

his own, others slightly further away, and still others that are far away from it. [...] Thus, the city becomes similar to the natural beings; the ranks of order in it similar to the ranks of order of beings, which begin with the First and terminate in prime matter and fitted together, will be similar to the way the beings are linked and fitted together. The prince of the city is like the First Cause, which is the cause for the existence of all the other beings” (Siyasa, 39).

This spiritual hierarchy and political competence that comes from the First principle is neglected in the “ignorant” democratic regime, and therefore it is a non-virtuous and ignorant city. In other words, the ignorant city is the city whose inhabitants do not know the true felicity, the thought of it never having occurred to them. The only good things they recognize among the things which are considered to be the aims in life as bodily health, wealth, enjoyment of pleasure, freedom to follow one’s desires, and being held in honor and esteem (*Medine*, 255). These passages show clearly that the ignorance of democracy and its imperfection comes from its main principle of *freedom to follow one’s desires*. Things contrary to these goods in the ignorant cities are misery for the views of these ignorant citizens (*Medine*, 255).

As indicated in the cosmos-state comparison above, unlike Plato who stresses the resemblance of the individual and the state, Farabi focuses on the hierarchical position of man in the cosmos as a whole and the political knowledge and competence which were manifested with the metaphysical principles and their transcendent conjunction. The principal subject of the transcendent principles which the First Cause gives to the First Ruler through the Active Intellect is opposed to the principles and rules (*kratos*) of democracy which was determined by the desires and appetites of the people (*demos*). Accordingly, “the democratic people have many aims, comprehending the aims of all the cities” (*Medine*, 315), and they pursue all appetites without regarding them good or bad. Therefore, as in Plato’s analysis, the democratic soul does not have in itself a “rational deliberation” in choosing the desires, and performing them in action (*Medine*, 315).

The metaphysical-epistemological extent of Farabi’s criticism of democracy can also be evaluated, in this respect, in a context of *transcendence*

of matter in the hierarchical rank.⁹⁴ This point, as stated above, presents the metaphysics-politics togetherness in Farabi, and therefore, transcendence of matter in every stage of beings is the precondition of the real happiness in the political organization (*Medine*, 205, 263; *Siyasa*, 34-35). For Farabi,

“Whenever man neglects to perfect his theoretical-rational part, fails to perceive happiness and hasten towards it, holds something other than happiness-what is useful, pleasant, domination, honorable, and the like-as an end toward which he aims in his or her life, [...] then everything that originates from his or her soul is evil” (*Siyasa*, 35). “Felicity means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in its existence where it is no need of matter for its support, since it becomes one of the incorporeal things and of the immaterial substances and remains in that state continuously forever” (*Medine*, 205).

We can conclude that, then, the real happiness can only be realized through knowing the primary principles and knowledges emanating from the First Cause to the First Ruler through the Active Intellect; while the aims of the ignorant rulings such as profit, pleasure, domination, honor are not the main precondition of the real happiness. “Happiness is the good which is pursued for its own sake and it is never at any time pursued for obtaining something else through it” (*Medine*, 207). The art of ruling can only be obtained with the supreme knowledges that are not possible for the people to acquire. This art includes two aspects of the scientific activity which is defined “*seeking for truth which provides the opportunity for happiness*” or “*seeking for happiness which depends on truth*”⁹⁵, and they are, in turn, metaphysics and politics. In the democratic organizations, there is no such ruling depending on Farabi’s real happiness; it is principally opposed to the “virtuous city” from its rules of desires and appetites of the citizens.

The emphasis on the togetherness of metaphysics and politics leads us to the hierarchical ranks in the city, that is, “the relation of the First Cause to the cosmos is similar to the relation of the First Ruler to the state.”

94 This approach is entirely *spiritual*, and explained by Farabi through upholding the relation of matter and form in Aristotle, and its different Neo-Platonist traditions and commentators such as Plotinus, Simplicius, Syrianus, and Porphyrius. (See for the details; Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 116.)

95 Fakhry, *ibid.*, p. 115.

This hierarchical account of ruling exhibits, due to its emphasis upon the knowledge and the competence, the non-hereditary monarchical or aristocratic character in which the best (few) rule, with the rest of the citizens divided into groups that (depending on their rank) are ruled and in turn rule. The only criterion for the rank of a citizen is the character of the virtue of which he is capable, and that he is able to develop through his participation in the regime.⁹⁶ This togetherness *principally* opposes democracy and the democratic soul. Also the citizens of the ideal state must know the First Cause, spiritual beings, celestial bodies, the Active Intellect, and the real happiness (the symbols of truth through religion which are different in determining these symbols, but all of them are virtuous [*Siyasa*, 37; *Medine*, 211]), and this requires the transcendence of matter from the metaphysical viewpoint. Finally, democracy is an ignorant regime, since *all these ideals* “principally” cannot be realized in the democratic regime which establishes on the desires of the multitude.

C. Education and Democracy

In the previous section, as a metaphysical background of the criticism of democracy, we have seen that politics in Farabi’s eyes offers the content of *transcendent* relation between the “human” and the “divine”, and such an understanding of *transcendence* is characteristically a precondition for human to attain all principles and knowledge.⁹⁷ Revelation, a union of a person with the Active Intellect (*Akl al- Faal*), gives the power “to define things and actions that direct people toward happiness” (*Siyasa*, 36), and plays a very serious role in this political activity.⁹⁸ The expression “*defining and directing actions toward happiness*” appears to issue in action as a description of the product of a philosopher-prophet’s perfection (as also the ruler of the virtuous city), and more importantly, in terms of the “*authoritativeness*”⁹⁹ of the recipient’s rule (*Siyasa*, 36-37). This metaphysics-politics togetherness in Farabi leads him to conclude that the principles of the virtuous city and that of democracy cannot be the same in terms of the

⁹⁶ Mahdi, *ibid.*, p. 187.

⁹⁷ Galston, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

accessibility to this kind of perfection, happiness, and virtue. Therefore, his ideal state is *principally* opposes the *ignorant democracy* and its authority.

Although this complete transcendence of material existence is *in principle* possible only for certain human beings (philosopher-prophet-rule in the city), the citizens of Farabi's ideal state must know the main principles of virtuous city, i.e., the First Cause and His perfection, non-material divine beings, and virtuous actions and its degrees. Among the things which people have to know, there is the knowledge of features of the First Cause, and how He can be represented in this world. According to Farabi, this is the list which every soul in the city must know:

“The things in common which all people of the excellent city ought to know are: In the first place to know the First Cause, and all its qualities, then the immaterial existents, and their specific qualities and the order of rank of each of them, until one reaches among these immaterial existents, the Active Intellect, [...], the celestial substances, and the qualities of each of them, then the natural bodies which are beneath them, and how they come to be and pass away, [...], then, the generation of man, and how the faculties of the soul come to be and how the Active Intellect sheds light on them so that the first intelligibles and will and choice can arise, then, the First Ruler and how revelation is brought about, then the rulers who have to take his place, [...], then the excellent city and its people, and the felicity which their souls ultimately reach, and the cities contrary to it” (Medine, 278-279).

The people governed by the rule of the supreme ruler, are virtuous, good, and happy, whether they live together in one community, or separately in distant cities (*Siyasa*, 36-37). Therefore, the main opposition to *ignorant* democracy is the inevitable togetherness of knowledge (*'ilm*) and action (*amel*) that asserted to be partners in the perfection of human enterprise. In fact, what we tried to do in the previous section was to understand the disagreement with the *ignorant* democracy in the *virtuous city*, and describe the negative criticism and non-favorable attitude towards democracy in the background of the inseparable linkage between knowledge and action.

However, we need a solution for the possible interpretation which leads us to understand his favorable and positive attitude to democracy

and the democratic city (apparently much favorable than Plato's). That is, though Farabi categorizes it among the ignorant regimes, he also speaks of its potentiality to turn into virtue, or the virtuous government (*Siyasa*, 51-52). In other words, we need to solve the tension between the *ignorant* democracy, and its explicit feature of potential virtuous city in Farabi's own texts. We must ask the question that: Although Farabi insistently emphasize the potentiality to virtuous ruling in addition to its ignorance and political incompetence, did he propose a reformation process into the virtuous regime through educating *all* souls in the city, like in Plato's implicit project? In this section, we will try to solve this tension between his disagreement of democracy, and its potentiality into virtuous regime, or the rule of virtuous man through the inevitable function of education of *all* souls in the city.

To begin with, we must keep in mind that education is the one of the most important social phenomena in Farabi's philosophy as for Plato. Education is concerned with the human soul in order to achieve its own level of perfection; it is not an isolated term from the people's lives.¹⁰⁰ It is in people's lives, and the main purpose of education can be stated as the acquisition of values, knowledge and practical skills by the individual, within a particular period and a particular culture, and to lead the individual to perfection, since the human was created for this purpose (*Tahsil*, 13).¹⁰¹ Therefore, the goal of humanity's existence in this world is to attain happiness, which is the highest perfection and the absolute good (*Tahsil*, 13-14). On the other hand, we also know that the soundness of the city is a reflection of "the good balance of moral among its people" (*Kitab al-Milla*, 24), and achieving this harmony and balance is one of the most important aims of education.¹⁰² This unity of morality in Farabi can only be attained with a proper education of all human beings. There must an educational project for *all* human beings of the virtuous city in addition to that of political leaders in the ideal city. This is the education and upbringing that provides the unity and order in the city that Farabi longs for in his ideal state (virtuous city). In a word, the absence of these common values governing people's conduct disturbs the city, and these virtues and values in the individual must be internalized in the soul so that a person is ready to act upon them

100 Rosenthal, *ibid.*, p. 159.

101 Al-Talbi, "Al-Farabi", p. 354.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 355.

“to earnestly desire them and, rather than being harmed by them, finds them attractive, [...], so that he pursues always those ends which are truly good and makes them his goal” (*Talkhis Nawamis Eflatun: Plato's Summary of the Laws*, 34).¹⁰³ Thus, morality is a fundamental objective of education in people's life, in that one of the goals of education is to combine learning with practical action, and the purpose of knowledge is that it should be transformed into action (*Tahsil*, 32-33). There must be, then, a moral unity in the actions of the citizens of the state in Farabi's thought.¹⁰⁴

Now, we can discuss at this point the question of whether this educational project or reformation process is possible for *all* human beings, as in Plato's thought. If it is, how it is possible, and additionally, whether it represents an *ideal democracy* or *democratic ideal* in the sense that the citizens of the city *know* (even with the method of persuasion) what are the good, justice, and virtue, and *act* according to them. This is the vital question we need to discuss in his account of democracy. But before discussing this point, we must evaluate his account of education in order to ask the above questions, and understand how the reformation can be realized in people's life.

Human nature is in Farabi's eyes the foundation of education, and he tries to establish the aims of methods of education in accordance with human nature.¹⁰⁵ For Farabi, though not all human beings have the same nature, and thus, some of them are capable of understanding the first principles like philosophers (*hukema*), and some people (*'amm*), cannot understand them directly; there must be an educational approach towards all human beings allowing them to acquire by habiting the different kinds of virtue like ethical and practical virtues (*Tahsil*, 30). Farabi points out that human nature is like a seed which has potential power, and needs to be cultivated in order to show its potentiality, therefore, it must be educated, in whatever degree, so as to reach at perfection, goodness, and happiness in his or her soul (*Tahsil*, 36-37).

¹⁰³ Though Farabi makes a rigid distinction between the methods of the philosophers and the methods of people (believers); that is while rulers use *philosophy*, religious symbols (images) are used for the multitude of the city the education of *all* human beings is the most inevitable subject in his system.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Talbi, *ibid.*, p. 356.

¹⁰⁵ Bayraklı, “The Philosophy of Education,” p. 101.

Farabi emphasizes the importance of applying different methods that match different human capacities. In this sense, Farabi uses two different terms (education and instruction) to show the difference of human nature. While instruction (*ta'lim*) is to create theoretical virtues in nations and cities, education (*ta'dib*) is the method of creating the ethical and practical virtues in them (*Tahsil*, 35). Education is concerned with *all* people for acquiring virtues by habit through motivating them to put these virtues in practice. Actions of the soul which develop from these habits must penetrate the personalities of human beings, in other words, the training of their souls (personalities) is education (*Tahsil*, 35).¹⁰⁶ Good manners in its educational meaning are the combination of all the good qualities, and education of the souls is the “way of creating the moral virtues, and the practical arts in the nations” (*Tahsil*, 36). Instruction (*ta'lim*) is, on the other hand, creating the speculative/theoretical virtues in nations and cities (*Tahsil*, 35). Farabi distinguishes, then, between instruction (*ta'lim*) and education (*ta'dib*), and the former is the way of acquiring the theoretical arts, and peculiar to the few, while the latter forms moral conduct, and leads to the technical or the practical skills. They are therefore quite different in Farabi.¹⁰⁷ The method of instruction must be appropriate to the level of the learners, depending on whether people belong to the common people or the philosophers (*Tahsil*, 44-45).

Education is on the other hand necessary for *every* individual in the city; since without it, nobody would be able to reach perfection and happiness (*Tahsil*, 36-37). So, if education must be available to *all* (as in Plato's suggestion), the method of teaching should be adapted according to the level of their states of mind.¹⁰⁸ There are two fundamental methods: For the common people, based on *persuasion*; the and for the philosophers, based on *demonstration*. Teaching theoretical intellectual virtues is carried out by demonstration, while teaching practical arts and crafts is by way of

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Talbi, *ibid.*, p. 358.

¹⁰⁸ As in Plato's section, we do not interest in the content of this method, since it is concerned with their epistemological philosophy. However, it is only safe to mention that both Plato and Farabi consider the necessity of education available to *all common people*, and we are trying to interpret the favorable and positive attitude to democracy in the framework of their account of education. The epistemological content of this education and knowledge is another subject to inquiry.

persuasion (*Tahsil*, 44).¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it is obvious that the way of addressing any group of people should be adapted to their standard of understanding, and thus, the use of demonstrative method upon the populace and the masses is absurd.¹¹⁰ In other words, the methods of instruction have two ways: Demonstration leading to certainty, which is the philosophical approach; or persuasion, which is the religious method (*Tahsil*, 45).

According to Farabi, education has to follow a program in order to learn the knowledge which will lead the soul to perfection in his or her life, in his judgment and actions, and in developing a critical approach.¹¹¹ Farabi classifies the sciences and learning, not just for the sake of enumerating them, but also with an educational objective (*Ihsa'ul-Ulum: Enumeration of the Sciences*).¹¹² In the curriculum of Farabi, the sequence of learning must begin with the language and its structure, i.e., its grammar, in order to express him; and without this ability, he or she will not be able to understand others nor they him, and he will not develop properly (*Ihsa*, 17). After languages comes logic, the instrument of the sciences and their methodology, and which leads to sound reflection; it is also closely connected with language (*Ihsa*, 27). Then comes mathematics, which the Muslim philosophers call “*ta’alim*” (exact science), and Farabi divides mathematics into seven parts: ‘Numbers (arithmetic), geometry, the science of perspectives, scientific astronomy, music, dynamics and the science of machines’ (*Ihsa*, 49).¹¹³ Then the natural sciences whose subject is matter: animal, vegetable, mineral, etc. comes (*Ihsa*, 67). Following the exact sciences comes theology or metaphysics, then the human sciences (political science in particular), then jurisprudence (*fiqh*), law (*qanun*) and academic theology (*kalam*). In short, Farabi’s curriculum can be listed as follows: Science of language, logic, mathematics, natural science, theology, political science, jurisprudence, and theology (*Ihsa*, 79).

Farabi also mentions another theory according to which education begins with reforming morals, “for he who cannot reform his own morals cannot learn any science correctly” (*Risale Fima Yenbegi En Yukaddeme*

109 Al-Talbi, *ibid.*, p. 359.

110 Sharif, *ibid.*, p. 456.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 456-457.

112 Al-Talbi, *ibid.*, p. 359.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 360.

Kable Teallumi'l-Felsefe: On What One Should Know Before Learning Philosophy, 189).¹¹⁴ In other words, before beginning the study, the student must reform his or her own ethical values so as to desire nothing but virtue according to this kind of learning. From this approach, we can conclude that education has a privileged position in the city for forming the souls according to virtue, goodness, and perfection in Farabi's thought.¹¹⁵

Above all these sciences and arts, it is philosophy (*hikme*) which is way to happiness that Farabi places as the highest form of learning for mankind (Tahsil, 44). The soul of the student is raised to the level of the rational human being until the First principle of existence is reached (*Fima yenbegi*, 190). We think that we can understand better the main purpose of the education in Farabi's eyes when the purpose of *Medine* and *Siyasa* is grasped. In these texts, Farabi stresses the inevitability of knowing the relationship between the universe and soul in order to understand the knowledge of the First Reason (God), and we have examined before, it was explained through the *theory of emanation*. If the ultimate objective of studying philosophy is twofold, i.e., theoretical and practical; the theoretical part is the knowledge of God, and the practical part for the human soul consists of imitating His wisdom and perfection in this world. From this viewpoint, as Majid Fakhry states, he departs from Plato in the content and extent of the educational process.¹¹⁶ The main indication for this departure is that while Plato begins his *Republic* with the analysis of *human soul*, and its similarity with the city; Farabi begins his *Medine* and *Siyasa* with the similarity between the cosmos and the human soul.¹¹⁷ Therefore, in Farabi's view, to achieve excellence in one's deeds, one must first reform one's self, before reforming those who share one's house, and finally one's fellow citizens (*Fusul*, 108-109; *Tahsil*, 36; *Medine*, 279; *Siyasa*, 36).

Farabi's aims in education are in harmony with the nature of the human soul, and the purpose of his creation (*Fima yenbegi*, 190). First of all, they must be taught the attributes of the First Cause (God), the levels and attributes of non-material things, and activities of all creatures. After that, they must be taught what life is in this world, and in the hereafter, and the

114 *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

115 *Ibid.*, 361.

116 Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, pp. 131-132.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

happiness which is the virtuous man is bound to achieve (*Medine*, 278-279). Therefore, the main and the most important goal of education is to teach ethical virtues, and all citizens of the city must know, even philosophically or symbolically (religiously), these principles in order to achieve the balance between two extremes in his or her soul.¹¹⁸

According to Farabi, if a person follows a wrong method in handwriting, his writing will gradually deteriorate (*Medine*, 269). In the same manner, if a person follows a bad way in moral life he will start to misbehave, and these wrong actions will create bad tendencies in his or her soul. Gradually, he will start to enjoy these tendencies, exactly as a person who is ill with malaria, enjoys unpleasant tasting food. He can neither taste sweet food nor properly distinguish their tastes in the same way as healthy people (*Medine*, 269).¹¹⁹ Farabi points out that these people become like psychopaths who always want to do evil and loathing goodness and virtue. He does not know his own disease but feels himself to be healthy, and does not listen to what the doctor says to him. Education aims to cure these people who are ill in morality and out of balance in their soul.¹²⁰ In this respect, the person who is truly educated with true principles can have the balance in his or her soul, and distinguishes the goodness and evil from each other.

It can be said that Farabi applied his main method into the education of the souls which begins from the First Cause (the One: God), and ends with the effect of this world through emanation, in both moral and political aspect. The examination of the attributes of the First Cause, and how the multiplicity of things in the sense world comes into existence *from* Him through emanation gives the necessary principles which every individual of the state must know, even though a philosophical knowledge, or religious way in which the symbols of the truth are imagined (*Medine*, 279; *Siyasa*, 40). Therefore, the spiritual structure of the theory of emanation reflects the Farabian verdict on both the education of the political leaders,

118 Farabi seems to borrow Aristotle's ethics (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II/6) which stresses the necessity of being moderate (*mesotes*) which means preference the midpoint in actions without tending the extremes. This virtue of character can be achieved with habits (*heksis*). See for the details information in Farabi; *Fusul al-Medeni*, pp. 98-99.

119 Bayraklı, *ibid.*, p. 103.

120 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

and of all souls in the city. The first principle which every soul must know is the First Cause who is one, unique, perfect, and necessary. Reason is also exhibited by Farabi in the axis of ascending the degree of Active Intellect through uniting with him (revelation), and of perfection and ultimate happiness which can be acquired through sharing his spirituality. Theoretical virtue is, in this sense, concerned with the sciences whose ultimate purpose is to achieve the knowledge of the First Cause/First Principle, while the end of the practical arts and moral virtue is related to make the “good”, “just”, and “virtuous” acts which the reason determines theoretically. Therefore, the existence and knowledge of the First Principle, and the Cosmos in the context of emanation is so vital in the education of human souls in Farabi’s thought (*Medine*, 278-279). For, as we have stressed before, education occupies a privileged role in the city for forming the souls according to virtue, goodness, and perfection which were determined through this spirited process.¹²¹ This point must be mentioned in order to apprehend *how* “ignorant democracy” can become a *true* and *virtuous government* in Farabi through educating the people in accordance with a proper rational training/education (*ta’dib*).

On the other hand, we can see the role of religious and theological sciences like jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and dialectical theology (*kalam*) in his curriculum (*Ihsa*, 79-92). The art of jurisprudence is, for Farabi, “that with which the human being is able to deduce the determination of each of the practical rules of religion which the law-giver has not specifically proclaimed” (*Ihsa*, 85/378). The art of dialectical theology is, on the other hand, “a faculty by virtue of which the human being is able to defend the specific opinions and actions proclaimed by the law-giver” (*Ihsa*, 86/379). These arts have a privileged position in Farabi’s curriculum for leading the multitude into goodness, virtue, and perfection.¹²²

121 This spiritual educational concern of Farabi which is noticeable for the transformation of *ignorant* democracy into *true* and *virtuous* democracy constitutes a different model from Plato’s reformation from the standpoint of the *content* of the principles, and the acquisition of them.

122 These religious elements differs Farabi’s educational curriculum from Plato’s dialectics. If we suggest that education of all people is possible in the city, and this leads us to conclude that ideal democracy through education of all human beings for being moderate in the state; we must also mention the *content* of the acquisition of the intelligibles and principles in both philosophers.

Farabi also emphasizes the role of law in the educational process in his reading of *Plato's Laws*, since the lawgiver is also the ruler; Farabi concludes that the law has an educational function (*Talkhis*: 47).¹²³ The thing which person was prompted into the goodness, righteousness, and virtue by the laws is only Reason, and the function and mission of the law-giver is make the people reasonable and educated souls in the state. The greater this effort is powerful, the more the state, and the desire of the people into virtue will be stronger (*Talkhis*, 47-48). Training (*ta'dib*) is, then, the component which people are led into noble actions.

Thus, the function of laws in the society does not simply mean the blind obedience of the citizens into the laws, if it does, it would be a despotic government, and however, they should have praiseworthy morals and acceptable behavior in their life (*Tahsil*, 44; *Talkhis*, 51). The love of law must be settled in the souls of the citizens, and the only thing which realizes this goal is the education and training (*Talkhis*, 54). According to Farabi, Plato's first and main concern is the acquisition of virtues in the souls of citizens through the rational laws, and this is possible only with a proper rational training (*Talkhis*, 56). The citizens must be educated with a view to leading them into midpoint (*itidal*) of actions, and to controlling and ruling their souls in accordance with these principles (*Talkhis*, 58).

On the other hand, the lawgiver must be trained in the affairs of State for this goal, and the ruler's aim in legislation must 'be to please the First Reason (God) (*Tahsil*, 46). The function of the virtuous rulers (*melikü's-sünne*) is to pursue the educational role previously undertaken by the Prophet. The perfect man (*al-insan al-kamil*), for Farabi, is the one who combines both the theoretical and practical virtues and perfection in his nature, and this perfection combines knowledge and action in order to reach at the highest goal of life which is happiness (*Medine*, 239). In addition to the purpose of education in terms of the training the political leaders in the city (as in Plato's just city), the whole of multitude must also be led into the good, virtue, and perfection through a educational process. In this respect, he believed that, then, the first aim of knowledge is the knowledge of the First Reason and his attributes (as we have seen in context of his theory of Emanation), a knowledge that has a profound effect on the

123 Al-Talbi, *ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

human being's moral conduct, and helps him to find the way to the ultimate aim of his existence.¹²⁴

Farabi's view on the law is the most important issue concerning his account of education of the souls. According to Farabi, the law "is meant to be a help to him who desires to know the laws, and to be sufficient to him who cannot bear the toil of study and of mediation" (*Talkhis*, 47). Although the knowledge of the laws cannot be acquired without the toil of study and of mediation [the activity of *theoria* (*tefekür*)], Farabi seems to establish the moderate/mitigated educational model based on the law contained *whole* society. In this case, the statement that "*the laws is to be sufficient to him who cannot bear the toil of study and of mediation*" can be understood in the context of education of *all* human souls with the principles of those bear the toil of study and of mediation, and of organizing their life with these laws. From this viewpoint, it can be said that only in such a balance of enlightening the souls with true education and restraining them with laws can the citizens live in accordance with the perfection, happiness, and virtue. Therefore, law has an educational function by leading the citizens into the good, virtuous, and right actions in the city.

In addition, we can ask the same question (as in Plato's educational model) whether the self-ruled moderate educated souls, even philosophically or persuasively, exhibit the *ideal democracy* or the *democratic souls* in the state. And it will be clear that whether it is possible to acquire the virtuous democratic souls and democratic cities after the examination of the ideal democratic souls in which the rational/knowledgeable part is ruling with a proper training in both the soul and the city.

At this very point, one can object to our suggestion in arguing that while Plato examines the corrupt states through exhibiting comparison between the soul and the state, the ignorant cities of Farabi do not correspond to the parts of the soul. In fact, Farabi examines the perverted features of the ignorant cities in his *Medine* and *Siyasa*, and never refers to the soul-city analogy in his analysis of non-virtuous cities. This argument might seem to be anti-thesis against our suggestion that "self-ruled educated souls can reflect the ideal democracy both in the soul and

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

city”, because of the non-commensurability of the soul and the state in Farabian dictum on politics. However, when considering the function of education in the city, and the importance of leading the people into virtue, perfection, and true happiness, we can understand Farabi’s approach toward democracy by suggesting it as a “*potential virtuous regime*”. It is true that Farabi did not apply the Platonic analogy in his examination of the states, and prefers to establish a cosmos-soul analogy in *Medine*, and *Siyasa*, as we have stressed before, but this does not lead us to conclude that he has denied the relation between the education of *all* souls and the correct organization of the state. In all his books, education has a direct function into the truly organized states, even into the virtuous city or the democratic city. That is to say, we must know that we cannot understand his favorable attitude toward democracy when neglecting the function of education of all souls in the city. Nevertheless, we need to respond to these questions: Why did Farabi not apply Plato’s soul-city analogy in his analysis of non-virtuous regimes? Why did Farabi prefer to use the cosmos-man (First Reason-First Ruler) analogy in the examination of non-virtuous cities? Does this method reflect his *transcendent* educational model even in the ideal democracy, or the democratic ideal for both the soul and the state?

As we have stressed above, while Plato begins his *Republic* with the analysis of *human soul*, and its comparison with the state; Farabi begins his *Medine* and *Siyasa* with the cosmos-human soul analogy. The relation of the First Cause (God) to the cosmos is similar to the relation of the First Ruler (Prophet) to the state, and the ruler after him (*melikü’s-sünne*) must rule the state in accordance with these knowledges and principles from which the First Principle comes through the Active Intellect. At this point, the educational function of *kelam* (theology) and *fikh* (jurisprudence) is much clearer as a discipline of Farabi’s educational model. These points seem to explain the *content* of both Farabi’s *transcendent* principles which comes from the First Reason when he uses negative expressions like *ignorant democracy* and *ignorant people*, and that of his account of education for *all human beings* through exhibiting democracy as a “*potential virtuous regime*”. In this respect we shall venture to conclude that: Farabi seems to favor democracy as “*potential virtuous regime*” through his educational model for *all souls*, as in Plato’s but in a different *form*, by establishing the

souls in which the proper ruling is at work together with the rational principles (even in the different content of Plato's ones). And this is the case for both understanding democracy, and its principles (freedom, equality, diversity etc.) correctly, and the validity of true principles for all human beings, even philosophically or religiously (persuasively).

Although Farabi did not use the soul-city analogy in analyzing the ignorant rulings in both *Medine* and *Siyasa*, we can say that from his whole texts, concerning his approach to educate *all* souls in the city, he tries to establish the *moderate/self-controlled* souls in which the rational part is *ruling*. This is explicit possible approach to his texts for a possible interpretation of his favorable attitude towards democracy, and the democratic city. Just in Plato's favorable attitude toward democracy, as we have argued before, the principal disagreement of democracy in Farabi from the viewpoint of the principles of the "virtuous city" is not operative in the "just soul", even in the ideal sense. That is, when this pattern of each soul is realized with a proper rational education, the imperfect and ignorant democratic city can or must be ennobled *from within* the self-ruled just/moderate souls.

Farabi's positive verdict on democracy as a "potential virtuous regime" can be more plausible, with a possible interpretation that arises from Farabi's own texts that stress the possibility of accessibility of virtue (being moderate) to all human beings in the state through educating them with a proper training. We can say that, then, the non-ignorant democratic city can be realized on condition that the realization of the self-ruled moderate souls (*al-mutavassit*) in which the excessive parts are mitigated by a genuine training (*ta'dib*) (*Fusul*, 101). From this viewpoint, in our view, Farabi distinguishes the ignorant (*cahil*) regimes from immoral (*fasik*) and erring (*dalle*) cities, in that the former is the place in which the citizens have no knowledge of virtue, goodness, true happiness, while the latter is the place in which the citizens know what virtue is, and the main principles for ruling a city, but have turned their backs on it (*Siyasa*, 53). This point also renders our interpretation plausible that the transformation of the *ignorance* of democracy is possible with a proper education of *all* souls in the city so as to form their lives in accordance with virtue, knowledge, and true happiness. According to Farabi, then, the moral unity in which the citizens form their lives can keep the city alive in diversity.

We must also see that, again, why Farabi did not use Plato's soul-city analogy, and transformation principles in his account of non-virtuous cities, even though he defends the education of all human souls leading to virtue and goodness, from a very different aspect of the educational project. Farabi seems to try to secure, then, the metaphysics-politics togetherness through the cosmos-state analogy (the First Cause and the First Ruler), and the transcendent principles which comes from the First Principle. This is the case when considering the inevitable place of revelation (Theory of Prophecy) which is the combination (*ittisal*) of the First Ruler with the Active Intellect. Though Farabi endeavors to combine human affairs with divine, and to reconcile philosophy and religion, i.e., reason and revelation, there is a notable difference between Farabi and Plato concerning the *content* of the principles, and their extent of acquiring. This difference is predominant in their both principal negative attitude towards corrupt/ignorant democracy, and positive/favorable approach to it. From this standpoint, it can be said that Farabi's method in revealing the principles of morality and politics is mainly based on his "emanation", i.e., the metaphysics-politics togetherness, and this inseparable linkage between the cosmos and the state, divine and humane, reflects Farabi's accounts of politics and education. Accordingly, the content and acquisition of principles and knowledge in Plato and Farabi form a *cognitive* difference from each other concerning the critique of democracy. The reason why Farabi did not use Plato's soul-city analogy, and valued the metaphysical principles of his own, and that of the educational model through the cosmos-human nature analogy will be much more than understandable from the viewpoint of the togetherness of metaphysics and politics in both philosophers.

In conclusion, although we have argued that the purported intelligibles and principles of Farabi lead us to conclude that the principles of the virtuous city and that of *ignorant* democracy cannot be the same in terms of the accessibility to this kind of perfection, happiness, and virtue; we must also need a solution for his favorable and positive expressions relevant to democracy and the democratic city. And, we argued that, as in Plato's model but in different forms, Farabi suggests a reformation/transformation project from the *ignorant* democracy into *virtuous* and *true* democracy, through establishing a moral unity in difference and diversity by

educating all human beings in the city. Though this model is rooted in the ideals of a God-centered humanity in this world, this is the virtuous and moderate democracy in which the educated human beings morally rule their souls in accordance with true principles, and know the true freedom, equality, and authority.

COMPARISON

Democracy is the regime which Plato and Farabi categorize among the corrupt/ignorant cities, and discuss its features and principles in detail. Plato's negative attitude towards democracy can be examined not only in the axis of the authority of reason (*to logistikon*) over the other parts through the nature of the tripartite soul (psychological basis) but also that of the emphasis upon the distinction between knowledge and belief, philosopher and non-philosopher, and the idea of the Good (metaphysical basis). The democratic soul and city opposes the scientific principles and values of the Platonic ideal state ("just city in speech") in this sense. These are the cognitive backgrounds of his rigid and bitter approach towards democracy, since the most prominent feature of democracy is the deprivation of the principles and virtues that lead the people into goodness, righteousness, and justice in the state.

Farabi also mentions democracy among the ignorant regimes in the same way, and criticizes negatively its ignorant and non-virtuous characteristics due to its deprivation of the supreme principles of the ideal state ("virtuous city"). It must be said that although there was no actual example of democracy in Farabi's time, and his account of democracy is based on Plato's consideration of democracy, Farabi considers it much more favorably than Plato. However, this does not change the fact of his categorization of it among the non-virtuous and ignorant cities which are opposed to the ideal state. To be sure, his negative approach to democracy comes from, as in Plato, the effort to establish a scientific and rational state-model. In the

background of the criticisms of democracy in Plato and Farabi, there exists the distinction between the principles of the ideal states of both, and that of (corrupt and ignorant) democracy. In this respect, we can find an answer to this question, in the same line, that why is democracy a corrupt and ignorant rule in both Plato and Farabi? That is, simply because of its ignorance of the basic principles of their ideal states (“just city in speech” of Plato, and “virtuous city” of Farabi). Therefore, both Plato and Farabi negatively criticized democracy in the same way that since it opposes the basic principles of the ideal state, i.e., reason, harmony, virtue, and goodness. Accordingly, it can be stated for both philosophers that the state must be established on the true and rational principles, not on the variable and unreliable desires of the masses. Therefore driving power of their critique is the same, that is; the authority and excellence of knowledge (Plato’s *episteme* and Farabi’s *‘ilm*) upon the soul and the city.

Plato’s views on democracy cannot be examined without regarding the soul-city analogy which is dominant in the first four book of the *Republic*. For, Plato treats the *pre*-democratic process (the nature of aristocratic, timocratic, and oligarchic soul), and discusses the conditions which engender the democratic soul and the democratic city in detail (*Republic*, VIII) Plato seriously examines the transformation process of the just soul in which the reason and harmony is dominant into the democratic soul gradually in which every excessive appetites (including philosophy), flourished with the wrong upbringing and education, are ruling. When considering the wrong methods of training, it will be clear that why he rigidly disagrees with the *Sophists* who establish their views relevant to goodness of the people on the variable and unreliable appetites of the multitude, not on the true and unchangeable principles.

While Plato criticizes and treats democracy and other corrupt cities on the basis of the tripartite soul (*Republic*, VIII), Farabi’s account of democracy and other non-virtuous rules does not depend on the soul-city analogy. His emphasis is upon the ignorance of people and democracy that are deprived of the metaphysical principles and truths emanated from the First Cause. As stated above, the “virtuous city” in which the souls are encouraged to goodness, virtue, and true happiness (in both this world and other world) opposes, then, the ignorance and the incompetence of democracy in principle. This point seems to reveal the distinct *form* of Plato

and Farabi's critiques against the ignorance and non-virtuous character of democracy. While Plato uses the human arguments (internal to reason: [ideas]) concerning the determination of the values of life, in both moral and political sense, and describes democracy as an "overturning of values" (*Republic*, 560 d); Farabi deliberates on the conjunction (*ittisal*) of divine and human in the same line, i.e., political realm, suggesting that these *transcendent* principles emanated from the First will lead the people into virtue, and true happiness. What we meant by the difference of *form* in their critique is this distinction.

Both Plato and Farabi do not only categorize democracy among the corrupt/ignorant cities and describe its incompetent characters, but also allude to the preservation of it, and transformation into the virtuous model. The solution of this tension (the rigid criticism of it and the effort to preserve it in a true and virtuous way) is not easy in both Plato and Farabi.

It is austere in Plato who has been considered either as a deeply anti-democratic thinker and totalitarian (Karl Popper, R. H. S. Crossman) or contrarily an *implicitly* democrat in his time (Leo Strauss, J. Peter Euben). The solution of this tension in Farabi seems to be easier than Plato's, since he mentioned democracy as a "*virtuous rule in itself*" and as the greatest variety, hence democracy is the only rule in which the philosopher can lead his way of life without being disturbed. Though this favorable attitude to democracy is explicitly expressed by Farabi, we think that it is not satisfactory in the intellectual sense.

We tried to solve this tension between the negative and favorable attitude to democracy in Plato and Farabi from the inside of their own texts, and conclude that: the negative critique of both arises from different character of the ideal states, i.e., the "just city in speech" of Plato and the "virtuous city" of Farabi, and that of [corrupt/ignorant] democracy. It is true that the rule of Plato's philosopher-king and of Farabi's philosopher-prophet-king opposes democracy (*demos-kratos*) from the viewpoint of principle and of the ends they pursue. However, both allude to the transformable nature of democracy into its essence which is virtue and moderate/controlling itself *from within the nature of the soul*. In this respect, while Plato tried to preserve the virtuous and good character of the *demos* (people) through stressing the accessibility of virtue to *all* and educating them with a proper,

pre -democratic values, Farabi deliberated on the inevitability of the true and proper training for all souls, through the different character of disciplines (as *fikh*, *kalam*, and *divine law*). Though the different *content* of their educational curriculum, the aim and the driving power is the same, i.e. the establishment of the *self-controlled moderate souls*, even philosophically with a philosophical instruction, or a persuasive training model.

Therefore, the possible solution of the tension between undemocratic character of their systems and implicit democratic attitudes is only possible with an analysis of education and democracy, or the “education of *demos* in a proper training”. This model concerns the enlightenment of the souls, since for the idea of the Good in Plato, and the Active Intellect’s position by Farabi are used through the sun-simile for their function (*Republic*, 508 c, 514 a; *Medine*, 203) The education of the souls with unchangeable and eternal truths is necessary for this project, and what is lacking in corrupt and ignorant democracy is this *common* conception of the “good”, and a holistic approach to it. The content of “the idea of the good” of Plato, and the felicity which is “goodness without qualification” of Farabi is, then, very prominent in personal morality and social relationships. What is lacking in democracy a unified, reasoned, and universal “good”, as a final arbiter among the different and competing views for both philosophers. In this respect, freedom of the (ignorant) people cannot be ultimate good in a state for Plato and Farabi. The city of both must be centrally organized, like a good human being, around *a purpose* that supports the organism itself. Therefore, individualistic free choices fostered by [corrupt and ignorant] democracy, without being based on a reasoned and unified “good” are morally and politically harmful to all. In other words, it can be said that it is immoral to pursue the excessive appetites without consideration of this unified good. The result of this democratic approach to every desire without being moderate is the “*outdoing everyone else*” (*Republic*, 343 e), in Thrasymachus’ understanding, and this notion of “outdoing” can be easily related to the immoderate and excessive democracy or to tyranny.

It is also true that the non-virtuous cities of Farabi do not turn into each other as Plato’s model, and he did not use the soul-city analogy in his account of the corrupt cities. However there is an implicit place for Farabi’s favorable attitude toward democracy, which gives us the opportunity to conclude that the effort to establish a moral unity in different characters in

the city must be considered as the serious goal of the society (*Medine*, 280). All the non-virtuous regimes are opposed to the virtuous city because of lacking this guiding principle which is true knowledge, virtue or the formation of character leading to activities conducive to true happiness. Therefore, the character of the citizens must be formed with a view to attaining *one* goal in the city; ‘virtue which comes with a true knowledge’, and the ‘authority of knowledge over ignorance in every field of life’.

In our view, the enlightenment seems to be this effort to establish the unified and reasoned moderate souls in the city so as to pursue the common “goodness” in it. Thus, their indictments of democracy must be re-examined and re-evaluated from this viewpoint in our time. Farabi’s effort is not different from Plato’s one, since we have argued that the driving power (content) of their critique is the same, namely, establishing the moderate/self-controlled souls in the city, and a common conception of the “good” in it among the different and competing views. However, *the form* of these faculties and principles are different, in both Plato and Farabi.

Consequently, we can say that, even *ideally*, there is a possible interpretation in both, for establishing a *moderate democratic ideal* or *ideal democratic souls* through a proper/true education and training. The only common thing in their critique is the authority of reason and virtue over ignorant and corrupt organizations in the soul and the state. However, the form of both their negative approach to democracy and the possible solution for establishing an ideal democracy and the democratic souls has a different source, that is; the ideas and the human intellectual effort in Plato is changed with the transcendent Active Intellect in Farabi.

CONCLUSION

Both Plato and Farabi examine the features of democracy and the democratic city in their treatises, and democracy is, for them, a corrupt and ignorant rule, the moral values are easily overturned. The basic characteristics of democracy are freedom, equality, and the authority of people pursuing the excessive appetites. These appetites must be governed, for both, by the highest principles of truth and objective reality. Therefore, we have argued that the ideal model-states of both Plato (“just city”) and Farabi (“virtuous city”) are *principally* opposed to *demos-kratos* (rule of people) with a view to the necessity of the few people (philosopher-king and philosopher-prophet). Nevertheless, though the *content* of their critique is the same, i.e., the authority and the excellence of reason and rational decisions; the *form* of it due to the acquisition of these principles and knowledge is different from each other. This is important because when the highest principles of which the people were led into is taken into consideration, the form and the acquisition of these intelligibles are noticeable in their thought. Plato’s critique arises from the metaphysical aspect that the capacity to reach the high intellectual apprehension is essential to the few philosophers, not counterfeit ones and the multitude (since “*multitude cannot be philosophic*”) who are content with the many particular things without engaging in one single form. Farabi also defends, on the other hand, the view that the theoretical activity which cannot be separated from the political realm can be realized by the few (philosopher-prophet) who unite with the Active Intellect which brings the principles from the First. Therefore, the form of their critique is not philosophically the same.

However, though they ideally opposes democracy, both alludes to the establishment of a moderate democratic ideal in their treatises. The

passage of the *Republic* “there is a model of it in the heaven, for anyone who wants to look at it and make himself its citizen on the strength of what he sees. It makes no difference whether it is or ever will be somewhere, for he would take part in the practical affairs of that city and no other” and the dialogues of the *Meno* and *Protagoras* led us to conclude that the principal disagreement of democracy from the viewpoint of the principles of the “just city in speech” is not operative in the “just soul”, even in the ideal sense. This ideal is not more hardly realizable than in the “just city in speech”. Therefore, educating all souls, even of a slave of *Meno*, is possible and realizable, and when this “great and noble” pattern of each soul is realized, the imperfect democratic Athens will be ennobled *from within the self-ruled just souls*. The transmission from the corrupt *demokratta* into the *kallidemokratia* in which the “self-ruled souls” are dominant, is relevant to educational process within the souls of the individuals, not an outer power outside the souls of the citizens. Therefore it is, likewise, a process of rational *paideia* of all souls of the citizens. Plato’s message seems to be like that: “If you have democratic citizens, and if you want to keep democratic citizens, you have to *educate* your young people with rational principles.” Education is, then, used as an instrument against the post-democratic regime (tyrannical), and the condition of the stability and preservation of democracy is the establishment of the moderate and self-controlled (just self-ruled) citizens, which may have the capacity though an educational process to the rational discussion of practical matters.

Farabi closes the transformation model more favorable than Plato does, and suggests that ‘democracy is a virtuous rule in itself, and we have proposed three explanations for Farabi’s favorable verdict on democracy: firstly, the democratic city contains different individuals and groups, including the free associations of virtuous individuals, constitute ‘parts of the virtuous city’ in itself. Secondly, as a result of this reason, this kind of city is most easily transformable into a virtuous city and the rule of virtuous men, this is, we have stated, particularly true for the *ignorant* democratic city whose the citizens have no knowledge of virtue, but not for the *immoral city* whose denizens know what virtue is and the main principles for ruling a city, but denies the realize them in action. And finally, his explicitly favorable attitude toward democracy can be also explained, for us, by the

historical fact that it accords with the universalistic features of Islamic doctrine as well as his own multicultural experience.

Nevertheless, the influence of education upon the people is also noticeable in his thought, and therefore we must need a logical solution for his favorable and positive expressions relevant to democracy and the democratic city. We argued for that, as in Plato's model but in different ways, Farabi suggests a reformation/transformation project from the *ignorant* democracy into *virtuous* and *true* democracy through establishing a moral unity in difference/diversity by educating all human beings in the city. Though this model is rooted in the ideals of a God-centered humanity in this world, for Farabi, this is the virtuous democracy in which the educated human beings morally rule their souls in accordance with true principles, and know true freedom, equality, and authority.

In conclusion, despite the importance of educating the people through a proper training is dominant for the stability and preservation of democracy for both, they differ again on the ground that while Plato's model is secular (comes from ideas and the idea of good), Farabi produces his transcendent principles and notions from the First, (the sociopolitical content of the Active Intellect, revelation).

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DEMOCRACY

PLATO & FARABI

DR. MUHARREM HAFIZ

Plato and Farabi examine the features of democracy and the democratic city in their treatises, and democracy is a corrupt/ignorant rule and the moral values are easily overturned in it.

The basic characteristics of democracy are freedom, equality, and the authority of people pursuing the excessive appetites. These appetites must be governed by the highest principles of truth and objective reality. Therefore the ideal model-states of both Plato ("just city") and Farabi ("virtuous city") are principally opposed to demos-kratos (rule of people) with a view to the necessity of the few people (philosopher-king and philosopher-prophet).

Despite of all these negative approaches of Plato and Farabi, they allude to an ideal democratic model through educating all souls in the city through exhibiting the accessibility of virtue to all human beings, even philosophically or persuasively, in a rational and proper training. The educational project/model of both will be discussed in the third sections, and the writer argues that both Plato and Farabi are not deeply anti-democratic thinkers, but tried to preserve it in its proper and genuine form, and establish a moderate democratic city through educating people with a rational and good training. However, they differ from each other again from the viewpoint of the form of their alternative educational model.