The distinction between knowledge and opinion in *Rep*. 477c1-478a6

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ABSTRACT

Plato's argument in *Rep*. 5, 477c1-478a6, proves that knowledge (*epistēmē*) is a power different from opinion (*doxa*), and their objects are different in kind, too. This claim by itself would probably have been rejected by the so-called 'sight-lovers', i.e. people who deny the existence of Forms, so the argument uses premises that the sight-lovers would admit as true and self-evident, in order to convince them. My paper engages in the debate concerning the appropriate reading of these premises, and explains why the sight-lovers should accept something they previously would not.

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One of the most puzzling things in Plato's *Rep*. 5 is his claim that *doxa*, which is usually translated as 'belief' or 'opinion', is a power different in kind from *epistēmē*, knowledge, and their objects are different in kind, too (477b, 478a).[1] These claims contradict with our common sense. In the *Meno*, for example, knowledge seems to be a subset of belief, since knowledge is true belief 'bounded with reason' (*Men*. 98a). Accordingly, someone might believe without knowing what someone else fully knows, e.g. the Pythagorean Theorem: in both cases the object of knowledge and opinion is the same. So, why does Plato assert such a counter-intuitive claim in *Rep*. 5?

Any answer to this question should take the context into account. Socrates distinguishes two different groups of people, the philosophers and the so-called 'sight-lovers', to show that only the first ones possess knowledge in general, while the others do not. Unlike philosophers, the sight-lovers seem to be ordinary people who reject the existence of Forms and trust only their senses as a means to learn what the beautiful, the pious, the good etc. are (476b4-7, 479a1-4). We have good reasons to assume that in 476e-480a Plato presents a deductive argument that is addressed particularly to these ordinary people (see, e.g., 476d7-e8; 478e7-479a5), so as to show them that they lack knowledge and have nothing but opinions, and therefore that they are unsuitable for ruling. This assumption has been called 'the Dialectical Requirement' by G. Fine (1999, p. 217), a term which I shall adopt from now on. But if Plato aims to convince *them* that they lack knowledge, it means, firstly, that the sight-lovers are able to follow a deductive argument, and secondly, that its premises must be understandable and acceptable by them.

In this paper I will take the Dialectical Requirement for granted and assume that Glaucon, the interlocutor of Socrates, plays the role of a sight-lover's spokesman (476e7-9). I shall not focus on the whole argument, nor on an analysis of what sort of entities the objects of knowledge and opinion are. Instead, I will focus only on a part of the argument which proves the distinction between knowledge and opinion as well as between their objects (477c1-478a6). My aim is to engage in the debate over this controversial topic and to propose a reasonable interpretation. I shall show that the conclusions of this short argument are dialectical and necessary given the premises. To do this, I shall examine the premises themselves by considering that they are supposed to be adopted by any sight-lover. In accordance with scholars like J. Moss (2021), and contrary to scholars like G. Fine (1999), I will assume that when Plato talks about the objects of knowledge and opinion, he refers to things, instead of propositional contents.

From 476e7 and on Socrates elicits statements that a sight-lover supposedly asserts. A few lines later, however, Glaucon affirms willingly and without any question that:

A) Opinion is a power different from the power of knowledge. (477b6-7)
B) Whatever opinion is set over, it is different from whatever knowledge is set over, according to the power of each. (477b8-10)

Is it possible that the sight-lovers would eagerly take (A) and (B) as self-evident premises? Evidently not. Immediately after 477b10, Socrates asks Glaucon whether knowledge is set over being and knows it as it is (477b11-12), but he does not wait for his reply. Suddenly, he pauses and presents an argument which deductively proves (A) and (B). Only after proving (A) and (B) will Socrates repeat the question

whether knowledge is set over being and knows it as it is (478a7). This digression, an argument within an argument, shows that Plato takes (A) and (B) not as self-evident claims, but as something that cannot be accepted by the sight-lovers without proof. Apparently Glaucon has violated the Dialectical Requirement by affirming both (A) and (B). Socrates' argument in 477c1-478a6 restores the Dialectical Requirement by using premises that a sight-lover would accept as true, as we shall see.

I think that the argument addressed to the sight-lovers uses the well-known Socratic method. The usual pattern of this method reveals that Socrates' interlocutors are unaware of the logical consequences of some of their beliefs, which contradict with some other beliefs that they possess, but at least they are able to follow an argument, and they would never affirm an obvious contradiction. An interlocutor initially asserts that he believes that *p*. Then, after Socrates' questions, we learn that he also believes that *q* and *r*, but the combination of *q* and *r* logically leads to *not-p*. So, the interlocutor simultaneously believed *p*, *q* and *r*, without realizing that whoever accepts *q* and *r* must also accept *not-p*. Since he is able to grasp the logical necessity of the argument, and since he is not willing to abandon premises *q* and *r*, he is then forced to reject *p* and to adopt *not-p*. If the same method is applied here, and if the aim of the argument is to destroy some of the sight-lover's core beliefs while at the same time it respects the Dialectical Requirement, then we could reasonably assume that *the conclusions of the argument are the exact opposite of what a sight-lover used to believe* before his confrontation with the argument, while its premises are admitted by a sight-lover as true. If this suggestion is correct, it will help us reconstruct what a sight-lover used to believe on this subject.

So we may assume that the sight-lovers, before their confrontation with the Socratic argument, would not admit that knowledge and opinion are different powers. Their relation to each other is analogous to the relation between good vision and bad vision. Both good and bad vision are one and the same power and they are set over the same kind of things, namely colors, but only the good one accomplishes its *ergon*, i.e. it clearly sees and correctly discerns colors. So, a sight-lover would suggest that we should not take strong vision and weak vision as different powers that are set over the same objects (i.e. colors) but accomplish different things.

As Harte (2018, p. 149) correctly observes, the verb ἀπεργάζομαι "is often found in Plato with its cognate accusative: '*to ergon apergazomai*' (to effect its work or function)", and we should look back in *Rep.* 1 to better comprehend its meaning. In 353a10-11 Socrates says to Thrasymachus that "the function [ἔργον] of each thing is what it alone can do or what it does [ἀπεργάζηται] better than anything else" (transl. Grube-Reeve), while a few lines below he adds that "anything that has a function performs it well [τὸ αὑτῶν ἔργον εὖ ἐργάσεται] by means of its own peculiar virtue and badly by means of its vice" (353c6-7, transl. Grube-Reeve). The examples he gives in 353b-c are vision and hearing. Any lack or defect of their own particular virtue implies bad performance of their function (κακῶς τὸ αὑτῶν ἔργον ἀπεργάσεται, 353c9-10); evidently it does not imply another function. This means that weak vision or hearing does not accomplish anything at all. Accordingly, a sight-lover would think that opinion is bad, weak, or incomplete cognition, while knowledge is perfect, complete cognition. Nevertheless, both knowledge and opinion are set over the

same things: an F may be either the object of knowledge or the object of opinion.

We may assume that the negation of the last conclusion sounded so absurd and counter-intuitive in Plato's time, just as today many scholars find it difficult to accept. We shall see that the aim of Socrates' argument is to lead deductively to this shocking conclusion by using premises that almost anyone would eagerly affirm. Let us see how:

1) Powers belong to a genus of beings which enable us to do what we are able to do and any other thing to do whatever it is able to do. We discriminate what we call 'power' only when we look upon what it is set over and what it accomplishes. (477c1-d3) [P = premise]
2) We call a power 'the same' when it is set over the same thing and accomplishes the same thing. We call a power 'different' when it is set over a different thing and accomplishes something different. (477d2-7) [P]
3) Both knowledge and opinion belong to the genus of powers.[2] (477d8-e4) [P]
4) Knowledge does not accomplish the same with opinion, since knowledge is infallible, while opinion is fallible. (477e7-8) [P]
5) Knowledge and opinion are different powers. (478a1-3) [from 1-4]
6) Knowledge is set over something different from that which opinion is set over. (478a4-6) [from 2 & 5]

According to premise (1), a 'power' is anything by which either men or other things are able to do what they are able to do. Powers are a genus (*γένος τι*) of beings (*τῶν ὄντων*). So a sight-lover admits that powers are something real, they exist somehow. Something is called 'power' not based on its color or its figure etc. (477c7), but *solely* (μόνον) on two character traits: a) what it is set over (*ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι*) *and* b) what it accomplishes (*ὃ ἀπεργάζεται*) (477d2). Although the second criterion always implies an *ergon*, there is no need to conflate the *ergon* of a power with its objects, as Santas (1973) has shown by criticizing Hintikka's interpretation.[3] This conflation might be meaningful in crafts, since they *produce* their objects (e.g. the *ergon* and the subject of building-craft is the same, namely buildings), but crafts are only a subclass of powers, while other powers such as vision, knowledge and opinion *discover* their objects, which are something different than their *ergon* (cf. *Chrm*. 164a-168d; also Santas, 1973, 41). Socrates gives the examples of the powers of vision and of hearing (477c3). If we apply to them the two character traits of a power, we may legitimately infer that vision is set over visible things and produces cases of seeing, while hearing is set over audible things and produces cases of hearing.

Let us, for now, skip premise (2) and proceed to (3). According to (3) both knowledge and opinion belong to the genus of powers. They are powers because they fall under the general description of a power in (1), i.e. power is that by which we are able to do something: by knowledge we are able to know (478a7), and by opinion we are able to opine (478a9). Since they are powers, there must be something which they are set over and something that they accomplish.[4]

Premise (4) and conclusions (5) and (6) should be examined after seeing what exactly the relevant passage says, because this passage raises a lot of disputes among scholars:

> [i] 'But not long ago you agreed that knowledge and opinion are not the same.' [ii] 'How could any rational

> man affirm the identity of infallible [ἀναμάρτητον] with what is not infallible [μὴ ἀναμαρτήτῳ]?' [iii] 'Excellent [Καλῶς]', said I, 'and obvious [δῆλον] is our agreement that opinion is a different thing from knowledge'. 'Yes, different'. [iv] 'Each of them, then [ἄρα], since it is able to do something different, it is set over something different'. 'It is necessary so'. (477e5-478a6, transl. based on Shorey and Rowe, with changes; Latin letters and Greek words in brackets added)

Socrates reminds Glaucon that he took [i] as a premise in 477b6-7. One might suppose that it works also as a premise in the current argument. This, however, would make [iii] an unnecessary repetition, since it says exactly the same thing (cf. Gerson, 2003, p. 156). But the words *καλῶς* and *δῆλον* that refer to *ὁμολογεῖται ἡμῖν* indicate that [iii] is illuminated and justified in light of [ii], which is an explanation that was apparently a hidden assumption in 477b6-7. This makes [iii] not a premise, but a conclusion derived from [ii] and something else, which I do believe is premise (2), i.e. "we call a power 'the same' when it is set over the same thing and accomplishes the same; we call a power 'different' when it is set over a different thing and accomplishes something different" (477d2-7). Furthermore, [iii] in combination again with (2), leads to the conclusion of [iv] (note ἄρα in 478a4), i.e. that knowledge and opinion are set over different objects. The necessity of the conclusion given the premises is affirmed by Glaucon in 478a6.

Many scholars refuse to accept the soundness of this argument, or to read it this way. The source of the problem is located in premise (2), which can be read in two mutually exclusive ways:

a) If two powers are the same, then they are set over the same thing and they accomplish the same. But if two powers are different, then *either* they are set over different things, *or* they accomplish different things, *or* both.
b) If two powers are the same, then they are set over the same thing and they accomplish the same. But if two powers are different, then they are set over different things *and* they accomplish different things.

Consider that the argument is valid only if we adopt (b), and in the sense that each of the two criteria is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for making two powers same or different.[5] Some scholars, however, either prefer (a), implying that some different powers could be set over the same things, or they admit that (b) is the correct reading of (2), but it is either a false premise, or it is at least a weak one and barely convincing.

Among the scholars who prefer the (a) version are Gosling, Fine, and Harte. Gosling (1968, p. 123-5) rejects (b) by claiming that we should not stress the analogy with the powers of seeing and hearing too far, and he thinks that Plato "thought about [these two character traits] as two ways of getting at the same point". But this view would cancel Socrates' unitary assumption about powers: it would mean that some powers have different objects, while others do not. I will come back to this problem below. Nonetheless, Gosling's reading cannot explain why Plato tries to prove deductively why knowledge and opinion are set over different things. Fine (1999, p. 220) rejects (b) in favor of (a), if we assume that we talk about *things* instead of *propositional contents*, because she takes the second part of (b) (i.e. "But if […] different things") as an

invalid inference derived from its first part (i.e. "If two powers […] accomplish the same").[6] But this is not the case, and we should take (b) in its entirety as a premise for reasons that we will see below.

Among other scholars who think that (b) is the correct reading, although (b) is incorrect or a weak premise, are Cross and Woozley (1964, p. 150-1) and Gerson (2003, p. 155 n. 6). Also, Annas (1981, p. 202) thinks that the two criteria which separate knowledge from opinion "are logically distinct but not in fact separable". This, however, would beg the question: it cannot be self-evident for a sight-lover that these two cognitive powers must have objects different in kind. Moreover, Cooper (1986, p. 231-2) reads the argument that discerns knowledge from opinion and their objects in a way that I think is correct, but he does not clarify whether he takes infallibility and fallibility as two different accomplishments, or not.

The purpose of all the above references is to reveal the difficultness of interpreting the passage under discussion properly, and not to provide a detailed analysis for all of them. Nevertheless, I shall focus on Harte's (2018) reading, because I believe she offers the most plausible defense of (a), while at the same time respects the fact that the text seems to be closer to (b). Then I will explain why it seems evident to me that her reading is wrong.

Harte (2018) suggests that two different powers may have distinct and non-overlapping domains, and yet their respective domains are non-exclusive (p. 147). She relies on two examples taken from *Rep*. 1: the first is found in 346b2-6: "Suppose a navigator, while exercising the skill of navigation, came to be healthy as a result of being relevantly advanced by sailing" (p. 151). Medicine and navigation are skills, and any skill is a sub-class of powers (p. 151). Their domains are distinct and non-overlapping, and yet, as the example shows, they are not mutually exclusive, since navigation is set over a part of medicine's domain. Accordingly, as Socrates says in 346b11, medicine might be profitable, so in this case its domain is set over the domain of money-earning, although it is not medicine's own domain (and the same is true if we contrast money-earning with shepherding, ruling etc.).

The second example that Harte offers is taken from 353a, and its meaning is that "an *ergon* is unique only in the sense that it is uniquely specialized" (p. 152), but not in the absolute sense; "[t]he ergon of a pruning knife is pruning", but "[m]any kinds of knife can be used to prune" (p. 152). Harte calls these cases 'atypical results' of powers (pp. 153-61). Accordingly, the atypical result of belief is to be set over Forms, and the atypical result of knowledge is to be set over sensibles. On this point Harte follows Fine (1999, p. 227), and finds the first case in 506c6-7, where Socrates "implies that he has beliefs without knowledge regarding the Form of the Good" (p. 156), and the second case in 520c1-5, which describes the philosopher's return to the cave and his ability "to exercise knowledge (*gnōsesthe*, c4) of the 'images' (*eidōla*, c4)" (p. 156).[7]

I do believe, however, that none of the examples Harte appeals to proves that two different powers might under certain conditions be set over the same things (or domains). It is not navigation that (atypically) results in good health; rather, it is medicine that unintentionally has been applied. A doctor would suggest to the sick navigator to expose himself to open sea air, not to navigate a ship. Accordingly, navigation as such has nothing to do with a navigator's health condition or the quality of air that he is exposed to. The example shows only that *the same person exercises simultane-*

ously two different powers, one intentionally (navigation), the other unintentionally (medical treatment), and each of them has its own distinct and exclusive domain. The first has as its object the sailing of a ship, the second has as its object someone's health condition. Hence, the particular example does not show that one power is (atypically or not) applied to the domain of another. What is common in both domains is the person, not the power.[8] The fact that the domains of two different *erga* / powers are mutually exclusive is evident in Plato's text when we come to the examples of money-earning on the one side and medicine, ruling and the rest of the skills on the other side (346b-d). It is not medicine or ruling that (atypically) results in profit; rather it is the skill of money-earning that it is applied *in addition to* (προσχρῆσθαι, 346c10) the other skills. Again: one and the same person exercises two different powers.

The second example in 353a is unsuitable to prove Harte's claim, because knives are not powers, but tools by means of which we exercise powers. It is as if we confuse the power of vision with the eyes. Harte (2018, p. 152) tries to overcome this problem by emphasizing the *ergon* of the knife, instead of the knife itself, but this does not make things better. Pruning with a pruning knife and pruning with a knife of another sort are not two different *erga* / powers. In both cases the *ergon* is one and the same, namely pruning, and the tools you choose determine whether you perfectly accomplish this *ergon* or not, just like the health condition of an eye determines whether you perfectly exercise the power of vision or not. Moreover, the context of 506c reveals that Socrates' opinion is not set over the Good itself, but over an image / an appearance of it that takes the same name.[9] The fact that Socrates claims that there must be a Form of the Good does not prove that he knows what it is. Finally, the verb γνώσεσθε in 520c4 has the non-technical meaning of 'to recognize' and it refers to the correlation between images and their corresponding Forms, hence it does not have the same meaning that it has in *Rep.* 475e-480a (Gerson, 2003, p. 165 n. 22; Moss, 2021, p. 21 n. 16).

If infallibility and fallibility do not refer to two different accomplishments, then either we should take only infallibility as an accomplishment and fallibility as a bad performance of one and the same cognitive power, or we should take neither of them as an accomplishment, but as a third trait that belongs to knowledge and opinion respectively, different in kind from the accomplishments and the objects of these powers. The first option must be rejected, because it does not prove that knowledge and opinion are different powers, but it proves quite the opposite (as we've seen in a similar case of good vs. bad vision). The second option has been chosen by Hestir, who takes infallibility and fallibility as a third trait of knowledge and opinion respectively, different in kind from their work or their objects, and he assumes that the distinction between knowledge and opinion derives from this difference, because "[p]resumably this follows from an appeal to something like Leibniz's Law" (Hestir, 2000, p. 315, p. 329 n. 12 and n. 13). As a result, he infers that the conclusion "belief [= opinion] and knowledge do something different" does not derive from the premises "and cannot if it is to avoid circularity" (Hestir, 2000, p. 316). The problem, however, lies not in Plato's argument, but in Hestir's reconstruction of it: his reconstruction overlooks the crucial passage 477d3-7 (i.e. the second premise in my reconstruction of Plato's argument), and this omission completely distorts Plato's syllogistic

steps. Nevertheless, the second option must be rejected because it contradicts with the first premise of the argument, which affirms that "we discriminate what we call 'power' *only* when we look upon what it is set over and what it accomplishes" (477c1-d3). This means that there is no other way to discern a power from anything else apart from its accomplishment or the things it is set over.

Since *Rep*. 477e5-478a6 affirms that the distinction between knowledge and opinion is drawn due to the distinction between infallibility and fallibility, and since they are not the objects of these two powers, then infallibility and fallibility can be nothing but two different accomplishments. But why should a sight-lover accept this claim? We assumed before that he takes for granted that only knowledge has an accomplishment while opinion is a bad performance of one and the same cognitive power. So it has to be implied that there is something in the meaning of 'infallible' and 'fallible' that forces a sight-lover to admit that they are two different accomplishments.[10]

As Vlastos (1985, p. 12-13) has correctly noticed, the adjective 'infallible' (*ἀναμάρτητον*, 477e7) can be read in two ways: a) that which never fails, or b) that which is impossible to fail, and the last reading seems to be the correct one in our case. Accordingly, the adjective 'fallible' (*τῷ μὴ ἀναμαρτήτῳ*, e7) might mean either c) that which sometimes fails, or d) that which is not impossible to fail. We should notice that (b) implies (a), but (d) does not imply only (c); it implies (a) as well. For example, I might throw arrows that always find their target, even if it is by mere luck, which means that there is nothing that guarantees that I will not fail in a subsequent shot. The (c) version of 'fallible' cannot be an accomplishment, but the (d) version of 'fallible' can be, if my good luck always guides my arrows to their target. Yet, (d) is different from (b), since my luck is not impossible to fail.

Even a sight-lover, who might never have contemplated the nature of knowledge and opinion, would affirm that someone can find the correct answer of a problem without being an expert in the given subject. For example, a young student may guess the correct answer of a mathematical problem through sheer luck, or by a kind of inspiration. A sight-lover would also affirm, though, that the student's accomplishment is not infallible in the sense that nothing guarantees that her luck or her inspiration will be correct in the next challenge. On the contrary, an expert's accomplishment is not due to luck or any kind of inspiration. It must be something different, and whatever it might be, it must be infallible (cf. Vlastos, 1985, p. 13 n. 32).

In *Prt*. 319b-c, for example, Socrates mentions that the Athenians in public gatherings take into consideration only the advice of experts concerning a subject of their expertise, but they laugh at or get angry with non-experts who publicly express their own opinions. We might assume that the Athenians do so not because they think that non-experts always say false things, but because the non-expert's pronouncements are always based on something 'fallible'. Hence, there is no guarantee that their pronouncements are correct or wrong. Similarly, in *Euthphr.* 3c1-4, Euthyphro complains: "Whenever I speak of divine matters in the assembly and foretell the future, they laugh me down as if I were crazy; and yet I have foretold nothing that did not happen. Nevertheless, they envy all of us who do this." (transl. by Grube). Even if we accept that his assertion "I have foretold nothing that did not happen" is true, we know well that his following 'soothsaying' in 3e4-5 is false, since he 'predicts' that Socrates' trial will have a

happy ending. On the contrary, an expert's advice is always based on something that is supposed to be infallible. In *Rep.* 340d-341a, for example, Thrasymachus asserts that an expert *qua* expert never fails.

Hence, since even non-philosophers admit that achieving infallible results is a different accomplishment from achieving fallible ones (premise 4), then the sight-lover has to accept the valid inference that knowledge and opinion are two different powers (conclusion 5). But since knowledge and opinion are two different powers, a sight-lover must also admit that they are set over different objects (conclusion 6). This conclusion is deductively derived from premise (2) (i.e. "we call a power 'the same' when it is set over the same thing and accomplishes the same; we call a power 'different' when it is set over a different thing and accomplishes something different") and (5) (i.e. "knowledge and opinion are different powers"). Glaucon provides a recapitulation of the argument when Socrates asks him (numbers in brackets indicate the enumeration of the statements of the argument):

> 'Does it opine the same thing that knowledge knows, and will the knowable and the opinable be identical, or is that impossible?' 'Impossible by our admissions', he [i.e. Glaucon] said. 'Since different powers are naturally set over different objects (2), and since both knowledge and opinion are powers (3), but each different from the other (5), as we've said, these admissions do not leave place for the identity of the knowable and the opinable (6)'. (478a11--b2, transl. by Shorey with changes)

So, since the sight-lover has accepted (2) and (5), and provided that he recognizes the logical necessity of a deductive argument, he has to accept (6) as well. However, someone could raise another question against the most controversial premise, i.e. premise (2): Why would a sight-lover accept (2) as a universal rule without exceptions? Someone might accuse Glaucon that "he has allowed a misleadingly incomplete induction", as Stokes (1992, p. 120) points out.[11] In the case of premise (1), when Socrates talks about powers in general, he brings vision and hearing as characteristic examples: obviously they are both set over different objects, since vision cannot see sounds and hearing cannot hear colors. But why should we infer from these two examples that *every* single power is set over objects different from those of any other power?

I think that this is a characteristic case of Socratic *epagoge* (ἐπαγωγή), which is not to be identified with modern induction. The persuasive power of *epagoge* is not grounded in the sufficient number of cases that are used as premises, but in the kind of premises that Socrates uses. As Robinson (1941, p. 36-8) has pointed out, two or three examples used as premises is the commonest number that Socrates uses when he applies this method, and Plato has never made any distinction between enumerative and intuitive induction. Therefore Socrates and his interlocutors treat premises of the form 'X is A and B', 'Y is A and B' etc. as characteristic cases that set the ground for the conclusion 'all As are Bs'.

Let us take for instance *Prt.* 332c3-9. On the basis of only three examples, namely the pairs beautiful-ugly, good-bad, shrill tone-deep tone, Socrates derives the general conclusion that "for each thing that belongs to opposites, there is only one opposite". Similarly, vision and hearing are sufficient examples to convince someone that every different power is set over different objects and accomplishes different things, not because

they are numerically adequate, but because they represent sufficiently what a power is. But even if one demands more examples, all the cases of crafts-powers taken from *Rep*.1 lead to the same conclusion.[12]

There is only one dramatic persona in Plato's dialogues who has seriously attempted to question the Socratic *epagoge*, and this is Critias in the *Charmides*. In this dialogue we read that Critias constantly denies that temperance (σωφροσύνη) has any similarity with any other kind of knowledge, or power, or anything else, aiming to defuse any *epagoge* that would probably lead him to contradiction (see *Chrm*. 165e, 166b-c, 168a). But when Socrates finally asked him to classify temperance and to explain why such classification is true (169a-c), Critias was captured by *aporia* (169c6). Accordingly in the *Republic*, if knowledge and opinion were *powers of a different kind* than the rest of the powers, the onus of proof would be on the sight-lovers, and, as many similar cases from Plato's dialogues show, we have good reasons to assume that they would fail to do so (cf. Stokes, 1992, p. 121).

Hence, the sight-lovers are now forced by the implication of their own beliefs (i.e. premises 1-4) to reject their previous assumption that knowledge and opinion are one and the same power that is set over the same objects, like, e.g., strong and weak vision is set over colors. Socrates will use it to prove that the sight-lovers have only opinions and therefore their objects of contemplation differ in kind from the objects of knowledge. A presentation, though, of the whole argument would go beyond the purpose of this paper.[13]

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ENDNOTES

1 Here and below I follow Sling's edition.

2 There is no need to stretch the argument in a way that takes (3) as a conclusion derived from (1) and passage 477e3-4 for opinion plus a hidden assumption analogous with 477e3-4 for knowledge, as Santas (1973, p. 46-7) does. The words τιθεῖς in 477d9 (for knowledge) and οἴσομεν (future tense of φέρω) in e2 show that Socrates takes (3) as a premise. Glaucon's rhetorical question in 477e3-4 ("what else makes us capable of opining, if not opinion?", transl. by Rowe slightly modified) asserts the second part of premise (3), namely 'opinion belongs to the genus of powers'; it is not a further premise.

3 Prince (2014) also supports what he calls 'the Identity Reading', namely that the two criteria are in final analysis one, i.e. they refer to one and the same thing in two different ways. This reading, however, cannot follow Socrates' argument properly: why would Socrates bother to search for what opinion is set over, since he has already found the way in which opinion is different from knowledge (478a)? Moreover, the Identity Reading is totally incompatible with what Plato says about powers in *Rep.* 6: hearing and its object, voice, are two different kinds (507c10-d2), and accordingly vision and colors (507d10-e1; cf. also 508c5, where the presence of a color is stated as something totally independent from the power of seeing). See also *Rep.* 7, 524a1-3, where the crucial phrase 'to be set over something' which is expressed with ἐπί + dative refers clearly to something different from a power or its accomplishment.

4 Glaucon calls knowledge "the most powerful [ἐρρωμενεστάτην] among all powers" (477e1) without further explanation, but it is reasonable according to the context, to assume that a sight-lover would agree with it: knowledge is -among other things- the most important attribute for ruling; cf. *Rep.* 3, 402b9-c8, and *Rep.* 6, 484c4-d6.

5 Boylu (2011, p. 114) has correctly shown that "each condition is both necessary and sufficient for setting two powers apart since it entails the other condition", while any other reading of the (b) version makes the argument invalid.

6 Therefore, Fine favors the content-based reading of this statement which avoids invalidity. Cf. also Baltzly, 1997, p. 262.

7 Similarly, Kamtekar, 2008, p. 140-3; Smith, 2019, p. 64. For a much shorter but similar approach to Harte's thesis see Schwab, 2016, p. 47-50. For another view against Harte's thesis, see Moss, 2021, p. 80.

8 Someone might object that exercising an ergon / a power presupposes knowledge, as for example Aristotle states, but this cannot exclude the assumption that one and the same person can be both a navigator and a doctor. Even in this case their reaction would be exactly the same. In any case, the issue here is not what someone knows, but what someone does, since any power, as premise (1) affirms, is identified according to its object and result, not to its agent's state of mind.

9 Cf. the Sun Analogy, especially line 509a9; also Gerson, 2003, p. 164-5 and p. 172.

10 Although Boylu (2011, p. 119-20) has correctly noticed that infallibility and fallibility must refer to the one of the two criteria that discern knowledge from opinion, she wrongly assumes that infallibility is associated with perfect cognitive contact while fallibility with imperfect cognitive contact with their respective objects. But this assumption takes something imperfect as an accomplishment (which is contradictory in terms); otherwise it cannot explain why these two powers (knowledge and opinion) are not analogous with e.g. a perfect and an imperfect vision which are set over the same things, namely colors.

11 Nevertheless, Stokes rejects such a suggestion.

12 See, for example, *Rep.* 340d-e (an epagoge made by Thrasymachus), and *Rep.* 341c-342c.

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