

Comic Cure for
Delusional Democracy

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Plato's Republic

Gene Fendt

LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

16 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BT, United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fendt, Gene, 1955–
Comic cure for delusional democracy : Plato's Republic / Gene Fendt.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-7391-9390-7 (cloth : alk. paper)—ISBN 978-0-7391-9391-4 (electronic)
1. Plato. Republic. 2. Democracy—Philosophy. I. Title.
JC71.P6F46 2014
321'.07—dc23

2014018795



TM The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

ad majorem civitatis dei gloriam

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Preface

And would you be able to persuade, us not listening?

—Polemarchus, *Rep* (327c)

Jack Gilbert, in “Orpheus in Greenwich Village,” reimagines the poet going down out of the light. Looking up as he tunes his lyre, he sees the gathering beasts: they have no ears. Let Gilbert’s Orpheus stand, as a ghost at the head of this book, exhibiting how the modern age has improved on Polemarchus.¹

This book works within that school of interpretation—one as ancient as Aristotle—which holds that Plato’s dialogues are mimeses: the kind of thing that cannot be correctly understood, or work correctly, if read as purely philosophical essays, like the works of Aristotle. Within that *modus operandi*, I will show how Socrates’ work in the dialogue has implications for Plato’s work on his audience, and so for *Republic*’s work on, and significant insights into, fundamental problems in our contemporary social and political world. This *modus operandi* does not presume that Plato is, under cover of the dead, giving arguments to defend his most particular philosophical theses, rather, the argument in the dialogues is what we can better understand as only the philosophical surface of the dialogue, so that in order to understand the work of his mimeses we need also to consider (2) how the stories, poems, and events, as well as the arguments within a dialogue affect the characters, and (3) how the interactions of the characters (including, but not limited to, their arguments) are meant to affect us. The introduction argues that this three level reading is part of what is required by the universal recognition of Plato’s work (including Socrates’ definitions in *Republic*) as mimetic. As general orientation to the project, then, I must set out something of what I think is meant by this wide-reaching concept.

In his powerful reorientation to our understanding of this term, Stephen Halliwell argued that “the mimetic” gave the ancients “a unified conception of art” which gathered together a wide variety of practices sharing “a representational *cum* expressive character” legitimately regarded as a coherent group.² Against the usual intellectualist view of the arts supposed in Plato (and actual in others) this claim recognizes that ancient mimesis instigated both intellectual and emotional effects. Continuing along a line originally defended in *Love Song for the Life of the Mind*,³ the introduction argues that among the ancients the mimetic is first of all an emotional experience, thus I would reverse the order of terms Halliwell uses: the mimetic arts share an expressive *cum* representational character, have emotional as well as intellectual aims. This point of order is clear in Socrates’ requirement that education begin with music (understood as including all the arts), and that the musical-cultural surrounding of the children works on them “without their awareness” and “before reason” is active, putting their souls into a kind of harmony which allows them to be able to listen to reason when it does arise (401b–402a). Likewise in *Laws*, the Stranger extends this mimetic and emotional work of Apollo and the muses to all ages; each age, because of distinctive passional inadequacies or excesses, needs a different kind of music to allow their souls to be pulled more easily by the golden cord of reason, which connects human beings to the gods (653c–654a, 664b–666d). This puppet image seconds *Republic’s* consideration that the mimetic works “before reason” since the puppet is worked by distinct cords of different kinds (reason’s is golden, others are of baser, stronger metal, some more brittle or prone to rust). The golden cord cannot work the puppet alone, but requires some harmony with the others; the others can work the puppet against (so, without) reason.

So, any critical reading of Platonic mimesis—of any dialogue—must not only consider three levels of *argumentative* effect (what the arguments say, what they imply to each interlocutor, what the arguments between interlocutors imply to us), but also be aware of the *emotional* effects and changes among the characters due to and in their interactions, of which argument is only a part (as is always the case in drama). In our criticism and explication of Plato, then, we must first become aware of the passions the interlocutors are confessing or revealing. Secondly, we must notice how these are being worked upon through everything going on in the dialogue. And finally, we must also become aware of the kinds of passions Plato might be raising and working on in us through his mimetic construction of the dialogue. This last effect Aristotle called catharsis, purification, and posited as the final cause of (at least) tragedy, if not (as I would argue) of comedy and all other mimetic arts. So then, any logos concerning the work itself (*Republic, kath auto*) must play into the other speech about its work *pros ta theatra* (cf. *Po* 1449a7–8)—in the theatre of Plato’s readers, in one democracy and another.

Socrates' presentation of "the mimetic" within both *Republic* and *Laws* as that which, in the healthy city, both prepares the soul for and keeps it in tune with reason's discourse—and which in every other city does otherwise—requires us to think that Socrates himself must use his own not insignificant arts to accomplish that purpose with his interlocutors; Plato likewise—unless he is merely exhibiting the foolishness of Socrates and the Athenian Stranger in thinking the arts to be so significant. Even then we could still ask the question: what is Plato trying to accomplish *in us* by presenting such a (foolish) interaction and claim? The mimesis of such a comedy itself has a purpose, aims at some good. The Socratic distinction between the verbal lie and the true lie further certifies this orientation regarding the mimetic: we rightly use verbal lies (fictions) in order to lead a person who is deluded (or suffering under a true lie) out of his delusion and closer to the truth of things (382a–d). But delusion is not mere ignorance; it is a falsity to which we are passionately bound, "a 'corruption of mind' due to the tyranny of insubordinate eros,"⁴ or to use the Freudian term, delusion is error that is highly cathected. If delusion (or the true lie) were *mere ignorance*, then a fiction or a work of mimetic art would not be the appropriate cure; we should, rather, simply say what is the case or give a mathematical or dialectical proof. However, as Socrates' first fiction in *Republic* shows, when a madman is at the door, we rightly do not tell him the truth (331c). He would not be able to hear us. We will discuss this problem of madness and its cure more fully in chapter 1.

Since Plato is making up fictions, works of mimetic art, he must mean them as similarly curative or cathartic works. *Republic*, the work of mimetic art about regimes of soul and city, is meant to purify our regimes of soul and city through the mimesis of a purification Socrates leads on the first festival of Bendis; such purification is necessary in order to be able to hear clearly and correctly. For some—like Polemarchus, "bear in mind that we won't listen" (327c), and Thrasymachus (344d) within the dialogue—such fictions may be necessary in order to tempt them to listen, or be able to hear, at all. As faith precedes understanding, so the mimetic engenders a feeling and practice not yet understood in order that, and through which, we may come to understand. The last chapters will show more precisely how certain hierarchizings of soul make one more and less capable of understanding. Our introduction will aim not only to set up the argument of the rest of the book regarding *Republic* as a curative mimesis, but to set it in a wider frame—about Plato's art in general, and then about how the ancient view of mimesis connects to some contemporary understandings. That brief exhibition of wider connections is meant to show both the continued pertinence of Plato's ideas to contemporary specializations, and to give some indication of how Plato's more deeply philosophical project could be their unheard root chord.

That introduction sets the stage for the main task of the book: to show that and how the city Socrates builds through most of the dialogue is to be a curative *pharmakon*—a noble lie—for his interlocutors, who—led by Glaucon—prefer the feverish city to health. The city that is built for them and with them is not itself the ideal city, both the city and the building of it are purificatory. Further, Plato’s mimesis of Socrates in this Bendic dialogue with these feverish interlocutors aims to produce catharses in us, delusive citizens of our own particular earthly city. Our city (like Athens) is not only further from the ideal than *kallipolis*, it is not even intended to be curative; so, we are like Athens, perhaps. So we, too, must become (and are) partakers in the cathartic liturgy Socrates initiates (at his own expense) on the first festival of Bendis: a feast of *logos*, one of which the proper measure might well be “one’s whole life” (450b). The entire *Republic* is such a cathartic *pharmakon*, for we hear it as if overhearing Socrates repeating the music of the previous evening *for himself*—for his own purification.

Socrates’ initial hypothesis that the city is like the soul implies that if it is possible for individuals to be delusional, it is possible for cities, and for political theorizing concerning the foundation of cities, to be so also. The political discussion within *Republic* takes place at the instigation of a thesis originally introduced into the dialogue by one who springs into it like a wild beast (336b): cities are set up for the advantage of their masters (338e). While the sons of Ariston more cogently and calmly reconstitute Thrasymachus’ main points as book 2 begins, we must wonder whether those arguments are merely the speech of those who “have been talked deaf by Thrasymachus and countless others” (358c) and so are suffering, under mimetic repetition, from a delusion engendered thereby, or whether there is something true in that thesis despite its original source: the mouth of the wild beast. Plato’s brothers suffer this puzzle. The Thrasymachan position, however, also shares an *archê* or *telos* (or both) with the most politically and philosophically potent modern and contemporary political theories: we suffer likewise. In the last part of chapter 1 I summarize briefly, and largely in agreement with Joshua Mitchell’s work,⁵ how modern political theory from Hobbes through Locke to Rawls and Habermas agrees with the foundational Thrasymachan delusion, which should be called possessive individualism. Socrates’ hypothetical origin of the city—that no one is self-sufficient—develops a counterstory about the nature of the individual, society, and their relation, and of what follows by nature and necessity from each of these distinct *archai*. The opposition of these two ‘mythical’ histories of the city, their basis in acceptance or denial of the Socratic hypothesis, *necessitates* that one of these political theories is mistaken. One is the kind of error no one would willingly believe (382a): a true lie. Chapter 1 concludes by showing Socrates’ foundational story is true, thereby implying the impossibility of the

modern political *archê* and *telos*—individual self-sufficiency or autarchy; thus, continued belief in and defense of it is symptomatic of delusion.

Since Socrates thinks his hypothesis is true (for he calls it alone the healthy and true city), he must soon realize that those who continue to defend the opposing point of view suffer under a true lie; at the end of book 2—that is, shortly after he is forced to abandon the healthy and true as “insufficient” according to the feverish Glaucon—he prescribes the necessary cure for people in such a position: a verbal lie, a work of art. This cure must have a Janus-like structure: one face must seem to agree with the delusion far enough to be accepted by the delusional person, while the other must reorient that person in such a way as to bring him closer to the truth. The noble lie must accomplish both things out of one mouth. Socrates does this sort of thing in numerous dialogues, including those considered aporetic, and applying these Socratic distinctions and arguments about kinds of lies to the characters as they reveal themselves to be early on in *Republic* brings us into the problematic of chapter 2, *Psyche’s Pharmacy*: how do we make a drug for these souls? how is the drug expected to work? how can we be sure of what the truth is that we must lead them into? that *our* story does not itself lead into delusion? how does the dialogue accomplish a correlative purification for us, as for those within the dialogue? Plato constructs the Socrates–Adeimantus discussion of the true and verbal lies in such a way as to raise these very questions *to us*, even though Adeimantus agreeably skates over their difficulties. In other words, there *seems* to be no *aporia* between the characters—on the second level of the dialogue, but there *ought* to be one between the audience and the characters—the third level of the dialogue. The work of art may be exhibiting one thing within itself, but accomplishing—at least working to accomplish—another *pros ta theatra*, with regard to the audience. The mimetic is not merely impersonation of one or another character, but works its way in us through the interplay among them. Socrates cannot be read as the mouthpiece of Plato, since Plato’s mimesis opens an *aporia*, precisely under a place where Socrates and Adeimantus (agreeably) walk.

The questions raised about the *pharmakon* for a delusion lead on along two intellectually distinguishable, but actually (*in re*) inseparable, tracks—followed separately in chapters 3 and 4. Since a delusion is a highly canted error, both the passions (chapter 3) and the mind (chapter 4) of the delusional one must be corrected by the poet. Since the mimetic is that within which the rational comes to be and *provides the order* and frame within which reasoning functions, we first consider how Socrates is attempting to cure, or true (as one does a wheel), his interlocutors’ disordered passions in the Aristophanic sex comedy of book 5. That the passions must be trued *first* also explains why that sex comedy precedes the intellectual explication and required mathematical training of book 7. Unlike Aristophanic comedy, in

which the characters from the get-go are engaged in something openly absurd—feeding shit-cakes to dung beetles in order to fly to heaven, or negotiating private peaces with foreign governments—Socrates’ interlocutors have seemed largely sane; indeed many scholars have agreed with Glaucon’s criticism of the healthy city, and the *telos* and *archê* Thrasymachus posits are central (separately or together) to modern political theory. Just so, the psychic and political delusions with which we are concerned present this way; they are fully ambulatory—“they are like us” (515a). How far into them are we willing to go? are we already gone?

Like Aristophanes, Plato’s comedy brings his characters into the affirmation of further and more outrageous affirmations (though not, as in Aristophanes or other comic authors, actions). If you hear in my “further and outrageous affirmations” a suggestion of longer and stiffer phalluses you are hearing correctly, for the interlocutors’ suggestions and affirmations are meant to be (and as some scholars have pointed out, are) precise echoes of outrageous comic actions in plays like *Assemblywomen*, *Lysistrata*, *Clouds*; I trace several of Plato’s ploys here to Socrates’ previously excised comic scenes from Homer. The work of comedy, in either case, is the same: by bringing ridiculous passions (and the ridiculously cathected objects or ideas they lead us to embrace) into open ridicule, we may—if secretly suffering them—begin our cure precisely in and through that laughter, or perhaps disgust. If we do not suffer from them, our well-ordered passions are allowed free play in a space where there are no political or social consequences to that freedom: right and free exercise (laughing at the ridiculous) is also a sort of catharsis, particularly if one lives in a society that is largely neither right nor free. We see that Socrates is not immediately successful with his interlocutors, but we should begin to feel and see how the comedy he and his interlocutors play out before us in this part of their festival discussion might cure us of our own inordinate eros. As in any comedy from Aristophanes through Shakespeare to Stoppard, it is not necessary that the *characters* either come into the comedy with healthy souls or exit it fully cured in order for the comedy to have its cathartic effect on the *audience*. What is *represented to us* and what the *mimesis accomplishes in us* may differ.

The comic family can be seen as the “smaller writing” of what *Republic* writes more largely. As the opening of the great argument was set out to disprove Thrasymachus’ principle of individual autarchy (for the strong at any rate), one thesis the middle comedy plays with is the delusion of gender autarchy. As the Thrasymachan denies the natural necessity of communal complementarity among the members of the city (the strong would be mad—*mainesthai*, 359b—to agree to such a venture), so book 5’s comedy pays no attention to the original necessary and natural complementarity of the sexes—riding forth to an untethered extremity of its denial.

After these passions have been let out to their extremity (exhaustion perhaps in the interlocutors, laughter or disgust—one hopes—among the readers), Socrates continues his cure of the interlocutors (and Plato of us) by leading all to focus on the various relations of the mind to truth in the three linked images—Sun, Line, Cave—of books 6 and 7. While these images are Socratic invention (of several distinct types) for those interlocutors, they also produce for us, Plato’s audience, a theoretical outline of how a person can come to the truth from being buried alive in the delusion producing cave of mimesis and opinion. The three linked images require us to see different levels of clarity and obscurity, truth and the lack of it (509d–510a). Since it is all one line, there must be some truth even at the lowest level; the problem is taking that as completely true. This same kind of variable mixture, between truth and the lack of it, is the requirement we argued was operative in verbal lies prescribed as cures. Since my argument is that *Republic* is precisely this kind of cure for the interlocutors and for us, I then show how Plato has constructed his poem so that his readers should both *see operating* and be *mimetically practicing* each of those four stages—*eikasia*, *pistis*, *dianoia*, *noësis*—in the course of reading *Republic*. Such moving up the line is the intellect *turning* (through images which are not the truth) to become closer to the truth. Mimesis instigates movement. Chapter 4 therefore recapitulates the dialogue precisely to show where in it each stage of the relation untruth/truth is being exemplified and practiced; distinct parts of the dialogue are shown to be related to each of the four parts of the line and the four operations that define that line.

The sun-line-cave is the maplike view we, who are outside the dialogue, are given. Within the dialogue, Glaucon—who answers Socrates during these three images—is not only hearing, but also mimetically rehearsing each step and moving through that territory of which the map gives us an overview. He seems (at least momentarily) to be raised by the mimesis engendered in discussing these images, and their associated arguments and educational orderings, to a noetic vision. When questioned, he is able to *look down* from the height he has achieved into the mathematics (a *dianoia*) of regimes. He thus begins book 8 not merely repeating that with which Socrates had concluded book 4, but figuring that there is “a still finer city and man to tell of” (543d). Glaucon, I argue, has not fully achieved such a regime himself, but he has come to a point where he can see a regime beyond the best one so far described (which they have been building). That he can see a truer regime existing beyond his own building is a sign that a great purification has begun in him, though even he knows it is not completed (for he knows he is not yet there and may not yet have achieved even what he builds).

The fifth chapter, then, will show how what Glaucon has learned through answering and thinking about the mathematical education prescribed for the guardians leads him to the conclusion that there are *six* forms of regime: four

worse, the aristocratic regime which they have been building, and one “still finer.” He sees that there are explicit geometries available for each of these, and for no others. That there are six forms of regime and that *kallipolis* is not the best regime for soul or city is the claim which breaks furthest from even other dramatic and literary readers of *Republic*. It should not be so. For if, as many scholars see, “the problem Kallipolis is meant to resolve, and thus the problem of political philosophy itself, is precisely the socialization of those citizens who have spirit and desire more than is necessary,”⁶ then, we *must* hold that there is a possible regime of soul which *is cured* of precisely those problems because of which (and under which) Socrates redirected his own construction away from the healthy city towards the regime he builds for (and with) Glaucon and the others. That so called *kallipolic* regime was constructed *to cure* the city of luxury Glaucon insisted upon over health (372e); being cured, neither he nor we would any longer require that *pharmakon* or verbal lie, for we would know and desire the true city of the undeluded. There is no reason to think that a regime that is brought into being out of sickness and in order to cure fever is the same thing at all as the regime of health. In fact, it is necessary to think otherwise. There *must* be a regime of soul and city which instantiates such health—whether it is “a pattern laid up in heaven” or can exist somewhere “makes no difference” (592b), for this alone is the true measure. Socrates never considers the city built in the larger course of the dialogue to be his. As he works toward the conclusion of the first stage of his great argument about justice (what it looks like in a city) he explicitly says, “your city would now be complete” (427c–d).⁷ That is the city Glaucon and his brother needed in order to be cured; it is also needed by all who share the fundamental principle—possessive individualism—which Glaucon and Adeimantus have been deafened into accepting by Thrasymachus and many others: Hobbes, Locke, Rawls, Habermas, *et al.* It is possible, according to the mathematics underwriting Glaucon’s correct count of regimes, to set out an anhypothetical, noetically determined order of types of regime for soul and city. Thus, chapter 5: “From Mathematics to Social Science: The Six Geometries of Regime in *Republic*.”

Given five major characters and six forms of regime, the sixth chapter, “Polymorphous Perversity: Desires, Delusions and Catharses of *Republic*’s Characters,” hypothesizes that the main characters originally lie between the ideal types. I show how that hypothesis is in agreement with the language, interruptions, demands and blindnesses of each of the characters, and then how each of the characters can be seen, in the course of their interaction with Socrates, to be moving from a lower form of regime towards a higher one. These last two chapters then, are not attempting to theorize about mimesis and delusion generally, but are attempting to *show how* different sorts of occlusion of the good produce different sorts of delusive activity, including questions and answers, in accord with the geometry of souls which I argue is

operating as the ideal noetic structure underlying each individual's activity in the world. These chapters can be read as a sort of handbook of abnormal psychology, with case studies (except when talking of Socrates), for which Glaucon has grasped (by *noësis*) an anhypothetical demonstration, and for which the geometry of Socrates' tripartite theory of soul provides a dianoetic underpinning for the occurrences within the shadowy changing world of *pistis*, where actual regimes of soul and city come to be and pass away—plausible histories of which Socrates gives throughout book 8. I show how Glaucon's thesis that there are six forms of regime for man and city can explain the operation of Socrates, both in *Republic* and, in a general way, I trust, in other dialogues. Further, that there is a sixth regime form solves the oft-noted scholarly paradox that *kallipolis* is unjust to its best citizens by forcing them, against their *eros*, to take part in politics. This paradox is frequently presented as sufficient evidence of the failure of Plato's greatest work. However, if *kallipolis* is not the best city, rather a *pharmakon*, then we should not expect that it makes each type of citizen *perfectly* happy, for it is itself not perfect. In a higher regime the more perfect happiness will be available, insofar as it can be, to all. Perhaps it takes "a whole lifetime" (450b) of preparation to become ready. We shall then owe a cock to Asclepius (*Ph* 118a).

The main points of these last two chapters sail straight into numerous intense debates in the scholarship, namely the issues of (a) tripartition of soul, (b) the use and validity of the analogy of soul to city, and the questions of (c) how many cities are built in the discussion, as well as (d) which city is truly the best. The correct answer to all four problems must unite all four issues; the solution to any one of them must be able to fit together in a seaworthy fashion with the answer to each of the others. Glaucon limns a mathematically based, geometrically definable solution which undergirds a unified answer to all these problems. The last half of the book (from the interlude on) shows how that answer unfolds regarding each of these problematic *topoi*.

We must sort out two kinds of argument about these problems regarding *Republic*. Concerning the first two issues we can distinguish the importance the tripartite scheme and the city/soul analogy have in Plato's *poetic and dramatic organization* of the poem from how serious he is, or we can be, about its *philosophical truth*. In discerning the first, we must examine the structure and use of the schemata in the poem, not directly its philosophical cogency or lack thereof. Here I think the tripartition scheme and the analogy can be defended unequivocally, as it is not only argued for (and depended on) throughout *Republic*, but structures the very dialogue; in fact, these two theses provide, as it were, the ontological structure of the poem. That is, their truth plays through the formal construction of the whole; the world—the *opseôs kosmos* (*Po* 1449b32)—that is *Republic* comes to be as it is *through*

them. It seems best to distinguish these more literary concerns from the philosophical use of these two theses in an interlude, as a (poetic) calm before the (philosophical) storm, which I expect the last chapters (5 and 6) will arouse. So, the arguments regarding the formal and dramatic import of the problematic theses (a and b above) will be presented in the interlude and they will add up to a case that Plato is quite serious about both of them in structuring his poem: they are not just important strands in the weave of the dialogue, but the pegs upon which all the weaving itself is done. The final two questions about the number of cities and which is the best will largely fall out of this analysis of poetic/dramatic structure. It follows that, if Plato is so serious about the answers to these scholarly cruxes in this poetic-dramatic way, then an explanation of the devolutions of soul which algebraically depends on (and geometrically explicates the implications of) these theses must be considered as plausibly Platonic; in fact, such an explication (as chapters 5 and 6 shall give) must be taken as more Platonic than any explanation of soul and city not depending on them, for our explanation exhibits more deeply the perfection of the poem, its *kath auto* fineness and unity. Then we may investigate whether or not and to what degree tripartition and the city/soul analogy are philosophically cogent, and whether the regimes are numbered, ordered, and phenomenologically discrete, in the way Glaucon's thesis demands and Socrates considers. Arguments against such philosophical cogency will be examined in the problematic chapters themselves.

Similar reasoning is always required when considering the relative fineness of varied interpretations of any poem or drama. For example, it doesn't have to be either biologically plausible or socially acceptable that every time a herald or ambassador comes on stage to treat with Lysistrata the phallus he is wearing is twice as big as the last guy's, but such growth is dramatically and formally a better fit with the structure of the play than shrinking or a merely constant largeness.⁸ This is not, by any means, to say that Plato as poet has no interest in philosophical cogency, political feasibility or even salability within a democracy—he may well aim at all of those things as well as poetic, dramatic and formal perfection. In fact, I think he does—in precisely that order: perfect and cogent, then feasible, then salable—for that is their order of worth.⁹ Different kinds of analysis are necessary to show how these distinct aims may hang together, so the arguments for accepting a certain dramatic and poetic interpretation of *Republic's* number and names of cities will be answered in the Interlude, while the arguments regarding philosophical and psychic cogency, etc. of tri-partition's regimes will be put off until that place in chapters 5 and 6, where they arise in the course of presentation. Even if the answers to the problems of philosophical cogency and political feasibility which are to come later are not convincing knockdowns of contrary positions in the scholarship, *the poem* is constructed in a way which shows that the explication I am giving fits better than its competitors.

If the argument about the (missing) best regime is accepted, chapter 6 will show how the distinction between the two best regimes (aristocracy and the missing best) can also be seen operating within the character of Socrates. In *Republic*, we can see that he is oriented toward (the missing highest virtue) piety, both by his presence at the opening of the festival of the goddess and his very brief discussion with Glaucon about which city has best honored the goddess—essentially a question about piety—as he leads him out of Piraeus. When he is stopped by the would-be tyrant Polemarchus, who orders him to wait, promises not to listen, and threatens violence, he must change himself from a person who has little need of *thymos*, to one whose need of it will be great—for he is headed back down into the cave of Piraeus, where the just man can not be recognized for what he is, but is threatened with all sorts of hazards (361e–362a), not the least of which are those raised through mimetically engendered desire and *thymos* among the mad. Socrates, on the road, changes himself to the aristocratic regime he will thereafter publicly and politically set out, but what he had been aiming at on the road was a regime higher up—the regime in which desire arises only under, and directly from, reason’s enlightenment by the good; it is a regime of soul and city which does not need spirit (or *thymos*) to act as intramural policeman or instigator, and which desires no particular honor, but only what is known to be good. Such a soul understands that whatever good it achieves is only achieved because it is enlightened by the Good itself, to which Good all honor rightly belongs. Thus its ruling virtue is piety, which includes the wisdom of the aristocratic regime, and of which every claim of “justice” in every lower regime wishes to be an echo. Every culture cave arrogates piety to itself: piety therefore disappears from the discussion of *Republic*.¹⁰ Socrates willingly changes himself to the aristocratic regime because he is himself moved by love (as the higher regime of soul in which desire is aroused only by reason’s vision under the light of the good); out of love for his fellow citizens (who are exhibiting their delusion), out of love for the truth about all men—that no one is self-sufficient, Socrates goes back down to the cave of Piraeus, where there be monsters who wish to be men, knowing neither that they are monsters, nor what it is that they most truly wish. For this task, first of all, courage—the power to hold on to the truth.¹¹ And to accomplish this task the necessary equipment is poetry: the *pharmakon* for the soul; mimesis instigates the therapy of the soul, as in every other regime it instigates our illness or furthers our corruption.

But perhaps this is all a dream; for if we all begin in our culture cave, mimetically tuned—without our awareness and before reason—so that our souls harmonize with its particular “holy” buzz, how can Plato honestly think to cure the citizens of his own Athens, or how can the thesis that his work can be a cure for us in our quite different, not to say thoroughly thought inhibiting buzz, even be considered? To ask this question is already to have heard

something above the buzz, perhaps even in it; and to recognize that is to hear within the cave something not of the cave, but a more divine music. In the “Coda and Prelude,” then, we will make more clear how *Republic’s* work on its readers is no mere dream, but “a dream for waking eyes” (*Soph* 266c).

Whether or not one accepts this reading of *Republic*, its aim and method, it is certain that all along the way fireworks, if not cannon fire, will be engendered; the scope of the book cannot avoid such things. Since this book aims not only to exhibit how the discussion which is *Republic* works both on the characters within the discussion (who are like us) and on those reading (the “present characters”), and since it must do so within the context of contemporary political theorizing—for this forms the “present characters” (either mimetically or both mimetically and philosophically), it will draw fire from two distinct camps through which it sails. From Plato scholars, it must receive criticism for not paying adequate obeisance to the details of some of the philosophical and interpretative problems upon which it takes a stand. I hope I will be found to have set out sufficient explication and defense among some major counterreadings of the dialogue to allow my ship recognition as sailing under a Platonic flag—the flag of the *Republic*. From contemporary political theorists (and their protecting clouds of scholarly epigoni and votaries) it is even more likely that this book will be accused of shameless peremptoriness. I have aimed, in this regard, to pick out basic and architecturally central theses of our modern polity builders; regarding some important details of their arguments I have footnoted other writers’ more thorough criticisms. But those keystones I have aimed at have significant relation to the discussion which is *Republic*; it is these central delusions Plato aims at, the paneling and fascia (however thick and detailed) may fall as they will.

NOTES

1. Gilbert’s Orpheus is a ghost, rather than a reality, because the cost of quoting poets in our day is prohibitive. His absence is an effect of the once wealthy polemarch being no longer a person, but a corporation.

2. Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 7.

3. Gene Fendt, *Love Song for the Life of the Mind* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

4. Robert E. Cushman, *Therapeia: Plato’s Conception of Philosophy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), xxi.

5. Joshua Mitchell, *Plato’s Fable* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

6. David Roochnik, *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato’s “Republic,”* 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 47 (italics original). Compare Alan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 407, 411; many others agree with this assessment.

7. Compare also 470e, 473b, 458c, 517b. Socrates’ phrasing indicates that what is and has been going on is not his own city. After finishing this book I found Sandra Peterson’s *Socrates and Philosophy in the Dialogues of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). She argues that Socrates speaks throughout “under Glaucon’s condition of the luxurious city,” so

“his references to the city as ‘best’ or ‘good’ must be understood as themselves conditional” (107–115; quote at 113). To describe the truly best city she turns *extra muros*, to *Timaeus*; that turn is unnecessary.

8. There are, of course, no stage directions in Aristophanes; directors make many choices about how best to play things; charity to an author, particularly a genius like Plato or Aristophanes, requires the interpreter or director to consider ways to make *all* the structural and poetic elements fit together. Directorial willfulness in such matters is the dramatic equivalent of interpretative deification of an argument or a character over the whole of the poem or other such *hamartia*.

9. That Plato was driven by formal and poetic considerations has long been held; an ancient attestation tells that on his deathbed he had a tablet on which were several versions of *Republic*'s opening sentence. Some recent work suggests an even more exacting, Pythagorean or musical construction. See, for example, John Bremer *Plato and the Founding of the Academy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), particularly section three, and J. B. Kennedy, “Plato’s Forms, Pythagorean Mathematics, and Stichometry,” *Apeiron* 43, 1 (2011): 1–32.

10. For notice of its particular absence see, for example, Mark McPherran, “The Gods and Piety of Plato’s Republic,” in Gerasimos Santas, ed. *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic* (Malden, MA: 2006): 84–103 and Hayden Ausland, “The Decline of Political Virtue in *Republic* 8–9,” *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy* 28 (2013): 1–26.

11. *Kai prōton peri andreias* is how Aristotle begins his discussion of the moral virtues (*NE* 1115a5). Perhaps this is not merely accidental.

Acknowledgments

Various versions of parts of this work have been previously delivered as lectures, and some have been previously published. I would like to thank the following audiences, editors and readers for their comments and questions: A version of the introduction was delivered as “Plato’s Mimetic Art: Some Difficulties of Reading Plato (with reference to the *Republic*)” at the 2010 American Catholic Philosophical Association meetings in Baltimore, Maryland, where it was very helpfully commented on by Fr. Ross Romero, SJ. A revised version was published in the society’s *Proceedings* (Vol. 84: 239–252) as “Plato’s Mimetic Art: The power of the mimetic and complexity of reading Plato.” Much of chapter 1 was presented as “Delusion in *Republic* and Modern Political Philosophy” at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine in September, 2010. A smaller section was presented at the European Studies conference in Omaha that October. The dialectical *deus in machina* creating the scholarly debate over what I read as comedy in chapter 3 was set out in “Wave and Trough: The Natural Relation of the Sexes in *Republic*,” *The Review Journal of Political Philosophy* 7, 2 (fall 2009): 51–82.

Various parts and combinations of parts of chapters 5 and 6 have been delivered as “Six Kinds of Soul in *Republic*,” in a seminar to the Philosophy department of the Ukrainian Catholic University in September 2010; as “The Geometries of Regime in *Republic*: The Best Kind of City/Soul and its Five Inferiors,” at the International Society for Neo-Platonic Studies, Quebec (June 2006), and at the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, Fordham University, in October 2004. They were also heavily commented on by a series of several readers at the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, which comments and questions made clear that the argument I was making would require considerably more space than a journal article allowed; hence this

book. An early consideration of the relation of desire and reason in *Republic* was published in “Libidinal economy and the life of logos,” *Philosophy and Literature* 18, 2 (1994): 320–325.

Some aspects of (1) Platonic art and (2) its connection to liturgy, which permeate the book were originally delivered as (1) “Art, Passions and the Law: The logic of their relations” at the Critical Legal Conference, Utrecht University School of Law, Utrecht, Netherlands, September 2010; “Mimesis and Catharsis: The Construction of Freedom through Art” at the 27th American Maritain Association in Chicago, in October of 2003; “Two Figures of the Imagination and their Consequences for the Arts,” to the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Oxford University, in April 2003, and at the International Society for Neo-Platonic Studies, Orono, Maine, in July 2002. A revised version was published in *Soundings* LXXXVIII, 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2005): 179–197. (2) “Philosophy as Liturgical Action: An Essay on Plato’s Politics” was delivered at the twenty-fifth meeting of the American Maritain Association, Boca Raton, Florida in October of 2001 and at the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy (with APA-Midwest) Minneapolis, April 2001.

I have had the great fortune for over twenty-five years to be at a university where I am able to read and discuss *Republic* every year over the course of ten or twelve weeks in small classes. A happier arrangement for a teacher would be hard to imagine in the contemporary academic world. Thank you to my fellow students, and to my colleagues here—Tom Martin, Don Welch, and especially Dave Rozema. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the University of Nebraska-Kearney for a sabbatical over the 2009–2010 school year during which time I was able to put together these long thought upon matters. Thanks also to Mark Hartman of our Art Department for his line drawings.

Thanks to PLATAR Museum for permission to use their photo of a buckle. Goddess Driving a Chariot (500–400 B.C.) Gold leaf, bronze: forged, soldered, stamped, and woven.

All epigraphs from Plato’s *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Letters*; Aristotle’s *Poetics*; and Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilight of the Idols* are my own translations.

Introduction

Plato's Mimetic Art

The Power of the Mimetic, and the Complexity of Plato's Art

For we are without a common name to give to the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus and to Socratic dialogues; nor even to any mimesis that might be produced in trimeters or elegiac couplets.

—Aristotle, *Poetics* (1447b)

That Plato wrote dialogues is the commonest of knowledge. That these dialogues fall into the category of mimetic art, rather than scientific or philosophical treatise, has been an undeniable truth since antiquity. What that means for our reading of the dialogues, for getting Plato's point(s): doctrinal, philosophical, moral, passionate—that is the question. Given the long history of such debates anyone daring to write yet another book on that (arguably) greatest of Plato's philosophical poems ought to set out in brief his idea of what mimesis is and how it functions and then how this understanding shapes the reading and understanding of Platonic dialogue. If Plato's dialogues are mimeses and *Republic* works to help or heal rather than incapacitate the souls with which it comes into contact, then *Republic* performs the defense of poetry for which Socrates asks Glaucon in book 10. If this book's argument succeeds, then the same point will have been exhibited, for *Republic* will have been exhibited in its excellence as a mimetic work.

I begin by briefly setting out a problem in the interpretation of ancient mimesis between the received view and an explanation I think is more adequate regarding both the Platonic and Aristotelian language as well as the social-political problematic in which both unfailingly speak of mimesis. I will then show, even more briefly, how that better view of ancient mimesis

ties into language acquisition, findings in contemporary neuroscience, and Rene Girard's theory about the origin (and plausible destruction) of culture. Those matters together place the ancient philosophical machinery on firm anthropological and cultural ground, where—even today—it finds significant real world traction. The book's further argument is that Plato's has more traction than philosophies of more modern construction. The second part of this introduction shows that even if one disagrees with my interpretation of the mimetic, reading a Platonic dialogue requires attention to at least three levels of discourse: the arguments at the philosophical surface, the interaction of the interlocutors, and what those interactions incite, invite or require of the readers.

THE MIMETIC ARTS

The received view for quite some time was that our modern notion of art has little if anything in common with antiquity's concepts of *mimêsis*, or of *technê*.¹ The modern narrowing of mimesis to representation, of the mimetic to things that are representational of other things, and so the mimetic as intellectually or cognitively oriented rather than operating emotively, is a further conclusion within the received view.² But this cognitivist and at times thoroughly rationalist prejudice ("this persona represents that kind of person"), is also arguably not the whole story for both Plato and Aristotle. Nor, on the other hand, does it seem deniable that there is a *technê*, or art, for making such mimetic things.³ That they are constructed for an end as well as being from nature, and that mimetic constructions have some generalizable rules certainly underlies the construction of Aristotle's *Poetics*.⁴

The received view has been powerfully called into question by Stephen Halliwell, who argues that "the mimetic" gave the ancients "a unified conception of art" which gathered together a wide variety of practices sharing "a representational *cum* expressive character" legitimately regarded as a coherent group.⁵ Halliwell's argument requires our reconsideration of the status of the mimetic among the ancients. There are several elements of the ancient view which allow us to call the thoroughgoing intellectualism of most modern interpretations of the term into question. In *Republic*, Socrates is clearly concerned with a nonrationalist and even noncognitivist working of the arts, since his concern with them is primarily in regard to what surrounds the children. He says that music, poetry, painting, architecture and all other like crafts work on the young "like a breeze bringing health from salubrious places; and, beginning in childhood, it will, *without their awareness*, lead them . . . to likeness and friendship as well as accord" (401cd); the works of the artists "*flow . . . into dispositions and practices, and from there it emerges bigger in men's contracts with one another*" (424d). That these dispositions

and practices are mimetically effective long before we are able to think about them (or what is in them) is a mere matter of fact for the ancient understanding of how a person is raised into practicing the virtues—or not. In *Laws*, where the vocabulary is rather of tuning, consonance, and drawing or pulling of strings (e.g., 653b, 659d–e), the Athenian Stranger says that all laws (*nomoi*) are like kithara melodies (*nomoi*) in needing preludes—among which preludes he places all the arts of the muses—to set the souls of citizens up in a harmony which *tunes them to hear* the speech of the laws (and keeps them in such tune); without such preludes he thinks even the best laws will fail (*Laws* 722d–723c).

So then, I disagree with Malcolm Schofield's explication of *Laws*, who asserts that "preludes simply embody the outcomes of . . . deliberations, and as such are regarded as satisfying the citizens' entitlement to persuasion."⁶ "Embody" is the right verb with which to attempt to carry this point, but I am unpersuaded that this is the view the Stranger is embodying: mimetic preludes *set up* for rational persuasion and thereby (like the law's enforcing of acts in accord with virtue) *set up* the hearers to become fully human members of a fully human city. They are not outcomes of deliberations, rather they rhyme with deliberation and its outcomes. So too, from the opposite direction (that of cognition rather than emotion): the acts of citizens obeying rational laws are not virtue entire, but they look like virtue. We must have both: the rhyme and the look. Music (passion) and knowledge (cognition), we might say, act from opposite ends of the human: the concave and convex sides of a lens (cf. *NE* 1102a32). Following the law without proper feeling is one sort of half-right human; proper feeling without knowledge of the law or reason of its rightness is another. Schofield intellectualizes a process which Plato describes otherwise.

So it begins to become apparent that the mimetic keeps company with the nonrational part of the soul, as book 10 argues (603b–d), precisely because mimesis is a nonrational process.⁷ It *certainly* begins that way, and Plato's word choices and analogies emphasize it. This is one way a person can be "virtuous without philosophy, having been raised in a state with good laws" (619c). One merely does what one sees, acts as acted on; *knowledge* of the law is not required. The song flows in, the passions are called up. Music educates "through habits, transmitting a certain harmoniousness through harmony, not knowledge, and by rhythm a certain good measure, and qualities akin to those conveyed by *logos*" (522a); not, then, conveyed by *logos*—or not primarily. The proper feelings flow into him, and the song flows out.⁸ Of course, the mimetic can work the other way too—or rather, any way; one is "inundated, . . . swept away, borne by the flood wherever it tends" (492c). Through the mimetic we first become what we are:

A state of character related to virtue in a different way, that runs counter to the education it's gotten from these people, doesn't happen, hasn't happened, and won't happen, . . . though if anything should be saved and become as it ought . . . , it won't be bad if you say it is a god's dispensation saved it. (492e–493a)

What one lives with, one imitates; “who dwells with the divine and orderly becomes orderly and divine” (*theiōi dē kai kosmiōi . . . kosmios te kai theios . . . gignetai*, 500c–d): even the grammar is mimetic.

Plato's language in these places is biological or mechanical, not intellectual—the mimetic flows, blows, pulls, has a natural *ergon* working through eyes and ears (401c9); in fact it works *lanthanē*, unawares, escaping the notice or knowledge of those it works on (401d, cf. 424d); it works “before reason” (*Rep* 402a, *Laws* 653b). Even for those with reason songs “are really incantations for souls” (*Laws* 659e, 665c), charming us back into tune with the divine, flexing the stronger cords of the passions to pull along with the more malleable golden cord of calculation. Aristotle, too, uses such language, and makes clear that we take a natural pleasure in the mimetic and our first learning is mimetic (*Po* 1448b4–9). But our first learning can't be representational identifications (this is a that), our first learning has to be beneath such intellectual comparison, thereby allowing it; we have to have had lots of experience to begin building up concepts.⁹ Both Plato and Aristotle regard music as a mimetic art par excellence, and one which works not only on infants, but even on some higher animals and some who suffer madness¹⁰ — as well as, often without their awareness, adults. Melodies, modes and rhythms impress moral qualities (*Rep* 398d–400e, *Pol* 1340a1–25). Thus, the argument that mimesis proceeds by some mechanical or biological process, and is not primarily—certainly not merely—via intellectual or conceptual activity, is inescapable.¹¹ As something that is both natural to us and made by us, we experience pleasure both *in* mimesis (for it is an unimpeded activity of nature, cf. *NE* 1153a13–16) and *through* mimetic works (*Po* 1448b5–8).

So, whereas the more intellectualist view of Aristotle explains that “the impulse unshackling the cathartic process did not come to the spectator ‘from below’ . . . —from his viscera and humors . . . but ‘from above,’ from the dianoetic enlightenment elicited from the logos of the poem,”¹² both the Platonic and Aristotelian language *require* us to think that while both sorts of process may well be going on, most significantly and certainly, if the more basic biological and mechanical, precognitive mimetic functioning on the passions does not draw in and properly attune or purify (catharsize) the audience, the cognitive power's logos will not be able to be heard, or to be heard correctly: all of our *nomoi* in words need *nomoi* that are not words to prepare the way.¹³ Similarly, we must be moved in virtuous ways by nature or the mimetic (which is our nature) before we can know what virtue is.¹⁴

Just so, we learn speech first by becoming attuned to the sounds around us; in this attunement we first learn that speech is distinct from all other sounds. We are *in* speech not only before we are *of* speech, but we must be in it unknowing (and miming it) *before it can become* our way of knowing; thus, if there were no pleasure in mimesis that is precognitive, we would never achieve cognition. And if mimesis is natural to us before reason there is no reason to suspect that this natural precognitive activity and its pleasure ever ceases, certainly not since it is the root of that very thing through which we think—our mother tongue, which we know by heart. That mimetic heart is, then, ever active, unspoken and yet speaking, in the language of the head.¹⁵ And perhaps frequently it is not really the head that is speaking, but our speeches themselves are mere mimesis; as Kierkegaard¹⁶ says, “some think human beings have language to hide their thoughts, but I think it is to hide that they have no thoughts:” such would be truly *barbar*, not *logos*, something that plasters over a lack of reason with its mere mimesis. Perhaps Kierkegaard is being dialectically extreme; it was a favorite trope of his. Or perhaps Magister Kierkegaard remembers Plato’s glad coining, “*doxomimêtikos*,” one who merely imitates opinions and words (*kai logos mimoumenoi*, *Soph* 267c, d). In any case, excluding the mimetic from the human soul or city (as *Republic* 10 ostensibly argues for) is impossible, just as it is impossible to exclude it from language—it is the delusional dream of rationalism to wish so (and that dream has proven mimetically infectious).

That Plato wrote philosophical mimeses may well be a further hint, not only about how important he thinks the mimetic is, but also how utterly inescapable. If the Athenian Stranger means to make a distinction in book 2 of *Laws*, where he says “all the arts of the muses are eikastic and mimetic” (668a, c), his point must be that every eikastic—or thetic presentation (now called a proposition)—includes and is embodied in a mimetic. So not only does the eikastic (which orients us toward those things about which we are speaking) first arise out of mere mimetic mouthing, all the arts of the muses—including all speech—carries along with it a certain mimetic. In that case, even when we are “pretending” to be purely thetic—as for example in formal logic—we are instantiating or practicing a mimetic.¹⁷ The idea that style is merely a fortuitous shaping of what should just be (were we really philosophers) truth functional propositions, is itself a rule of philosophic writing—and publishing?—which shapes a mimetic; one outside of which every word of Plato lives, moves, and breathes. Plato puts this fact face forward by *only* writing mimeses—and with a variety of characters and formal constructions no philosophical thinker since has even attempted to approach (save, perhaps, Kierkegaard). To investigate this matter further exceeds our project here, however.

Contemporary Echoes of Ancient Mimesis

This understanding of mimesis is not merely an ancient artifact. It is in line with several contemporary strands of thought about how we become—or are—such vastly complicated social creatures. It seems, for Plato and Aristotle, that we grow from (but never out of) mimesis into rationality and cognition. In *De Motu* Aristotle says “sense perceptions are *at once* a kind of alteration, and phantasia and thinking have the power of actual things. . . . That is why we shudder and are frightened just thinking about something.”¹⁸ So thought, *phantasia* and sense perception *each* change the body; the way bodies respond sounds literally mimetic; his analogies for mimesis are infectious and mechanical rather than the cognitivist “representative of.”¹⁹ This understanding enables a rapprochement between the ancients and contemporary biology on two sides. The first is to what we know about the developing baby. In at least the first five years of their lives the prefrontal cortex, which allows internally driven intention, is undeveloped (it isn’t fully developed until one’s twenties). What is active are the occipital and parietal cortexes (which are also highly active—if that’s the right word—in adults watching tv and movies, when the prefrontal cortex dims). What this shows is that the attention of children is taken up by what surrounds them.²⁰ Their intentions are not made by them; indeed, to say they have intentions is ratiopomorphizing. To echo a pun of Plato’s, the *kuma* (*und Kind*)—the swell (of the fetus, and child)—is moved by and in the *kuma*—the swell of the wave (cf. *Rep* 457c); the wave is the movement of their cultural and familial sea.

We should relate this to other contemporary neurological studies about the workings of the brain. Neurologists have discovered that so-called mirror neurons fire both when we watch and when we perform the same act (there is a further group that fires as well when we are the actor). According to neuroscientists, the working of such cells gives a physiological basis to the dissolution “of the barrier between the self and others.”²¹ More recent studies have shown that some mirror neurons fire both when listening to certain kinds of music and when feeling emotions like those frequently said to be expressed by or in the music.²² We are being taken up and shaped by what we see and hear around us; these studies give some organic basis to the ancient thesis that mimesis builds up into cognition, behavior, and habitual emotional patterns, that perception is an immediate infectious change.²³

In addition, the ancient philosophical and the modern biological accounts can be tied to Rene Girard’s theorization of the mimetic foundation of culture. Girard holds that culture arises out of a disaster brought on through the process of mimetic rivalry; religion institutionalizes a form of that mimetic disaster, which allows the group to successfully avoid its full blown repetition—providing as it were a substitutive satisfaction. So culture and individuality arise out of mimetic indifferenciation (and sometimes—violently—

dissolve back into it). This dissolution of the barrier between oneself and others which is tied to mirror neurons and a lack of one's own intentionality are precisely what ancient views of mimesis held. This dissolution is not only the central issue of Girard's anthropological theory, but connects with a major effect of popular public artistic performances. Ironically, Girard, thinking Aristotle and Plato intellectualists, regards their notion of the mimetic as wrongheaded and opposed to his.²⁴ Thus modern research agrees with the ancient understanding that individuality arises out of, and can collapse back into, our mimetic origin. These mimetic connections exhibit a deeper implication than mere political-economic interdependence to Socrates' first principle: no human being is self-sufficient (369b).

Neither Girard, nor Plato, nor contemporary neuroscience limit the mimetic to the world of art. That world is, rather, where we can have greatest control over the mimetic element of human culture, if we so choose: the artist shapes mimeses, and they work the same mimetic way that lots of elements of culture we don't so consciously shape work. Of course the "romantic" artist may not be consciously shaping anything either—he may be inspired mindlessly (as Ion),²⁵ so merely picking up what is "in the air," like an Aeolian harp. Kierkegaard seems to think this may happen with others than romantic artists, in fact, with everyone who uses words.²⁶ Plato's Socrates seems well aware of this mimetic omnipresence in the first half of his *Apology*, where he says he must defend himself from some ancient charges (18a), which are the real source and problem for the legal charge he faces. Those accusers are "many," have been at work "for a long time, many years already," and these charges are "the most dangerous" since they have been taking the Athenians "prisoner from childhood" (*ek paidôn paralambanontes*, 18b, cf. *Rep* 514a); already and for a long time, while they are most malleable (18c), these have been speaking. And Socrates points out exactly what is true about these "charges:" they are made by no one, it is not possible to call anyone to answer (18d), as if they are just in the air—except when a comic poet picks them up (18d, 19c); but Socrates is not saying Aristophanes invented them—indeed, if he had, the comedy would not work. Something like these charges must already be in the air of the culture before Aristophanes hangs Socrates in the air of the theatre—or they would not be funny to his audience. They are among the shadows playing on the wall of the Athenian culture cave, and with these Socrates must fight (18d).²⁷ The charges are a *diabolê*—a word which shows up with uncanny, diabolical regularity and force in that first part of *Apology*. It is from this *diabolê*, which the Athenians have been so long hearing—even if not listening to—that he must purify them in his brief defense (19a), before even being able to begin with Meletus; for in this *diabolê* Meletus himself has trusted (19b). This faceless, nameless *diabolê* speaks *through* the mouths of Anytus, Meletus, Lycon (28a, 23e), but it is not really possible to know and speak the name of

this accuser (18d).²⁸ *This* has undone many and good before Socrates, and *it would be nothing if not amazing* (*ouden de deinon*, 28b)²⁹ if *it* stopped with him. The mimetic *diabolê*, which is everywhere, can lead anywhere; *it* does not stop acting, and its name is legion. Thus Socrates is not accusing his interlocutors of injustice when slander (*diabolê*) has been spoken of him for a long time, for *they* are not speaking; *it* is. If they understood him, they would perhaps find this even more insulting—those named people don't really exist in this attack (28a). They are there as if under a spell; the spell is speaking through them. Among his accusers no one is home: each is *doxomimêtikos*. That is how they can say such ridiculous things and expect to be believed; and how they are believed. It comes from the mouth of the many (26e, 27a).

Returning to the more limited question of the mimetic *arts*, among which are all Plato's dialogues: this discussion should not be taken to say that the arts do not work at all cognitively or through cognition; indeed all of the arts using language ought to do so.³⁰ The point I wish to insist upon is that for the ancients (and in reality) we grow into intellectual cognition through something that lies deeper. What lies deeper is what the ancients called "the mimetic"—in which we participate by nature, that through which we first learn, that which we pick up from our surroundings unawares, that which is certainly always active in the arts—even in those unequivocally highly intellectual arts which use language: drama, movies, Platonic dialogue. The arts are the place where our first emotional communion, our first learning—a "learning" which takes place without our notice, perhaps even in a state which cannot be properly called "mine," for the barrier between oneself and others *is* not—is most powerfully renewed. It is at least partly for this reason that we frequently speak of aesthetic experience as producing an experience of transcendence: our self dissolves. To speak of what is going on in such cases as involving a recognition of intentionality or an intentionality of one's own, to think of any art as merely signals or signs "representing" some content or action misses precisely the point and affectiveness of the mimetic, which takes us up into something not ourselves within which all of our knowledge is framed.³¹ The mimetic *takes us up into* an order (a *kosmos*) visible or hearable (cf. *Po* 1449b32)—and this order is that in which, and at least partly—if not wholly—by which, any intentions are given shape. It provides a precognitive and extracognitive attunement without which cognition can never begin, nor intentionality ever take place. Perhaps reason breaks us from permanent subsumption to the power of the mimetic; perhaps it does so as Girard theorizes, through the catastrophe mimesis itself brings on. This break, however, is never clean or permanent—all of our arts are *eikastic* and *mimetic*, the Athenian stranger says; even a logical representation of the world engenders (and is engendered by) a mimesis.³² Our mimetic nature is both blessing and curse; mimesis is, as Plato saw, a *permanent* human issue; it is something about which we *can* become aware, and which

we *can turn* toward the good—for the artist gives shape to just this mimetic *physis*—but from which we can never escape.³³

The anthropological originality of the mimetic—its standing as *archê* of *anthrôpos*—makes it both unexorcisable and necessarily exercised and exercising. Even if the play or music or ritual is new, our original state of emotional communion is part of what is being renewed. Being brought into such a state could well be cathartic—if it is not delusive, polluting, or soul (and city) destroying. From that latter communion one would perhaps prefer not to wake, as, unfortunately, Agave does, after one such mimetic infection vividly produced before us in Euripides' *Bacchae*. That play both exhibits (to rational contemplation) and produces (through mimesis) a mimetic effect; these mimetic effects need not be (and in this case, I would argue, are not) the same. We are, however, not quite ready to broach the subject of the use of the arts, or their plausible connection to delusion or catharsis. In any case, the standard contemporary philosophical distinction between telling and showing does not go far enough; there is also instigating, or tuning, or drawing in. Telling and showing are both on the side of reason, representation and cognition; mimesis runs deeper—it is mechanical, as infectious as waves in water. In fact, all of our telling and showing, including the philosophical kind of writing now before you, participates in mimesis: rhetoric and logic, as well as poetry, have mimetic effects.

Tuning

Plato writes dialogues, works of mimetic art, because he is aware of this power of mimesis, a power which will “draw [us] helplessly into a fictive world of vivid but spuriously attributed speech.”³⁴ It not only “invites us,” but *charms* us into the world of the speakers, as a hearer and possible interlocutor ourselves. The Athenian Stranger calls the arts “incantations” for the soul (*Laws* 664b, 665c), and Aristotle says that “since actors are making the mimesis, of necessity some part [of the poem] will be the *opseôs kosmos*—the visible ordering”—which they are creating around or before us (*Po* 1449b32). So, that Socrates is “present and responsible as the teller of the tale” does not in any way make this dialogue, nor any other Platonic dialogue, something which “overcomes the dangers of poetry”—rather it *employs* exactly those dangerous powers. In *Republic's* case, the person we are imitating from beginning to end is Socrates (who imitates all the others—including the mad), but it is the only poem of Plato's in which we do so, and Socrates makes up further poems within it. Nor is (Plato's or any artist's) mimetic power “nothing but an artificially heightened appearance.” We are rather being enchanted (*Laws* 773d, 812c), shaped, and turned by the work of art, only one aspect of which (in Platonic dialogue) is the arguments presented, and another the very fact *that* arguments (both good and bad) are being

constantly presented. Put another way, the first metaphilosophical condition (or the first condition for the possibility of) philosophy³⁵ is the proper upbringing and tuning. Socrates and the Athenian Stranger both *argue* for this position, and Plato is *constantly carrying it out* in precisely the way those arguments suggest—through mimesis, even in those dialogues where neither poetry nor mimesis are mentioned at all. It is not only the arguments that move us, not only representations, but we move in the world *as* the world moves, carried by it into motion ourselves by the motion of that world. And it is the movement of the whole world that is important and effective here; we do not merely take on the emotions of the main character, or “take on the perspective of a multiplicity of characters,”³⁶ but the movement between them or among them works on us. Just as in music it is not just individual notes or chords which affect us, but the movement between them and among the instruments. We got into the position we are in by being carried—by the sea, and then on the shoulders of giants who rose out of the great mimetic sea in which they themselves were born. No one is human alone.

PLATO'S ART: THE DIFFICULTY OF READING THREE THINGS AT ONCE

Even allowing for disagreements about how we should interpret the mimetic among the ancients and the Platonic (at least) disagreement with many contemporaries—like Freud—about the uses of the arts, Plato, Aristotle and the mainstream of contemporary philosophy affirm the following matters: a) that there can be no civilization without the arts, b) that the arts are important elements society uses to advance the happiness of its members, as well as c) that society has to limit or direct the unrestricted drive for pleasure which seems to be natural to human beings and d) that art has some functional capability in achieving this socially requisite task. With regard to art's status, as we shall see in chapter 1, both Freud and Plato consider it in relation to the distinction between illusion and delusion. They agree that this distinction is of great importance, and while they have a basic agreement about what that distinction is, I will show that it is Plato rather than the father of modern psychology who exhibits the political, social and psychic reach of the distinction (for good and for ill) most perspicuously. In fact, one may see not only 1) that *in Republic* Socrates makes this important modern psychological distinction, but that 2) *through* his discussion Socrates is attempting to turn his interlocutors out of some of their most dangerous political and psychic delusions, and that 3) *by* writing the dialogue Plato is both revealing the depth of political and individual delusion in the interlocutors and setting up an artistic mimetic therapy for readers through his work of art: the illusion of *Republic* is to cure the delusions of republics. In more exacting Platonic

language, the verbal lie entitled *Politeia* is to cure the true lies of polities, both literal (of cities) and figurative (of souls). Of course if art (like the natural mimesis of which it is born) can be helpful or curative, one should also be open to the suspicion that its power can work the other way as well—entrancing into delusion. Circe lives; she is undying among men. For Plato, art is much more complex than mere satisfying illusion, for the illusion of art is to effect a real cure of certain psychic and cultural delusions—or else it induces or strengthens them. If Plato is correct that mimetic art accomplishes this, then the idea that art is merely substitutive satisfaction for instinct is necessarily false; the converse is also true—if art is merely substitutive satisfaction, then Plato is deluded. The work of art we call *Republic* not only provides direct arguments for this thesis (a telling), but also is a performance of it upon the souls of Socrates' interlocutors (a showing)—and on Plato's readers (an entrancing).³⁷

That last sentence already sets out one of the great contrasts between reading Plato and reading Freud (and almost every other philosopher or psychologist). In the latter, the argument or explanation pretends to be entirely and merely argument or explanation.³⁸ To read *Republic* well, however, we must not only concern ourselves with Socrates' arguments and distinctions, like that between illusion/delusion (1), but we must also see how the dramatic interaction of the characters is working (or not) on/in the characters (2), and (as scholars and teachers) consider how watching and hearing the interaction, and thinking through the arguments, parables, quotations, myths, histories, interactions, etc., effects, or is meant to effect, us (3). These three depths may well exist in all texts,³⁹ but they are most certainly and self-consciously built into Plato's texts by Plato, who is not writing merely to transfer information about *psychê*, politics, theology, or ethics as textbooks in philosophy, psychology or theology might.⁴⁰ In fact, Aristotle explicitly differentiates Socratic dialogue both from the kind of writing that makes scientific truth claims, which kinds of writing he takes up in the *Organon*, as well as differentiating it from *Rhetoric*, which he calls dialectic's antistrophe, when he discusses Socratic dialogue in *Poetics*. As mimeses are of action and agents, who of necessity have a certain character expressed in their speech and thought (*Po* 1448a, 1450a), such dialogues may (and do) include both the kinds of speech or writing the *Organon* and the *Rhetoric* analyze, but a Socratic conversation is never merely that. If Homer and Empedocles really have “nothing in common except their meter” (*Po* 1447b17–18), then we are less rhetorically radical than Aristotle if we say that Platonic dialogue has more in common with Homer or Shakespeare than with Vlastos or Quine—or even what is extant of Aristotle. More Platonically, a dialogue is not so much about informing the mind as it is about transforming or turning the soul: mimeses are soul turners.

The first of these three depths to the reading of Plato (and *Republic*) is admitted and practiced by everyone; it has to do with what Plato shares with Quine and Freud. It is, we might say, the philosophical surface of Plato, and it is itself intricate and multifaceted, ranging from the seemingly simple description, distinction and syllogism to those distinctions and arguments about which there is unlikely ever to be precise scholarly agreement. Aristotle and several millennia of philosophers can (and do) exhibit propositions within a dialogue as examples of certain kinds of argument (sophistical or otherwise), and understanding how these work (or fail) and what they prove (or not) is a necessary beginning for all readers of Plato, but that is all it is. The second and third depths have a common source in the fact that Plato is a maker of *mimeses*, itself a term of art and scholarly debate in philosophy and in *Republic*. The *fact* is recognized by almost all readers,⁴¹ but not all give the interactions of the characters their due in attempting to figure out why a certain argument is given, or story told, or distinction made, much less what its acceptance, denial or fluffing indicates about the character who does so (our second level or vector), and still fewer attempt to discern (the third level or vector) what *Plato's mimesis* may be attempting with its audience as distinct from what *Socrates* may be attempting in what he says (including both narrative and dramatic mimeses as well as argument) to his audience.⁴²

This last scholarly failure is most particularly pertinent when one considers whence mimesis arises, as well as what mimesis is supposed to accomplish and *how* it is supposed to accomplish it. It is, in this regard, insufficient merely to consider the difficulty of reading a dialogue as one about discerning the difference between Socratic and Platonic irony, or Socratic vs. Platonic teaching. For, according to both Plato and Aristotle, mimesis aims to (and does) work on the passions (and behavior)—often without our knowing; the crucial questions of which passions or behaviors, and how, and to what end, have a wide variety of answers—even among those who recognize that Platonic dialogues, as mimeses, must be considered in line with this third depth in reading: as works of art that draw us in. I propose that this three level view of reading a Platonic dialogue is more directly adequate to working with the dialogues as mimetic works than more rationalist or epistemologically concerned distinctions.⁴³ I propose that such reading is what their ancient recognition as mimeses requires. Such reading, particularly of the third level, will certainly pick out different problems for analysis than traditional exposition of Plato's arguments, and even some distinctly different issues than the growing number of "dramatic readers" of Plato (who orient their work around the second level).⁴⁴

Several Exemplary *Aporiai*

So, to give a small example of how these depths multiply the difficulties of reading Plato, let us consider a term originating in the philosophical surface: *aporia*. An argument or distinction may present a logical *aporia* or difficulty (1); Meno famously presents one: “How will you look for something when you don’t in the least know what it is? . . . How will you know what you found is the thing you didn’t know?” (80d). On a deeper level (2), a number of dialogues end aporetically—*Euthyphro* and *Hippias Major*, for example, do not seem to come to any conclusion; by this we mean that Socrates and his interlocutor can find no way to come to agreement; they seem at odds and the interlocutor runs off. Between these two levels one may see that an aporetic argument challenges the interlocutor to contrive some new distinction or story (generally because it disgusts or surprises him to find where a previous answer leads), so that an *aporia* on the first level may allow or produce an at least partial agreement between the characters (level two). Just so, in book I of *Republic* Socrates produces *aporiai* out of Cephalus’, Polemarchus’, and Thrasymachus’ original definitions of justice such that Polemarchus at least agrees that he “didn’t mean it that way” and no one else seems to know exactly what they did mean either (e.g., 334b, 340c, 343a). That is not much of an agreement, though it is necessary to reduce one who thinks he knows to this recognition before anything greater can be hoped for. If *Republic* 1 were an independent dialogue, as some scholars think it originally was, no doubt it would be called an aporetic one.

On the third hand, though the characters in a dialogue may end not coming to agreement, it may be that between Plato and the reader (level three) there is (or should be) no *aporia*. For example, one could argue that *Euthyphro* is philosophically or theologically aporetic at level two (between Socrates and Euthyphro), for Euthyphro runs off without enlightening Socrates about piety. However, between the reader and Plato there need be no such *aporia*: one might consider that Plato’s *drama shows* that the Socratic dilemma presented to Euthyphro is false; it moves us *to feel* the impiety of either side of his dilemmas taken alone.⁴⁵

During the course of the dialogue, Euthyphro picks both what we might call the “natural law” side of Socrates’ dilemma—the holy “is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved” (10d), and what we might call it the divine command side of the dilemma—“holiness is that which is loved by the gods” (15b), that is, “what is dear to the gods is holy” (15c). Euthyphro sees he has come to disagree with himself (several times), but cannot see how to answer, so gives up and runs off; the dialogue ends with no resolution. But we need not leave so dissatisfied; in fact we ought not, and the dialogue leads us on the road of discovery precisely through the construction of its nonsolution. For, as we come to see how Socrates’ dialectic runs either Euthyphran

choice either into its opposite or into a bald impiety (or both), we might see that a more thoughtful piety would disallow the strict causal separation of the terms in the disjunction Socrates offers between god's love causing holiness or holiness causing god's love. Similarly the exclusive disjunction between justice being either a subsidiary part of holiness or holiness a subsidiary part of justice need not be accepted; the first would require there be a part of holiness outside the just, while the second would imply there is a part of justice that is unholy. Both choices sound impious; the choice is enforced by the disjunctive dilemma, but there is no reason to accept the disjunction in the dilemma as a rational requirement. A more pious philosopher might see that the better way to begin working through the issues would be to say that holiness or piety is the *ratio essendi* of justice and justice is the *ratio cognoscendi* of holiness or piety.⁴⁶ Thus a being could possibly *act* justly without *being* pious, but could not *be* just without *being* pious; and certainly no being could be holy without being just, as well as acting justly. It is, then, both impious and unjust to separate these terms in the way Socrates' disjunctive dilemmas require, and still more so to separate them from that *being* in whom they must be one. To separate them so is to imply the god could be either unjust (if the holy is what is god beloved and what is god beloved is so merely because god loves it "and for no other reason"—like it being just and his own essence) or unholy (since the god beloved and the holy are distinct kinds of things). Both beliefs are both impious and unwise to speak. Denying the disjunction the dilemma builds on means holding that the being of the divine is justice; the divine is also the holy. The divine being loves itself and, in doing so, is loving the holy, but the *causal* relation Socrates sets into his disjunctive dilemma can only exist for a being which is not itself both holy and just; in other words, a being for which it is an open question whether it ought to love itself—and whether to do so is pious. Such a creature is Euthyphro, as we see, and Socrates as well—but of the god this must assuredly be false. The being of the divine is a different kind of being than that of the human; the relation of justice and holiness in it are distinct from how such may exist in humans.

This has been a rather long example, and reads *Euthyphro* in a way that will certainly not be accepted by all, but even if this interpretation is not accepted, the point of this example for reading Plato still can and does stand: We are meant to be disturbed by what both sides of the dilemma lead to, and this disturbance of our piety is to wake us up and make us try to think it through more philosophically—not run off like Euthyphro. Further, perhaps stunned by the impiety each argument drives us into, we can now hear the hints in the dialogue about how to think it through. The more than considerable literature on the Euthyphro dilemma proves that Plato has been more than millennially successful in getting many to try to see an answer *through* the dialogue that is *not in* the dialogue.⁴⁷ Plato's doctrine might well be

called secret, then, because this is the only way to come to it—by becoming a philosopher oneself, and a philosopher through and about the dialogic form and its purpose, not merely an analyst of the arguments given by the characters.⁴⁸ Becoming a philosopher requires a particular passion (piety here), within which only can one's mental exercise come to the truth. Improper passion, improper response, missing the teaching—which is secreted from such a character.⁴⁹

An *aporia* at any one level, as just seen, does not require an *aporia* at succeeding levels; nor should we expect that agreement on one level implies no *aporia* on another. It may sound foolish that an argument is aporetic, but that the characters agree about some further conclusion that pretends to follow from it, but this happens frequently in politics, where people may agree on a conclusion while holding utterly opposed grounds for it. We will investigate an *impossibility* grounding an agreement between Socrates and Adeimantus in chapter 2. So, just as two characters agreeing does not imply that the characters have a real agreement (or any real agreement with reality)—as is exhibited frequently—we should not expect that an agreement among several characters, including Socrates, is always something we readers should agree to. For example, one might argue that despite Meno's concluding agreement with Socrates' pseudoeliminative argument that virtue must be a gift of the gods, Plato means us to see that this conclusion is a noble lie. The false conclusion will, however, disable Meno's prejudice against slaves (or other lower class, less sophisticatedly trained people) having virtue, and thereby put him on the road of *practicing* virtue by requiring he treat all others as possibly having the gift of god; for it is only by *practicing* that virtue comes to be in human beings—maybe even in Meno.⁵⁰

So, for example, when we come upon an argument of Socrates' that seems faulty, the reader on the first level will point out how it fails and perhaps adjust premises or invent a distinction which will help the argument go through to its (presumed) conclusion. The reader on the second level will consider who this argument is addressed to, and what Socrates is trying to get him to agree to or turn his passion toward or against by giving it in the particular dramatic and argumentative situation where it appears. And not only arguments, Socrates tells stories, invents poetic images and myths; these must be for some purpose in regard to the person spoken to.⁵¹ He has to give several different kinds of speech to Phaedrus (who reveals he has an unshakable fixation on writing speeches), finally giving him a myth in the hopes of curing the fixation by having him quit cold turkey. Whether Socrates (or the writer, Plato) believes the story is true about writing being bad for your mind is not a question we can easily answer from the dialogue—though noting the strange fact that such proscribed writing is being written precisely at the time of its proscription—but it *is* clear that both writing and memorizing speeches has taken Phaedrus' mind away! On the third level, the reader must become

aware of what Plato's mimesis of the discussion among the interlocutors is trying to accomplish in us: perhaps spark us into this question—why have these characters agreed to nonsense? And then, what does our laughter at Phaedrus' interactions with Socrates reveal about us, and about what we really believe? What might that laughter already be curing? Perhaps it is possible to write in such a way as not to cause mental and passionate defects, but rather, in fact, to aid and strengthen, to purify of defect.

So, finally, we must add two further ways (one on each of the last two levels) of producing *aporiai*: for—as mimeses—Platonic dialogues are not merely intellectual enterprises, but emotional or passionate ones, and as the mimeses *in* the dialogue may (and do) move the passions of the characters differently, the mimesis *of* a dialogue may be moving us (or be meant to move us) on a completely different—even opposing—vector to that the characters *in* the dialogue move on at their level. For example, Socrates' aporealizing of Cephalus' definition of justice as telling the truth and paying debts via his example of the madman at the door (331c) moves Polemarchus, by filial piety, to paternal defense. The resulting aporetic discussion of Polemarchus' own definition moves Thrasymachus to a mad rage at both Polemarchus and Socrates. I doubt that Plato means us to be moved to either emotion through his mimesis, rather he means us to be moved as Glaucon is after all this argument—to wonder about what justice really is, and perhaps to be somewhat surprised at Thrasymachus' violence. Plato (and Socrates with his interlocutors) must attempt to work this way if it is true that “apprehension of the ultimate structure of Being is conditioned upon *ethôs* or the right state of balance of affection (*pathêmata*) within the soul.”⁵² In any case, it will prove to be dangerous to pick up such a work, for as a lesser mimetic artist has said: “such works are mirrors, when an ape peers in, no apostle can be seen looking out.”⁵³ In fact a quite deluded soul might reveal itself by looking in—but the wonder of a great work of mimetic art is that it can help the would-be apostle out of his delusion—unless he mistakes it for a book of logical problems or merely philosophical theses.

NOTES

1. Compare Paul Kristeller, “The Modern System of the Fine Arts,” in Peter Kivy, ed. *Essays on the History of Aesthetics* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1992), 5–14; R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 5–56.

2. Among Plato scholars these artistic representations are always flawed, either for the usual (book 10) reasons, or, as Catherine Collobert argues, because the poet's invocation of the Muses is precisely a prayer to be confined to appearances, therefore guaranteeing ignorance of the forms and reality; this leads to her more forceful rejection: the mimetic thereby has no *technê*. See her “Poetry as flawed reproduction: Possession and Mimesis” in Pierre Destree and Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, eds., *Plato and the Poets* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), especially pages 56–58.

3. One could deny both *techné* and *telos*, I suppose, by saying “art is everything called art,” but there is Duchamp waiting, with his “incarnated proof of the contradictory identity of art and non-art.” Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996) has an interesting discussion of the modern historical dialectic of this issue; the quote is from page 28.

4. I have previously shown how Aristotle's *Poetics* can be read as an outline for the entire field modernly called aesthetics in “The Others in/of *Poetics*,” *Journal of Philosophical Research* XXII (1997): 245–260. See also the explication of mimetic objects as sharing (as do constitutions) in the way of being of both natural and made things in *Love Song*, 17–22.

5. Halliwell, *Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 7.

6. Malcolm Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 86.

7. Thus, I disagree with Harte and Burnyeat that book 10's discussion focuses “on the effect of art on the audience of art,” while the earlier discussion concerns “how the young Guardians should write, produce or act in mimetic performances.” See Verity Harte, “*Republic 10* and the Audience in Art,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 38 (Summer 2010): 69–96, at 71.

8. H. S. Thayer is on the right track in emphasizing the ecstatic and hypnotic element of song and dance, *the enactment of which produces* “the truth and reality of the moment, in the enchantment of their performance.” See “Plato's Quarrel with Poetry: Simonides” in Kivy, ed. *Essays on the History of Aesthetics* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 1992), 119–142; the quote is from 133.

9. Compare *Meta* 980b20–981a10, *An Post* 71a1.

10. For example, see *Statesman* 268b, *Pol* 1342a.

11. For further argument and evidence see my *Love Song*, 4–12.

12. The quote is from Pedro Lian Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 234. It is quoted by Leon Golden as decisive against my view in his review of *Love Song*; see *Classical Philology* 103, 4 (October 2008): 449–54, at 452.

13. Some of the mimetic *nomoi* may well be built into the words, as Socrates illustrates in *Cratylus* (426c–427d). Whether or not one takes Socrates' remarks about natural names entirely seriously, clearly words have the kind of onomatopoeic effects he mentions, so poets, like Plato, will know how to use them wherever they are not inspired precisely by them. See *Republic's* beautiful rhyme, quoted above: *theiōi dē kai kosmiōi . . . kosmios te kai theios . . . gignetai* (500c–d).

14. Hallvard Fossheim puts this matter most strongly when he says “practical reason is in ineradicable debt to something that isn't in itself entirely reasonable.” See “Mimesis in Aristotle's Ethics,” in *Making Sense of Aristotle: Essays in Poetics*, edited by Øivind Andersen and Jon Haarberg (London: Duckworth, 2001), 84.

15. The mimetic, then, shares its conceptual extension and power with the postmodern psychoanalytic notion of “fantasy” as that which provides the background for any particular ideology and is the animating and structuring principle of desire/enjoyment: a “function similar to that of Kantian ‘transcendental schematism’” according to Slavoj Žižek in *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 7 (cf. 3).

16. Actually, not Kierkegaard, but Vigilius Haufniensis, in *The Concept of Anxiety*, translated by Reidar Thomte and Albert B. Anderson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 108.

17. For a longer and much more involved presentation of this idea see my “Intentionality and Mimesis: Canonic variations on an ancient grudge, scored for new mutinies,” *Sub/stance* Vol. 23, No. 3 (1994): 46–74.

18. *De Motu Animalium* 701b17–23. The effects are immediate and mechanical: “just as, if the rudder shifts a hair, the shift in the prow is considerable” (701b27–28).

19. Compare Aristotle, *De Motu* 701a5, b1–33; if certain kinds of music make the heart beat faster or slower, they so change the motions of the body, thereby causing heating or cooling, and thus raise or calm the passions (as in *Pol* 1342a10–17).

20. A wide ranging discussion can be found in Alison Gropnik's *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell us about Truth, Love and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2009).

21. V. S. Ramachandran, "Mirror Neurons and the Brain in the Vat" (1.10.06); accessed online at www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran06/ramachandran06_index.html. See also his "MIRROR NEURONS and imitation learning as the driving force behind 'the great leap forward' in human evolution" at www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran/ramachandran_p1.html.

22. Istvan Molnar-Szakacs and Katy Overy, "Music and mirror neurons: from motion to 'e' motion," *Social, Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 1, 3 (2006): 235–241.

23. Compare Aristotle, *Pol* 1340a22–24: "In listening to such our soul changes round, for habitually rejoicing and suffering in such likenesses is near to what accords with reality."

24. This connection to Girard was given somewhat more explication in *Love Song*, 4–12. For Girard's (mis)understanding of ancient mimesis (he accepts the received view—he is a victim of it), see *Job: The Victim of his People* (London: Athlone, 1987). See also, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, translated by Michael Metteer and Stephen Bann (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 8: "Already in Plato the problematic of imitation is severely curtailed. . . . The examples he selects for us are consistently limited to *representation*" (italics original).

25. Ion prefers this self-explanation to the option that he is purposely unjust at 542b. A similar charge about the poets can be found at *Ap* 22c; inspiration can be for good or evil, it seems, just as mimesis. Perhaps it is a mimetic phenomenon; some are more mimetically sensitive—call this a sort of genius. The oracles "say many fine things," and "the poets experience something of this sort" (*Ap* 22c). Perhaps the poets are less often accurate or good than the oracles (with which Athens itself, at times, had been known to disagree).

26. Compare text at note 16 above.

27. Thus David Leibowitz's remark that "there is a certain murkiness and implausibility in Socrates' story of his first accusers" is both true and explicable precisely as mimetically engendered, for the mimetic is shadowy in precisely this way. See *The Ironic Defense of Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47.

28. Apropos of nothing, *diabolos* is the name, in the Septuagint, of the accuser in *Job*. Girard discusses the mimetic nature of the events and speeches in his book on *Job* (n. 24). The *diabolos*, it will be remembered, is the instigator of Job's troubles; suppose it is (as in *Apology*) the name of a process, an impersonal process of disindividuation: it works with the economy of physics—as much on speaker as on spoken of.

29. On the numinous charge of *deinon*, see Nussbaum's comments in *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 71–73.

30. One "can" about this "ought": "A" moves further away from the inside of the theatre when listening to *Don Giovanni* precisely because he wants *not* to hear words; he has a feeling that language brings one into a moral community—the actors and words get in the way of pure (would that it were!) arational aesthesis—of music (to say nothing of women). One *can* attempt to make even arts using language into pure mimetic flow. This would probably miss the artist's intention (at least the intentionality the work carries within it by using language—whether the artist means it or not). See Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*, vol. 1. One could also just mimetically fall into "hiding that one has no thoughts." Insofar as one is being mimetic, one is not thinking—even though one is using *logos* and perhaps even logical form. See n.16 and Plato's inventions at *Soph* 267c, d.

31. So, Habermas, for example, who thinks that the task of criticism is to translate "the experiential content of the work of art into normal [i.e., informationally communicative] language," will *always* be missing, quite precisely and exactly, the experience of mimetic art in doing so. See *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 208. Such Germanic readings are always in immediate need of a French supplement; the German explanation pretends to omit the specifically mimetic effect of the poem, but really only replaces the *poem's* mimetic effect with another—namely, becoming like a German professor of philosophy; one should say similarly of analytic philosophers.

32. If the Athenian Stranger's claim that all the arts of the muses are *eikastic* and *mimetic* (*Laws* 668a) is distinguishing between the representative/intentional and the mimetic, the second half of this distinction is perennially pushed out into the intentional in philosophy—always leaving a supplemental mimetic effect as its trace. Habermas' view (n. 31) is merely another example.

33. One great benefit of Joshua Mitchell's *Plato's Fable* is he sees that "mimesis—the Socratic provocation as it is set forth in the fable of the *Republic*—precedes . . . [in the sense of lying deeper than, modern] understandings of the relationship between imitation and reason" (11).

34. This and all unlabeled quotes in this paragraph are from Eva Brann's *The Music of the Republic* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2004), 89–90.

35. Charles Griswold argues that Plato constructs his dialogues to solve a metaphilosophical problem; Plato "seduces the reader" into philosophy and "poetry and mimesis are indispensable" for this purpose. "Plato's Metaphilosophy: Why Plato Wrote Dialogues," in *Platonic Readings/ Platonic Writings*, Charles Griswold, ed. (London: Routledge, 1988), 143–167 at 160.

36. G. R. F. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry" in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 1, edited by George A. Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 117.

37. In this I almost agree with Kenneth Sayre that reading a dialogue is supposed to produce "a similar effect in the mind of the reader" as an encounter with Socrates would have produced in the streets of Athens; he should have said "soul" instead of mind. That same corrective is needed for the analogy to a "literary garden" which "produces fruit in the mind of a reader [that] contributes to his or her immortality." See *Plato's Literary Garden: How to read a Platonic dialogue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 26 and 20. Sayre's emphasis seems mistaken in its intellectualism. Not so, Gerald Press, who, in "Plato's Dialogues as Enactments," in *The third way: New Directions in Platonic Studies*, Francisco Gonzalez, ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995): 133–154, says "whatever statements they make, whatever doctrines they may assert [including by enacting a doctrine that is essentially propositional, the dialogues] also create effects that are distinguishable from those statements and may even contradict them. They create these effects in a precisely poetic manner: by *creating a world into which the reader enters and in which she sees and experiences*" (140, my italics). "These other effects operate through the imaginations and emotions" (141). Press goes on to show how this view dissolves many scholarly dilemmas about approaches to Plato.

38. I say "pretends" because the mimetic is ever present; thus one may always give a Freudian reading of Freud's essays; furthermore, to do so is always enlightening.

39. "All the arts of the muses are *eikastic* and *mimetic*" (*Laws* 668a), but insofar as mimesis is natural to us, perhaps we should allow that all of our writing and speaking is so—even in science.

40. Mitchell says, "the philosopher's task is not to *hand down* a luminous and unspeakable 'knowledge of the Good'—Socrates makes light of those who claim to possess such a thing as this—but rather to awaken souls that yet slumber. Not by mortal generation is philosophy born; the midwife to *this* event comes prepared with palliatives of a different sort" (*Plato's Fable*, xi).

41. We might deny recognition of the fact that Plato's dialogues are mimeses to Cornford, who in his translation of *Parmenides* cuts out the "Aristotle" responding to "Parmenides'" speeches in *Plato's Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939). The fact has too little significance for us if, like Richard Kraut, we think "Plato's aim in writing is to create an instrument that can, if properly used, guide others to the truth and . . . then it may serve his purpose to create a leading speaker who represents the sincere convictions of Plato himself." See "Introduction to the Study of Plato," in R. Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 25. I agree with Kraut's premise about creating a certain kind of instrument, but his conclusion about a mouthpiece tends to practically abrogate the fact that Plato's instruments are mimeses; "proper use" cannot be reduction to a character's philosophical theses.

42. As Diskin Clay says, “The dialogues were meant primarily for the readers of Socrates’ distempered city, Athens, who were themselves distempered.” See *Platonic Questions: Dialogues with the Silent Philosopher* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 121.

43. As, for instance the widespread use of the distinction between Platonic and Socratic irony, or Kenneth Sayre’s suggestion (*Plato’s Literary Garden*: 29–31) of four ways of reading a dialogue based on the divided line. Both are far too rationalist or epistemologically concerned divisions; there is more to poetry than irony, or knowing. What I am calling the second and third levels are in line with the distinction between Socratic and Platonic provocations discussed by Mitchell Miller in “Platonic Provocations: Reflections on the Soul and the Good in the Republic,” in *Platonic Investigations*, edited by Dominic J. O’Meara (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 163–93. These provocations include, in both cases, the passions, not just the mind.

44. Perhaps the fairest way to introduce the large number of such readers is to point out several books which contain numerous such scholars: *Who Speaks for Plato: Studies in Platonic Anonymity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), edited by Gerald Press; Gonzalez’ *The third way*; Griswold’s *Platonic Readings*. Also see Hayden W. Ausland, “On reading Plato Mimetically,” *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (Autumn 1997): 371–416.

45. For a variety of ways to understand the dialogue, not all of which consider it aporetic in its relation to us, see my “Five Readings of *Euthyphro*,” forthcoming in *Philosophy and Literature*.

46. This view could, then, consider that piety or holiness is the unifying intentional essence of all virtue, while merely acting in accord with virtue (even with a sort of knowledge of the virtue) might take place without such (knowledge of or intention to be of) service to the gods, or as *Republic*’s Socrates might put it, answerability to the good. This hints at something *Republic* will lead us to on its own; we will return to discuss piety in chapter 6 and the coda.

47. In a happy analogy, we must see (and come to) piety *through* justice, not see it *in* (as a literal part of) justice. The dialogue is a mimetic and symbolic hypotyposis of piety: it makes us—even Euthyphro—do what piety would do (if we—or he—knew what it was); we are led thereby to reject both sides of the dilemma.

48. So, sensitivity to the (intramural) drama (level two) and to its (extramural) poetic effect (level three) does not leave us with skepticism about philosophy or Plato, nor does it leave us to trace merely “unphilosophical and dilettantish meanderings about this or that literarily cast ‘teaching,’” as Griswold (rightly) complains about some dramatic readers of the dialogues. See “Reading and Writing Plato,” *Philosophy and Literature* 32 (2008): 205–216; at 206.

49. I should say “hidden” from such a character, if taking a distinction insisted upon by Thomas Slezak in *Reading Plato*, translated by Graham Zanker (New York: Routledge, 1999), 85–86.

50. An extended defense of this reading may be found in my “Forgetfulness in *Meno* or, Plato Invents the Art of the Fugue,” *Platonic Errors* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 79–109.

51. Catherine Zuckert proposes, in *Plato’s Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University Press, 2009), that “to show how the characteristics and interests of the interlocutors affect the argument, . . . the arguments [should be taken up] in the order in which they occur and [we should look] at each step of the results, which are not always logical” (6).

52. This was the thesis of Cushman’s *Therapeia*, xix.

53. The remark is Lichtenberg’s, but I have it three or four removes from the truth: Hilarius Bookbinder uses it as an epigram for *Stages on Life’s Way*, a collection of variously authored texts, at least one of which was stolen; the whole is generally accredited to one S. Kierkegaard.

Chapter One

The Madman at the Door

Delusion and Mimetic Art in Republic and Modernity

I mean, to be lying in the soul about what is . . . and to be holding falsehood, to be ignorant there is what all would least accept.

—Socrates, *Rep* (382b)

We must confess that there are some discouraging obstacles: perseverance in stupidity, organized spinelessness, aggressive unintelligence, and so on.

—Camus

The abdomen is the reason why man does not easily take himself for a god.

—Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

DELUSION IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHE-LOGY

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Sigmund Freud tells us that since the program of the pleasure principle cannot be carried through directly (at least not since the slaying of the primal father, before which it was only possible for him), the human psyche has developed four types of “palliative measures.”¹ To be somewhat more exacting than the good doctor, and to arrange them according to what it seems he considers their descending order of worth, we could distinguish them as deflections, substitutive satisfactions, intoxication, and delusions. Deflections put off our immediate misery by concentrating on something else; Freud’s examples—gardening and scientific activity—allow us to say of deflections that they eventually produce some

important real satisfactions; going to work in the morning is the most usual version. This kind of deflection of psychic energy has led to the growth of science and technology, which, Freud assures us, has already made us into “a kind of prosthetic God,” and promises to “increase man’s likeness to God even more” (CD 44–45). This increase in our own power should, and has, led to a decrease in the human need to seek protection from the ancient invisible father of religion. For the modern, “technology will provide” has replaced the medieval and ancient faith that God would do so. The third of Freud’s palliative measures—intoxication—needs no further discussion (and practitioners of this method are unlikely to be reading this in any case).

The other two ways of displacing psychic energy, or libido, away from direct satisfactions are the most pertinent for entering into Plato’s dialogue, as well as for developing a critical understanding our own cultural milieu that exhibits again the persistent deep relevance of *Republic*. “The substitutive satisfactions, as offered by art, are *illusions* in contrast with reality, but they are nonetheless psychically effective, thanks to the role which phantasy has assumed in mental life.”² On the other hand, *delusions*, like religion, “restrict the play of choice and adaptation [of means to achieve pleasure] . . . depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world” (CD 36). Religion, as a mass delusion, does at least spare the believer from going through the trouble of inventing his own personal neurosis or delusional system however (CD 36). These two are united in that both illusions and delusions are false in the sense that they contrast with reality. Their difference lies in the fact that illusions are recognized as products of phantasy both by the artist and his audience, though this recognition is not “allowed to interfere with enjoyment” (CD 31), even if the enjoyment is “mild compared with that derived from the sating of crude and primary instinctual impulses” (CD 30).

On the other hand, delusions are not so recognized, and because they are believed to be true they restrict choices among other possible libidinal objects in the real world, tightening up with considerable unnecessary restrictions the already highly corseted civilized psyche, thereby suppressing (if not entirely destroying) the possibilities for happiness available within a civilization or culture. The delusion (religion being Freud’s primary example) structures and organizes the way the world appears; the truth and worth of things, deeds and even pleasures only appear within its *kosmos*, and suffer their evaluation only within its horizon. Religion thereby works in the culture like an overactive superego within the psyche, heightening repression of Id desire beyond what the reality principle sees as necessary (CD 108), which repressed energy in turn can only be released through increasing neurotic symptoms—if not “blissful hallucinatory confusion.”³ Meanwhile, because they are recognized as transient illusions, the works of artists do not restrict other choices of satisfaction, and indeed we should and do expect society to

offer us a wide variety of such substitutive satisfactions. The more liberal society is in this regard, the better according to Freud.⁴ Such artistic satisfactions should be an aid to civilization in controlling both the psyche's aggressive and desiring instincts.

Finally, we should recall two further remarks about stories, art and natural beauty. First, as to their *modus operandi*: Freud recognizes both artistic and natural beauty as "perfect examples" of aim-inhibited impulses towards sexual objects; our liking for them is a sublimation of our sexual drives (*CD* 34). Both natural and artistic beauties provide mild intoxications so important that "civilization could not do without [them]" (*CD* 33). Despite this, point two, Freud seems to think it would be better if we *could* live without the artist's inexact substitutes for reality. All Freud's uses of the poets in books like *Civilization and Its Discontents* suffer remarkably from what we should call "Socratism"—the poet directly teaches a lesson (which agrees with Freud's conjectures) or gives an image which, in a less exact, but pithier, way represents the psychoanalytic truth. Art is entirely representational. In his earlier exploration of illusion, delusion and religion, Freud had offered a telling tale—literally true, I presume—about such tales regarding his son, who, hearing a fairy tale enjoyed by his siblings, asked the governess whether or not it was true; upon hearing it was not, he walked off in disgust. The father considered this response to be an admirable sign of adult realism.⁵ One is reminded of other such fully adult realists, like Hume, whose first *Enquiry* concludes with a program for the renewal of libraries, where we must ask whether or not a book contains "any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number, or experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence" and if not, "commit it to the flames."⁶ Or, perhaps, Aldous Huxley who explains that "Art . . . is only for beginners, or else for those resolute dead-enders, who have made up their minds to be content with the ersatz of Suchness, with symbols rather than with what they signify, with the elegantly composed recipe in lieu of actual dinner."⁷ Such remarks imply that if we were truly rigorous lovers of truth (which leads to real instinctual satisfactions), poetry (all arts generally) should have no place in our lives. Society may use it as a sop, and it entrances the children, but real men have no use for it precisely because it is illusory; get back to the lab, the garden, or the legalized call girl or boy.⁸

Numerous scholars in aesthetics still consider Aristotle to be both opposed to Plato and a closer relative of Freud's (though any suggestion of art being merely a sop for children could not be found in Aristotle). The latter connection is at least partly due to the fact that a close relative of Freud's brought the word catharsis back into the modern languages, interpreting it as purgation.⁹ Such an interpretation (or translation) is, however, far too limiting, as many scholars now agree.¹⁰ Nonetheless, even among scholars who attempt to treat Plato as himself a mimetic artist and *Republic* as a work of art

these errors (strikingly contrasting Plato with Aristotle, joining Aristotle with Freud) continue. For example, Joshua Mitchell, who recognizes Plato's *Republic* as *necessarily* a fable explains that,

the catharsis (see *Poetics* . . .) that tragedy produces when, in public performances, pity and fear are treated well *purges the excess* of passion that is present in the audience. Plato rejected tragedy, in part, because he thought that periodically purging . . . may in fact exacerbate [the problem].¹¹

Without further argument¹² let us merely note that such a *purging* of the passions is precisely Freud's explanation of how art ameliorates the repressions of social life. That his view of art's work and worth is related to Aristotle's is suspect; that such a view of art's worth (given Freud's understanding of its work) is opposed to Plato's is certain. The conclusion follows that if Freud is correct about the functioning of the work of art, Plato is delusional about how art works and why it is important. The converse is also true.

THE PRESENTATION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE DELUSIONAL IN *REPUBLIC*, AND SOME IMPLICATIONS REGARDING (POST)MODERN POLITICAL THEORY

The Presentation of the Delusional

Madness has already presented itself in our Introduction's mention of *Republic*, and in the discussion which is *Republic*. Early on, Socrates gives a very short story of a friend who deposits his weapons with us when sane, and then returns mad demanding them back (331c); the example leads Cephalus to abandon his definition of justice. No one asks how we know the friend is mad, whether we should do the same for an enemy, or even how we know it is unjust to return the weapons or tell the madman where they are. The bare plot of the story produces Cephalus' agreement; no reasoning is given. That this story of the mad friend is the first provocation in *Republic* to what will later be described as the medicinal lie ought to make us more circumspect about using either utilitarian or pseudo-Kantian principles in order to define justice, or Plato's lack of it.¹³ The story (momentarily, at least) *cures* Cephalus of thinking that a simple universal action rule (or two)—tell the truth, pay your debts—gives an adequate (or even universally true) definition of justice. This true lie, which Cephalus holds as justice, is stopped cold—not by philosophical argument, but by *a story about an imaginary friend*.

In agreeing with Cephalus' realization of his definition's inadequacy, we need not agree that Socrates is a proto-utilitarian, as is often suggested. It may seem Socrates' point is "debts should not be repaid if harm results,"¹⁴

but Socrates presents no such defense. He tells a story. Perhaps his point is that in such a story we are not able to repay the friend, for the friend is not there. We do not owe the weapons to the madman at the door, but to our friend; if we know who our friend is (a question taken up only slightly later at 334c–335a), we will not give them to the madman. Furthermore, even though he is not our friend, we may still owe some good to the madman as well: to mitigate his madness rather than abet it. Perhaps it is the business of the just man to do good to all. Even a minimal deontic principle like the Hippocratic do no harm (cf. 335b, d) would prevent us from helping the madman carry out his madness. Socrates offers none of these adjuncts to the case; *he merely tells the story*. Readers can agree with Cephalus' decision not to give the weapons to the madman for more than one reason—perhaps without even being able to give a reason; some will utilize a philosophy fit for pigs, others will not. Some, perhaps like Cephalus, will merely be struck blind by an insight about what the good *is not* in the situation presented. Thus the good breaks in to a mind despite its settled principle, through a story.¹⁵ What principle we may attempt to derive henceforth is not at issue; *the story produces universal agreement*, both within the dialogue and without (I presume): It is unjust to return the borrowed weapons to such a one. There may be agreement among readers (as among interlocutors) about the *conclusion* with no agreement about the principle or the decision strategy which reaches it. In fact, we (or they) may well be disagreeing about principles, but the question of principle never arises. The *story* carries the field; the community unanimously accepts it.

Clearly, if a friend had deposited his weapons with us and came back saying that he was (for example) tired of his wife and all her offspring and was going to make them into gyros, we would both lie to him and fail to pay him back.¹⁶ “Your weapons are not sharp enough for your use at this time, and I can’t give them back to you; I’ve sent them off to Sparta to be sharpened; they’ll be back in two weeks,” we might say, thereby preventing him from both madly tearing our house apart looking for the weapons and preventing him from carrying his madness out in action against his own family, by extension, against himself. The intervening weeks might, additionally, bring a little more sharpness to his mind and allow him the opportunity to be cured of his madness. Such a verbal lie at least prevents the work, and perhaps begins the cure, of the true lie which has taken hold in the soul of our delusional friend.

If we think through this example, we might come to see how Polemarchus' new definition (good to friends, bad to enemies) can be seen as a defense of his father's, rather than simply a replacement of it. Cephalus' rule could have been merely an uncaredful specification of the goods we owe: debts and truth. A less specific “*good things*” *are owed* corrects his father's more specific and literalist way of thinking about *what* is owed. Polemar-

thus, by specifying what counts as debt *less* precisely than his father, could escape (perhaps) the issue his father retires from. But then he specifies further that we owe good *to our friends* and harm to our enemies. This specification could still be only a minor correction of his father. If *we owe good to friends*, paying our literal debts and telling truth is not only correct when we are dealing with friends most of the time—for the good thing or deed would be paying our debts and telling the truth to our friends—but even on that occasion when the friend is not in his right mind we are still *paying our debt* to our friend by keeping the weapon (and not telling the truth), for *what is owed* to the friend is something good (332a). Thus Polemarchus is less inclusive of *to whom*, limiting the original (seemingly universal) Cephalan rule to friends, while also becoming less literal about the debt. He understands friendship as an exchange of good things or deeds, not specific goods or true propositions; that exchange of good is what is truly owed—and only to friends.¹⁷

Alternatively, Polemarchus might be seeing “friend” as other than merely the identical body. For, we might say we are telling the truth to *the friend* by saying the weapons are not available to *the madman*, which leaves open that they will be available, in the future, when the friend returns. (On this view, too, one would usually not tell the truth to enemies, though in this case we would!) Polemarchus thereby could be defending his father’s definition as (again) just a bit too simplistically universal and literally employed—we do not owe the truth and payment of debts to all, but only to friends. But we always do owe that *to friends*. Thus, if he knows who his friends are (and does not mistake the madman for the friend who deposited the weapons), or if he knows that friendship is an exchange of good deeds rather than literal debts, Polemarchus may avoid making truth telling subject to a utilitarian calculus.

It does not seem, from the ensuing discussion about knowing one’s friends, that Polemarchus is capable of distinguishing who his friends are however. So, perhaps we should consider that he is thinking of another solution. A proto-utilitarian filial defense would rather explain Cephalus’ reasoning as mistakenly holding to rule utility, where Socrates’ case shows that act utility is required. In other words, most of the time (as the father presumes) it will be good to follow the rule to tell the truth, but, when it causes such harm as it is about to, it is not a good thing, and Polemarchus therefore takes up act utility when he affirms that it is good that we owe to friends, and this rules out telling the truth in the particular case before us. Any of these more adequate specifications could be what Polemarchus is thinking when he agrees we should lie to the mad friend and yet jumps to the defense of his father, quoting the poet’s (equally vague, philosophically) “pay what is owed.” No one of these, however, can be the point *Plato* aims to

make. His point is, rather, that *the story* stops the Cephalan delusion about justice.

Plato explicitly leaves the moral reasoning here open; *Republic* (on what I earlier called the third level of reading) thereby invites us to step in and feel and think our way through it. Moreover, if we all feel and see that the truth is as Cephalus and Socrates agree—that we ought not “tell someone in this state the whole truth” (331d)—we must all already be illuminated (as Cephalus) by something of the Good, if not the Good itself. Our *universal agreement* is a sign of seeing something true, but not necessarily of seeing it clearly;¹⁸ perhaps something divine begins to work in us through this story: a light shines in the darkness of our own culture cave. If the Good is that which makes all things be as well as be known, it must be possible for this universal agreement to happen at any time and place, provided our attention is turned correctly.

The story has reoriented us exactly this way. We have just seen that an agreement about the just can be made to happen by a properly turned lie: a fiction. We have all come to agree, through the fiction, that *the truth is* as Socrates and Cephalus say: justice requires not telling such a one the whole truth. We all *know* this; and we also see what is morally necessary: some catharsis, some purification, some release from, or at least defense against, the determinations of madness—we must turn our friend’s attention differently. We all see this despite what may be differing moral principles from which we would prefer to argue. Meanwhile, Socrates’ *story* has accomplished in Cephalus precisely what the *lie* accomplishes for the suddenly mad friend in the story—it disables continuation along the intentional path each has set out. Socrates and his story are to Cephalus as the friend’s speech is to the madman, and the story’s *effect* on Cephalus mirrors the medicinal lie’s effect on the mad friend: it stops them both from proceeding. The Good is not yet seen clearly—by us or Cephalus (or the mad friend)—but it makes its presence known first through this little *fiction* of the mad friend at the door—to whom we tell a fiction which all affirm. Something divine must be happening to us—at least to Cephalus, for a story made up on the fly has awakened him from his dogmatic slumber. And he has been slumbering and talking in his sleep for a long time now.¹⁹ The story is a divine gadfly. To tell the truth, Cephalus must leave the discussion in order to get back to his comfort zone—paying a debt to the gods (331d). Socrates’ story stops him for a moment; then he then falls back into his practiced principle. The order of his world, his *opseōs kosmos*, is set by such terms—debt, payment, money—even “true” is a contractual term for him; what does not appear within this horizon cannot be seen. We will investigate this regime of soul in detail later.

Madness appears *in propria persona* a bit later in book 1, when Thrasymachus flings himself into the dialogue “like a wild beast,” claiming that

Socrates and Polemarchus have been possessed by nonsense (336b).²⁰ But it had appeared *in a person* even earlier, when Cephalus had quoted Sophocles' statement that old age had allowed him to escape the frenzied and savage master of sex (329c). Cephalus adds that old age can rid one of "many such mad masters" (329d)—an admission that goes considerably farther than the playwright's. It is as if an image Socrates makes much later is already seen and known to be operating by and in the older men: the soul is a many headed beast, and there are both tame and wild heads springing up in it (588c–e). Cephalus admits more wild and untamed heads than Sophocles in the zoo of his psyche. It appears that one of the others was the blind god of wealth, for he confesses that perhaps the greatest good of having money is that "it contributes a great deal to not having to cheat or lie to any man against one's will" (331b), which at least suggests that an honest poverty is not to be expected. Needless to say, the blindness of this head does not appear to him.²¹ The less zoophilic Sophocles still only escapes his beast by age, not wisdom—though at least he has the wisdom to see his escape as an escape and not wish a pharmacy to invent some way to remain subject to his madness. But what might Sophocles, Cephalus, Socrates, or Plato, mean by madness?

The Conceptualization of the Delusional

At the end of book 2 Socrates presents the distinction between what he calls the true lie (*hōs alēthōs pseudos*, 382a,b) or the real lie (*tōi ontī pseudos*, 382c) and the verbal lie (*to en tois logois pseudos*, 382c). He says of the true lie that it is "the lie in the soul about things that are," it is "to lie to the most sovereign part of oneself about the most important things" and that "to have and hold the lie there is what is most hated by the gods and men" (382b). This true lie contrasts with the verbal lie, which is not always an object of hatred, but is at times "useful as a medicine"—for example, when a friend of ours through madness or disease attempts to accomplish something harmful. The true lie is, like Freudian delusion, an untruth held by the person as true; living one's life this way is something no one would want or choose. It is sufficient for Socrates' conclusion—no one would want this—that we accept either (or both) 1) that there is a natural desire for truth in the soul or 2) that in the delusional situation it is impossible that the person would be living her own life. Her "choices" are never her own, but the delusion's. Such a one's entire life *is not*; there is no real person here. No person could want it. The first condition, which most would accept as likely held by Plato and Socrates, requires we accept there are such things as "nature," "soul," and "truth"—not all of which some moderns would be willing to accept;²² but it is not the only premise which can get to Socrates' conclusion.

Socrates does not argue with Adeimantus that delusion constricts or destroys possibilities or elements of one's happiness and possibilities for pleasure (419a), which is Freud's argument against it. But one might ask *when* and *why* delusion is a problem for Freud (or any consequentialist). If the good is pleasure, and delusion is more pleasant than painful for a person, it is evil to wake them from it, is it not? Suppose the delusion is not only pleasant for the person, but not harmful to society, perhaps even beneficial:²³ Cephalus' delusion that he is a good person, with good principles, who has led a good life perhaps? Why not let the dead bury the dead? If you're sleeping with your mother but no one (including those involved) ever discovers it, who would ever be unhappy? As the many say, ignorance is bliss; if you learned the truth, you might put your eyes out or hang yourself. Best (and happiest!) not to know then. Consequentially, it is immoral to wake this one to the truth of its life. Thinking otherwise requires one hold that truth is a higher good than the most pleasant life; such is not possible in the philosophy of pigs.

Socrates, however, gives no argument at all for why neither god nor man would want this deluded life. It seems, rather, that Plato is letting us see that there is no person here who can raise the question of "their own" happiness; it is, then, immediately certain that "no one" wants it. Perhaps Plato's *oudeis* here is both a mathematical joke and a rhyme of Odysseus' famous *outis* (*Od.* 9:360–365); "not one" would accept to live the true lie for such would not be "one," but either two (the lie one thinks one is, and what one is but knows not) or none (neither being what one thinks, nor alive to what one is). Both Freud and Plato, in any case, agree that the situation of delusion, of being in the true lie, calls up what we might call the therapeutic imperative.²⁴ The therapy, Socrates says, is a certain kind of *logos*—a false one: a fiction, an artistic (i.e., made, constructed) illusion, a story or poem—in fact, exactly what Freud says art is. Socrates is making this distinction, we must recall, in attempting to distinguish which music ought to be allowed in the upbringing of the children, and which not. By contrast, he says, the god would always be true in work and word (*kai alêthes en te ergôi kai en logôi*, 382e). Are contemporary philosophers and psychotherapists, then, gods, that they can cure purely by telling the truth or exhibiting it? Or is the grammar here deceptive: perhaps, unlike a literally true word, a true work is not one which is representationally or "essentially" true, but one which *works* truth, one which *trues*, produces truth or is *truing* in the one it works on? Is that also true even of words?—can they *true* even though not literally true, can they be *truing* while not being true? Such would be a good *mêchanê tôn pseudôn* (414b). Such is Socrates' story of the mad friend, and to the mad friend.

Socrates' example of the occasion for the "not hated" verbal lie at the end of book 2, then, refers back to the preambling discussion of justice in book 1. It is precisely the example Socrates had raised to question Cephalus' definition of justice. We already noted that this madman at Cephalus' door—at

least the door to his definition of justice—made a prior appearance in Cephalus' own speech and soul, where he, approvingly, quoted Sophocles' thankfulness for having escaped "many mad masters" (329c–d). Cephalan approval of Sophocles' prayer of gratitude, together with his later admission that one really ought not tell the mad friend the truth or give him his weapons, implies that, as a younger man suffering under many mad masters in his own soul, a good friend should have told Cephalus many a verbal lie to help cure him—or at least hinder the activity—of the many mad masters he confesses were running his soul-ship (cf. 488–489). This, in turn, implies that he would pray for such a true friend for his sons.²⁵ We might expect (had he stuck around for this distinction among lies in book 2) that he would admit to wishing he had been told several of those therapeutic verbal lies back in his youth, but, even though he has left the discussion, his admissions under Socratic questioning place him on the ground where he *must* hope his sons (Euthydemus and Lysias, as well as Polemarchus are present) will have good friends: the kind who will therapeutically lie to them when suffering under mad masters in their own souls. Thus, Socrates' paying the debt to him may *require* not telling the whole truth—a debt to the father requires lying to the sons; the good owed to the son himself will also require such a lie under the circumstance of filial delusion. We could call this paternalism, but more exactly it is the paternalism of the truth for its children. Imagine a universal agreement by all possible *rational* members of a community that a lie is required. Even the dead say Amen.

What is it that makes a master (or a friend) mad—how do we tell? It would not be sufficient that a master orders one against one's wishes, for every master (or mastering part of the person) will sometime do that; if ordering against a wish never happened, we could never tell there was a master. So it must be that the mad master is either one who orders against one's own good, or against the master's good. In the case of the delusional friend these are identical: the master (oneself) is believing that a certain act (chopping up one's wife and children, e.g.) is the good thing to do for oneself, when it is not. Such a situation is what Socrates in book 2 is calling "the true lie"—holding in the soul (the most sovereign part of oneself) an untruth about the most sovereign things (what the good is for oneself would certainly be among those). The most sovereign, mastering part is ordering activity in accord with a false idea of the good; the master orders against the good of both the master and the slave because here the master and slave are one: the person who wants his weapons back.

But "*having* a mad master" pictures the true lie *in* the soul as a power originating *outside* the person; it pictures the splitting of the master and the self. Such splitting reminds us of two things. First, that Plato must imagine a true self and a nonself in the one person. That is, his psychological theory has to have a prescriptive or telic aspect—there is a right way or a true way for

the soul to be; that true nature can be defected from.²⁶ Freud's famous statement "Where Id is Ego shall be,"²⁷ echoes a similar psychic splitting and prescriptive or telic psychology; neither thinker produces a merely descriptive psychology. Secondly, let us recall that mimetic infection, the mirroring of the external world by the person, shares this picture of division. The mimetic appears as from the outside, in society (so master and self are distinct), but it becomes oneself (so master and self are one); thus the mimetic is that in which the distinction between self and others dissolves. Thus does man become mob.²⁸ Afterwards, perhaps, she wakes up—as Agave does. The person both is and is not the mad master; the person is master (insofar as he himself acts) and mastered (insofar as what has been seen and heard has taken him up—like a wave). In this way the mimetic seems a fall into madness. It is a fall out of self-mastery (presuming one has achieved it) into "the great beast" (493a–b). If there could be a truly divine mimetic (cf. 500c–d), it would share this double picture of mastery, but be turning the soul to her own good, perhaps even without her noticing it. "But there is much calumny (*diabolé*) abroad" (500d).²⁹

In the later discussion with the madman—Thrasymachus—Plato uncovers more exactly (without saying) what he means by a mad master: if the true master of an art always works for the good of that over which he has the art (342b, 347a), the mad master must be the one who either does not work for the benefit of the patient or works for her harm—both possibilities are covered by Thrasymachus' definition of mastery as "setting down rules for *its own* advantage" (338e, 341a). The first is either ignoring or ignorance of the good of the other (a sort of passive euthanasia of the good); the second is aiming at the destruction of the good of the other (murder of the good). The madness of the first involves a treating of the other as mere means to the master's advantage, even if some benefit accidentally accrues to her. Thrasymachus seems the more radical madman and master: that he intends to carry some "deserved punishment" out on the head of Socrates in return for teaching him (337d) marks him as just this type, though, as not unusual with madness, it is not precisely clear what benefit his punishment of Socrates will provide Thrasymachus.³⁰ Perhaps it is merely to exhibit his power; the benefit to the master is precisely the activity of power, of working one's will, no matter what this *libido dominandi* accomplishes. This activity of power he shares with the "euthanizing" master, so it seems that madness is precisely that "working of one's will for the sake of working one's will" that would best be expressed in Augustine's terms: *libido dominandi*.³¹

In the characters of book 1 we can see two kinds of ignorance in the soul about something of the utmost importance: justice. We might, after a distinction in *Laws* (863c), call them the simple and the double version of ignorance; they are not entirely distinct, but share a slope. Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus are shown not to know what justice is by Socrates' book 1

arguments; in their ignorance of a correct *logos* they are like Meno's slave boy who does not know how to construct a square the area of which will be double the square Socrates draws (84a). But there are significant differences between these. Meno's slave boy shows ignorance at its simplest and least problematic—for his ignorance is not about something of much importance and is a problem in which he has no vested interest (or, to speak with Freud, any natural or practiced cathexis); he has probably never considered it before.

Like Meno's slave boy (who momentarily thinks he knows the answer to this brand new problem, 82e) Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus all think they know the answer to Socrates' question about justice. Unlike the slave boy, the problem is neither new to them, nor one to which they have not been practicing some type of answer for some time; thus each has some more or less strongly vested interest in his answer. The youngest and the oldest, Polemarchus and his father, are led less and more quickly to see that they do not know what justice is. Cephalus has been living for a long time in accord with his mistaken idea; though he immediately sees that it cannot be as he says, he is strongly attached to it by that continual practice and thought and cannot abandon it at this late date. After a moment he goes back to doing what he has always done—paying a debt (in the form of a sacrifice to the gods)—and does not return to the discussion to take matters up with more exactness. Noticing an error is insufficient to provoke even any further examination by him; in fact, he might well fear such, as he has been practicing his error for decades. Cephalus here illustrates but one way a character may be ineligible for participation in the “mysteries” of philosophy: the spark of recognition of a truth or problem goes no further because of decades of practice at mere acceptance of “what is said.” The habit of sitting in the cave has become an inability to stand up and turn around; the *diabolê* owns him. The pleasure of the familiar has buried all desire for truth. Callicles presents another ineligibility: unwillingness not to follow his own will. In both cases the character's ineligibility is self-instantiated and self-confirmed; we may wish to excuse Cephalus as mimetically hardened into his inaccessibility, whereas Callicles seems to choose his. But in both cases, as Thomas Szlezak has said, it is a moral (i.e., passionate) state that precludes cognitive progress, even though Socrates exhibits a polymorphous capacity to “conduct philosophical inquiry on different levels [depending on] the partner [and] his needs and capacity for [comprehension].”³² This problem is explicitly repeated when Socrates begins to distinguish opinion from knowledge, which starts in book 5 and carries us through book 7. Of the person who does not really discern that he has only got an opinion Socrates suggests we need a way “to calm him down and persuade him gently, concealing the fact that he is not in a healthy condition” (476d–e). A story about an imaginary third person hides the fact that the interlocutor himself has something at stake. A directly cogni-

tive cure is impossible for this kind of ignorance (including Cephalus, Callicles, Adeimantus and Thrasymachus). For Meno's slave boy, on the other hand, a directly cognitive cure is possible; he has not built up any peculiar cathexes.

Socrates' interaction with Cephalus is, then, but the first, and lightly drawn, illustration in *Republic* of what Cushman pointed out in *Therapeia: Plato's Conception of Philosophy*:³³

Formal refutation is [not] able or fitted to encounter and extirpate the ignorance Plato deploras. Theory runs upon non-theoretical reefs submerged and hidden below the surface of purely inferential discussion. These are the unacknowledged, but decisive, premises of thought. They disclose foundational preferences to which the mind is committed before inference gets under way. . . . Logical inference and deduction ignore the first principles of thought and move unsuspectingly above the level where decision has already been made and both consent and commitment given. Accordingly Plato perceived that a "gentle" transformation of perspective must be induced.

Such a one as Cephalus has been charmed by speech, time, pleasant practice—including those practices enforced and encouraged within his adopted polis—and perhaps a little fear (cf. 413a–e), to be such a one as reason may break over, but, apparently, no longer move.

Illustrating the same problem, Polemarchus comes to the defense of his father's idea but finally allows that he "no longer knows what [he] did mean, [though he still holds] the opinion that justice is helping friends and injuring enemies" (334b). From this, Socrates moves him to agree that, "it is never just to injure anyone" (335e). Polemarchus' ignorance is like Meno's slave boy's in this: he can be moved by *aporia* and argument to see his error and to grasp a better answer (84d–85c)—or at least to seek it. Even though (unlike the slave boy with geometry) he has been practicing some view of justice like his father's for all his life, and as a result has some practiced passional ties (or cathexes) to the answer he gives, as well as to the original giver of that answer, he can be moved by the story and argument (eventually) to give it up and do battle on Socrates' side for the newly won truth (335e). At least he *says* so, and though he later presents/reveals some highly cathectable delights opposed to such justice, he does not abandon further discussion. He is not too old to change his mimetic patterns; perhaps he is young enough even to begin to philosophize rather than merely gossip about *doxa*.

Thrasymachus is also mistaken, but in the face of argument which first shows him to be flummoxed (340a), then is itself something from which he wishes to escape (344d), and finally that under which he is discovered to be perfectly naked and embarrassed (350d), he clearly abandons *logos* without abandoning his position: his soul will not fight on Socrates' side, but still holds that justice is the advantage of the strong. He is not truly persuaded, as

Glaucon will suggest at the start of book 2. If we call this ignorance “double” that of Meno’s slave, it agrees with the explanation given in *Laws*: “because he partakes not only of ignorance [as in the simple case] but also of the opinion that he is wise, and believes he knows completely things about which he knows nothing” (863c). Polemarchus has been educated better than Meno’s slave, has practiced what he thinks he knows before being asked, so he is on the slope of double ignorance, but not as far down as Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus exhibits a stronger—at least arational, if not antirational—cathexis for the position he introduces.³⁴ This is the worst case of the lie in the soul about things that are: delusion supported and defended by arational powers in the soul. Well, not quite the worst version of it: Thrasymachus is not unsalvageable, as Callicles is, for the former still blushes and answers slowly, the latter neither blushes (482e–483c) nor wishes to answer at all (497b, 519d). Callicles wishes to be outside of speech and merely exercise power (483d). Philosophical argument alone cannot break the hold of Thrasymachus delusion: the golden cord of this divine puppet is too weak to accomplish any action against the cords of iron and bronze (*Laws* 644d–645b); such as he need music, stories, true-breeding fictions to start the harder cords moving more correctly. Thrasymachus prefers to give up answering as he thinks, just as Callicles does—and then refuses to answer at all; in doing so both are willing the abandonment of *logos*—and Callicles is more perfect in this.³⁵ They are willing to unmake themselves in exactly that particular which makes them *divine* puppets: “the best thing about them” (*Laws* 803c)—the golden cord of calculation and *logos*. Thrasymachus suffers from the “desire to be impious” (cf. *Laws* 887a), which we will see later is definitive of the tyrannic soul (*Rep* 573c). Again, the *libido dominandi* appears as the one thing that is good for its own sake to this kind of soul. In these extreme cases the soul clearly needs something other than reason to break it from its much loved master (a master with which each—erroneously—identifies himself). So *Gorgias* ends with Socrates telling stories. Modern politics (Hobbes, et al.) threatens death; Thrasymachus admits this works on sheep—he needs stronger medicine.

Returning to the less violent case of delusion; if Polemarchus is the heir to everything Cephalon, then the father’s confession of gratitude at release from his mad masters should also be read as a prayer that his son be saved from such late born releases—which lateness perhaps requires Cephalus to be sacrificing to the gods for the rest of the night and explains why he cannot find release from his overturned notion of justice to attend to further discussion. The inheritance of the argument is Cephalus’ parting gift but, in order to fulfill the father’s will, verbal lies may well have to be told to the son(s). The father, by his confession, unwittingly, prays for this practice—exactly the opposite of what he preached: tell the truth. Is his not an exhibition of a well-hidden madness: one’s unwitting prayers are true and good, while one’s

accepted principles are mistaken and—in the case of the madman at the door—deadly? Again, if Plato has a “secret” doctrine, it is here revealed in an agreement between Cephalus and Socrates: The mad and the good secretly agree—though the former know it not; this is what we should expect if morality is based on universal rational principles: the mad will not know when they are following them or answering in accord with them. They know not who their friend is; their friend is the rational principle: it alone can know the good of the other parts of the soul, or of the whole person, and so work for its good (cf. 582d–583a). All other principles are therefore mad when they are masters—they can only aim at their own satisfaction, which (as we see in the case of Thrasymachus) cannot even get clear about *how* that is their good. It is unlikely that such a one can be cured directly by rational argument, for the principles already in place are mistaken and deadly. They do not allow ground for the good principal *per se*; some purification, some catharsis is necessary, some other kind of cure or entry for the principle than pure sentential logic is required—a noble fiction, a *mythos*, at least a musical prelude. Polemarchus and Cephalus both *accept the story* without argument or rational adumbration. The light of the good breaks briefly through their habit. It is apparent that *logos* alone is insufficient; some *mousikê* is required.³⁶

At this point we can summarize some wide matters of agreement. First, we should note how ancient and modern concepts of delusion fit together. Like Freudian delusion, the true lie is *a falsity which is believed and lived by the speaker*; this false story *has detrimental effects on the person’s happiness* and frequently makes him perceive as good things which will either hinder his achievement of happiness or destroy it entirely (like slaughtering his wife and children, or alternatively, believing a religion as Freud says). Both ancient and modern might well agree that such a soul is not living her own life, but a lie; not knowing what one’s own life is is Socrates’ reason why “the unexamined life is not worth living for man.”³⁷ Secondly, the believed untruth is frequently guarded, if not originally emplaced by a (more or less strong) arational power or cathexis (or several), probably oft strengthened by habit, disallowing any impetus of reason. This, in turn, requires (thirdly) a doctor of the soul, in either age, who *aims to cure or render harmless* the mad master(s), where cure means that the patient comes to know and become capable of the truth about her psyche and its happiness, and rendering harmless means preventing the delusion from carrying out its work in the world and the person’s life, even if full knowledge of the truth about the soul and its happiness is not yet achieved. The aim in both cases is to set the psyche free from delusion (or, so much as possible, its effects) so that she may live the life that is truly her own—rather than that of the mad master. Socrates says that this can be done by telling well-constructed verbal lies (fictions); Plato seconds his motion by writing dialogues. Freud prescribes psychoanalysis;

art is merely a sop to Cerberus (or, at best, the picture thought of a psychoanalytic truth). Fourth, the ancients and the moderns would *expect every polity to attempt to prevent* (certainly not encourage) *such delusions* in the raising up of its children, as Freud's arguments against religion and in favor of early childhood sex education imply.³⁸ Both Socrates (in all his efforts) and Freud (in his) consider such curing or preventing to be good for the person as well as society, and both thereby imply not only that a person can be mistaken about what happiness is and how to achieve it, but also that there is a therapeutic duty (variably fulfilled) when facing the madman at the door. For, "all the gods and men abhor [the true lie] . . . , and would least of all accept it" (382a–b). Finally, both ancient and modern *recognize the master as a mad one in that its rule is destructive to that over which it is master*—in this case, the soul or the culture; for the true master always rules for the good of that over which it rules, and the truest master would never err in such matters (340e, 342b, c, e). But, then, in order to recognize such delusion, we must already know the good at which the good master aims.

This last point implies that, a "thin" theory of justice based upon merely formal procedures is not a plausible solution in a world where delusion exists, and that for at least two reasons. First, it is itself delusional to believe that the true or good can arise out of a compromise among delusional interlocutors; secondly, rational formal procedures alone can neither hold nor release such souls under Plato's view of delusion, or the concomitant consideration that mimesis produces the prerationally effective *kosmos* or order within which all reasoning occurs. So we turn to the further political ramifications of this consideration of illusion and delusion.³⁹

Some Implications for (Post)Modern Political Theory

Because the delusions we are concerned with are those about the soul itself (or city) and in particular its happiness or justice, these can never be mere intellectual mistakes—like one about the shape of the earth or its placement in the solar system, or how to double a square; they are intrinsically passionate or emotional as well. They involve what Freud calls a cathexis of their objects—however impossible or self-destructive; more Platonically, they sit on practices which have become mimetically powerful before our awareness has come to consider them—we have been sitting there since childhood. Both Freud and Plato share a teleological presupposition: *psychê* aims at happiness; it therefore naturally desires what presents itself as an element of, or necessary prerequisite to, happiness.⁴⁰ These matters are not merely matters of knowledge of what happiness and its elements are, for the emotional or passionate cathexis that is built up in ignorance or error has a life of its own, as Plato, Aristotle and some moderns (Freudians, at least) see. We should not think, however, that their agreement about the concept of delusion

or the fact of psyche's natural teleology, or even the constitutional slavery habitual passions can exercise, entails a corresponding agreement between Freud and Socrates or Plato (or Aristotle) about what happiness is, or what the soul is (or mimesis, or reason . . .). This, in turn, implies that if they do not agree about what happiness and psyche are, it is absolutely necessary that each regard the other as delusional; to each the other must be the madman at the door. Further, if there is such a thing as delusion, *we* can be absolutely certain that at least one of these thinkers (or sets of thinkers) suffers from it: at least one of them is the madman at *our* door—or perhaps already inside it, shouting out the names of shadows.

Such problems of psyche apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to regimes of city, or we might say, to cultures. We should be surprised if anyone would deny this connection, for if it is the case that our first learning is mimetic, and that our learning and behavior continues to be shaped by the family, neighborhood and broader culture in which we live (and even for adults this often continues “without their awareness”), we are being shaped not to or by any noetically validated truths, but to and by the callings out of our particular culture cave (514a–517e), or the roaring and purring of whatever great beast happens to be prowling our streets (492b–493d). Cultures and cities are not the creation of pure rational angels, nor are they formed out of rocks (435e), so delusion or truth flows both ways: from cultures into souls, and from souls into cultures. Just so, in the mimetic, the division between self and others is dissolved. Thus, it is because we are mimetic beings that this Socratic argument is not the fallacy of division (or composition).⁴¹ This argument clearly has politically incorrect consequences, but we must be friends of the truth more than friends of any party, program or culture. To be brief, if individuals and perhaps whole societies (or at least subcultures within a society) can be deluded, then some political philosophies are so also. If societies or cultures can't be deluded, then neither can individuals be so. That both souls and cities can be delusional is another thesis shared by Plato and Freud.⁴² It follows that, if one's political world is built on a principle that is mad, considering which side of any question within it one should take is not only missing the important point, for it cannot (in principle) be answered justly, but every attempt to answer also encourages and *mimetically rehearses* the principles of *the infecting madness*.

It is interesting to note that the modern (intellectualist) view of mimesis is historically linkable to modern political theory. Hobbes, for example, contrasts the arts of man with nature in the strongest possible way. In *Leviathan*, he imagines the state as a *wholly artificial* invention⁴³ (rather than natural to human beings, but shaped in various ways by them as Plato and Aristotle) based on a *fully rational agreement* among its members to cede part of their *original natural* right and liberty (which extends to all things, dependent on the individual's power to act upon them) to the sovereign,

foreseeing that otherwise their lives shall be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.⁴⁴ His consideration of the artistic (what we have been calling the mimetic) as a *wholly artificial, cognitively ordered process* distinguishes his idea of art from the ancient position that mimesis is itself *a natural precognitive activity* of human beings and that artists shape (more or less rationally) just such workings to achieve the ends of their art. His explanation of how Nature is imitated by Art and that Art creates the Commonwealth on the first page of *Leviathan* exemplifies his *wholly* conceptualist or intellectualist understanding of art and imitation: natural being is to automaton as state of nature is to Leviathan. He admits, therefore only two sorts of train of thought and imagination: that directed by some desire and design, and that “unguided, without design, and inconstant”—entirely accidental and due frequently to the distempers of the body.⁴⁵ There is no indication here of the kind of entraining the ancients called the mimetic. He does talk briefly of imitation in chapter 29, but rather than mimesis itself being the nature of man, he considers that neighbors provoke the “desire for novelty,” and *this* is part of the “constitution of man’s nature” (225); either this desire or some mistakenly conceived opinion (226) *leads to* imitation. In both cases the firstness, and the “working without their awareness” which the ancients held as absolutely central to the concept of the mimetic, is denied.⁴⁶

Modern political philosophy’s repression of ancient mimesis, which in both Plato and Aristotle is repeatedly linked to discussions of *children* and *paideia* as well as the arts, is thereby of a piece with a second element of modern political theory, namely its treatment of politics as founded (morally if not historically) upon a social contract between *fully independent and rational adults* which aims at (according to Hobbes) a peace which will allow “felicity”—“a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another.”⁴⁷ That is to say, modern political theory starts from a myth of possessive individualism. By this I mean, “the conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them . . . [and] free inasmuch as he is proprietor of his person and capacities.”⁴⁸ This myth is at one with the frequent complaint that the guardians won’t be happy (419a, 466a)⁴⁹ because they wouldn’t have anything *of their own*, a complaint which Socrates says flows from “a senseless and juvenile opinion about happiness that will drive him to take everything in the city for his own by means of his power” (466b–c) and leads each to drag “into his own house whatever he has power to acquire apart from others, and another into his own house” (464d). This myth is not only present in modern political philosophy from Hobbes to Locke (and their later liberal developments), but it is also strengthened by the existentialist influences of the last half of the last century.⁵⁰ It is, then, no surprise to find it alive and well in contemporary politics, exhibiting its foundational status in many popular political debates—about abortion, education, marriage, euthanasia, as well as

the more usual and permanent debates about taxation and natural resources use. It hangs together with a view that those who matter are those who can vote—“the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about.”⁵¹ Such debates mimetically strengthen the delusion of possessive individualism precisely because that delusion is the framework (the *opseōs kosmos*) within which the arguments of *both* sides are presented.⁵² Whatever distinctions reason may be allowed to make within this framework, *the framework itself is mimetically rehearsed*, renewed, and reaffirmed. This is the “true lie” that works of art must not be allowed to lead us—or the children—into. But perhaps I have gone too far in calling the modern myth the delusory one. Let us approach the issue as an open question. *Republic* does.

Socrates’ Polity vs. Thrasymachus’/Hobbes’/ the (Post)Modern Polity

Socrates starts his defense of justice from a purposefully and exactly opposite consideration to that of the modern possessive individualist: “A city, as I believe, comes into being because each of us isn’t self-sufficient, but is in need of much. Do you believe there is another beginning to the founding of a city?” (369b) Aristotle agrees that, “the state is a creation of nature” and “is by nature prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part” (*Pol* 1253a 1, 18), even if the family and village exist earlier (*Pol* 1252b30–33). What is surprising is that neither Adeimantus, nor Glaucon, nor Thrasymachus, pauses at this Socratic question. This is so even though Glaucon has just rebuilt Thrasymachus’ position from book I in no uncertain terms: the city and “justice” *come to be as an agreement* among the weak sheep to escape the wolf. The solitary strong man, as Thrasymachus thinks himself to be, “the man who is really a man, would never set down a compact with anyone not to do injustice and not to suffer it. He’d be mad” (359b). According to him, the city is an unnatural and unmanly, wholly artificial invention, suitable for herd animals and those who suffer delusion.⁵³ It is clearly not necessary to enter this artificial agreement; to do so is madness whenever it is not weakness.⁵⁴

Thrasymachus is a stronger thinker than the moderns, who—if they are more sanguine about the natural human passions (Hume comes to mind)—still hold politics to be entirely instrumental: artificial, but not madness.

On this view, the political task is to ensure the way of our future desires through the public construction of individual freedom. Politics is an artificial system that provides utilities like security and wealth which can be put to any and all private uses. Interest group politics determines the distribution . . . and the burdens.⁵⁵

The difference between Thrasymachus and even the less sanguine moderns, like Hobbes, is that Thrasymachus has not been gossiped to equality.⁵⁶ Since by denying the sanity of the social artifice as well as any natural equality among men he is more radical than the moderns, let us imagine a sort of city set up on Thrasymachan grounds by contrast Socrates'. First, consider Socrates' city: because we are all in need of much, Socrates says not only that cities are natural, but that the best arrangement follows nature as well—"each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but rather differs in his nature; different men are apt for the accomplishment of different jobs" (370a–b). So, the natural arrangement of a society is that in which each person does that task most fit for his nature, supplying his (naturally) finer and more plentifully produced needful goods or services to the common store, from which he takes what he needs and is supplied by others;⁵⁷ further, Socrates holds that there is some good that even those mentally or physically not up to snuff (i.e., not equal by nature) can supply (370b–371e).⁵⁸ All these citizens, depending on each other, will have obvious respect and care for each other, since what each does is necessary to the good of all and each of the others; they will live happy lives of mutual respect, sweet intercourse, and peace, which Socrates presents both without (372a,b) and then with (372c) dessert. Their leisure, which will become plentiful, will be spent in this "sweet intercourse and hymning the gods:" this is the peace human nature was made for.

Glaucon calls that city a "city of pigs" (372d) and the great majority of scholars echo his complaint that it is insufficient for human nature; a longer argument for the opposition will be taken up later (chapter 5). But a city that spends its peace filled time in sweet intercourse and the praise of god (372b) was sufficient for Augustine (*City of God* 19) and I trust it might have been so for Socrates.⁵⁹ If it is so, then Plato's dialogue aims to institute and thereby bring us back to that happy city's liturgy, through his mimetic art; Socrates does precisely this at this first festival of Bendis—where everyone misses not only dessert, but wine, women, horseraces and (if taken literally) song, to say nothing of dinner. Looking back over the centuries, we should say Plato has been eminently successful in creating such a liturgy, and recalling us into its happy, healthy life, for we are in that city even now—with Plato and Augustine and uncountable others: sweet intercourse, and praise of the god(dess). In any case, the city that arises from human nature, according to Socrates, will be this way, and war only comes about by "surrendering to the unlimited acquisition of wealth, and overstepping the boundary of the necessary" (372d). War, then, is *not at all natural*, except as a necessary result—of overstepping nature's necessity.⁶⁰ Like Augustine, Socrates holds that we are "social by nature, . . . unsocial by corruption;" and this corruption is self-inflicted, infecting the whole body of humanity (*City of God* 12.27). Girard clarifies how this infection is spread through mimesis, a mimetism

which acts without reason, which speaks through each one, but is not really the *logos* of anyone: *diabolê*—whose name is multitude. Against this “what private training can hold out . . . and not be carried by the flood wherever it goes?” (492c) Something divine, then, must happen (368a).

The Thrasymachan-Hobbesian city, by contrast, starts from the idea that war is natural; *bellum omnia contra omnes*. This origin requires the human being be thought of as fully self-sufficient or autarchic. This is the *archê* of modern politics. An artifice is necessary to end, prevent or mitigate war; that artifice is the polity. If, like Thrasymachus but unlike Hobbes, we admit the natural difference in strength and skill among human beings, this city will “naturally” arrange itself in accord with power (as Thrasymachus had said, 338c–e); natural skill and ability for a task will not be the decisive issue, but ability to work one’s will upon others is. Hobbes merely denies any great difference in capacity to accomplish this, but the origin of society from the *bellum omnia contra omnes* implies also the same *telos* as Thrasymachus, thus is such a city dominated by the *libido dominandi*. Its citizens will hardly be imbued with mutual respect and care for each other, as each aims by nature to seize the goods or person of the other and is merely restrained by the artifice of law.⁶¹ Even this restraint is insufficient to insure our comfort, for each one of us has the Gyges ring of language (360a), which can help make us invisible, and those of us who are less than completely successful at such invisibility will either be, or have available to us, “teachers of persuasion” whose services will be employed when the courts of law come calling (365d). We will, of necessity, think highly of such wonder workers, for we will (naturally, given the artifice) have great need of them (405a–c). If we insist “that any universally acceptable concept of justice must be ‘thin’ and purely procedural,”⁶² it is naïve to think a Thrasymachan person (still less, a corporation) will not have sufficient resources at their disposal to carry the procedures past the span of a less well endowed complainant’s life. Therefore, that is precisely what the procedure will become. Peace, such as this city gives it, should be called a balance of terror even if it is not mutually assured destruction. Terrorism, then, is not a new political reality; it is the fundamental face of modern political theory showing itself: modern politics is based on the fear of death. Perhaps it is madness, but its logic is perfect. There is no way out if we accept the first principle of Thrasymachus (to say nothing of Hobbes—who is dialectically weaker). The “lone nut” terrorist is the *archê* of modern politics: solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short—it is no surprise that he should return *in propria persona*.⁶³

Even Plato scholars sometimes miss this most important difference. For example, G. R. F. Ferrari says “the city is artificial, a creation of human beings; the philosopher, as a human being, is a natural creature.”⁶⁴ This is mistaken on both counts. Socrates, like Aristotle, clearly implies that cities are natural, since no man is self-sufficient; *how* the cities are organized is

human invention (when it is not simply mimetic, which is also natural to us)—there are many kinds of city, and of different sizes too, but *that* we have them is entirely natural. Similarly, man as mere natural creature is not a philosopher; though each of us has a philosophic element, it requires a considerable practice and artifice to become a philosopher—as Socrates will argue in book 7. It requires, first, a certain mimetic enculturation. It is the same way with every virtue: these arise from our nature in accord with mimetic practices and (more or less) reflective legal artifice. Both human being and city are this strange combination of natural being and artifice: both *are* natural and *have* a natural end, but unlike other natural things like acorns and oak trees, neither city nor soul can achieve its end—happiness—without considerable *and correct* artifice. Achieving nature’s end, happiness, is the natural principle of measure for each artificial shaping of nature—constitution, poem, or person; many fail (cf. *NE* 1103b3–6). As Aristotle says about mimesis: it is natural to man *and* artists reflectively shape it to achieve its natural purpose—catharsis, and some shapings (artifices) are better than others for just the reason that they achieve the natural end better (cf. *Poetics*, chapters 4, 6, 13, and 14). We may draw up a summary comparison between these two views (see table 1.1).

Neither Thrasymachus nor Socrates explicitly draws out the Thrasymachan view; we are given only its *arché* or origin: the weak sheep get together; some of the details appear in Glaucon and Adeimantus’ reconstruction, or

Table 1.1. Socrates’ City v. Thrasymachus’/Hobbes’ City

Socrates	Point at Issue	Thrasymachus/Hobbes
Not self-sufficient; arises out of mimesis of/in society	Individual’s relation to	Self-sufficient, autonomous; owns his person and talents free of society
which exists by nature	Society	which exists by artifice
according to talents of labor according to need of goods	Division in society	according to power (with the aid of lawyers and political clubs)
Each contributes to good of all; from each according to ability, to each acc. to need.	Relation among citizens	Each takes what he can within the boundaries set for all, helped by lies, lawyers and political societies.
“sweet intercourse,” mutual need and respect, real peace	Social result	balance of terror; peace as the world gives it
“hymning the gods”	Use of leisure	war against others
Good for each and all	“Look” of Justice	Might makes right

Source: Author created.

additions and answers to questions regarding Socrates' healthy, and, thereafter, purified cities. We are given explicit details of Socrates' contrasting city. Socrates does not, for example, explicitly draw the conclusion that the artificial society of Thrasymachus will spend its leisure in war. In *Laws*, however, the Cretan, whose principle of city formation shares the Thrasymachan-Hobbesian view of the permanent natural warfare of each against all others, does say that the city is always preparing for war (626e–626e). In *Republic*, Glaucon plainly admits that it is “completely necessary” (373e) that his desire for further goods—and “many kinds of many of them” (373a), a sign of multiplying heads in his soul—leads to war. He is undisturbed by this consequence. In a precise political echo of Glaucon's psyche, a city which does not have guardians making laws for the good of all is really a megalopolis; “it is happiness,” Socrates says, to think such as “one thing” (422e): each family, each person, each element chooses for itself. It is the happiness of blissful hallucinatory delusion.⁶⁵ There is a deeply important principle beneath this claim: no shared *telos*, no shared being; beings are defined by their ends, thus defining different human cities. Ends are visible in the being's *archê*.

From forth these fatal loins, two diametrically opposed, mutually contradictory “cities” grow naturally, each from its respective seed principle or *archê*; but rather than vote about which one we prefer (some of us would lie about that), or consider which one is likely closest to our own polity, let us try to consider which can be true. Thrasymachus and Hobbes (among others) presume that the solitary independent man is the ideal origin of the city, which comes about by the agreement of several (weaker, adds Thrasymachus) such. Socrates (and Aristotle) think this is not merely unlikely, but absolutely impossible. So, if such a human being as Thrasymachus imagines is *possible*, even as a *telos*, if not *archê*, then Socrates is *necessarily mistaken* about the foundations of politics; if such a person is *impossible*, then modern political theory is necessarily a *delusion*: a cloud castle with no possible foundation in reality.

The truth is that Thrasymachus has forgotten his infancy, his childhood, his youth, as well as the fact that everything he thinks he knows has come to him through language and habit. He was not served up for dinner as a young suckling (as once suggested to the Irish by Mr. Swift), nor yet to some honored guest as a child (as Aristotle says some barbarians do, *NE* 1148b22); rather he became, first through mimesis, a speaker of Greek; he learned how to argue, perhaps how to hunt or garden, as well as how to wipe his own—nose (343a). From an *entirely dependent* infant he has become an adult, carrying about within himself testimony that he is still *not an independent being at all*: he speaks; we understand him. How does that work? Is it his invention? Through language the entire common store of human knowledge opens to him, none of it his own. He can, say, hunt, and cook his own food,

but such practices—hunting, cooking, weapons making and their use—are marks of the permanent presence of what he owes to others, of his utter dependence upon society, of his not being—even in his prime—self-sufficient.

So then, that Adeimantus answers Socrates' question about whether there is any principle (*archê*) for city founding other than human non-self-sufficiency with *the certainty* of “none at all” (369b) need not be attributed to forgetfulness of what he has just defended, having less wit than his brother (who also doesn't complain), or merely allowing it for the sake of getting Socrates' argument going. In fact, that his first less than absolute answer in this series (“apparently,” 369e) comes when Socrates suggests that the indispensable minimum is four or five, might well be because this seems too small a number for our neediness.⁶⁶ Adeimantus' answers return to certainty (370b–e, 371a–e) when Socrates continues building.

Thrasymachus, like the round men in Aristophanes' speech in *Symposium* (who “strove to overcome their origins” by making war on the gods), denies both his origin and his continuing status. He is *Republic*'s picture of Eros, “a fundamentally tyrannic desire, which . . . consists, ultimately, in a desire to be like the cosmic gods.”⁶⁷ He is the precise instantiation of that original hubristic Aristophanic being, bowling through the world, sowing his seed *in the earth*, from which beings just like himself are born—presuming real human beings can be born that way. Figuratively, Thrasymachus does engender: his *speech and action engender a mimetic* competition to be like him—prove oneself to be the strong by obtaining obedience, money, and praise (336c–d, 337d, 338c). His words and actions are his seed, and by them he infects his culture—the very ground he walks on, though the beginning *he* imagines for human culture is totally impossible. He can't even infect things on his own—he uses language to do it.

The possessive individualist *archê* of modern political theory is, then, an impossibility; it is even more impossible for such to be one's *telos*. There is no such wholly independent human seed or fruit, nor can there be such: we are always already the social animal, our good is necessarily social, necessarily and always tied up with others: not only do we not *become* any kind of I without others, we *are not* so now, or ever, either. Modern political philosophy, based on the idea of bargaining from an original position of independence, is a delusion. Not only does it not touch the ground at any point; it is *impossible* for it to touch the ground of human reality. Furthermore, “to derive justice from a contract of this sort is to regard it as a good thing only by way of its rewards—that is, the reward of not suffering” pain, harm, poverty, nastiness, brutality and quick death.⁶⁸ If justice is good for its own sake, then this kind of argument can *never* get there; it can't even get to the position of seeing this for-its-own-sake *possibility* for justice.⁶⁹ Ironing out

the details of specific arguments among these is a philosophical neurosis: it keeps going around and around within the same mad circle.

To continue briefly and more pointedly regarding our nearer contemporaries: First, if Socrates is correct that such political delusion as we have been discussing is a human impossibility, any theory of justice founded upon the principle that “all coercively enforceable political decisions must be *formulated* and be *justifiable* in a language that is equally intelligible to all citizens”⁷⁰ is also *not possible*. If some people are deluded, Socrates is clearly correct to think that we must tell them a verbal lie to bring them closer to the truth about what justice is in a society, but neither the formulation nor the justification that appeals to such a one will necessarily be sharable with everyone else. In fact, different more specific delusions will require different cures. It *may* be possible to produce a formulation and justification for a particular law or political venture that will be found intelligible to the deluded, and be seen by the nondeluded (e.g., the philosopher kings) as a formulation and justification which presents as much of the truth as possible to that particular delusion,⁷¹ but to hold that a just society must be built “exclusively on public arguments that claim to be *equally accessible* to all persons”⁷² is out of touch with reality if some citizens are living in a true lie—like possessive individualism.

That Rawls’ original justification was a *mythos* about people living behind a veil of ignorance⁷³ does seem like a formulation equally accessible to all, but readers of Plato (and Freud) might ask why it is necessary to poetize a narrative here; *why start with a verbal lie*; why found one’s polity on a poetic illusion? A realist (like Thrasymachus) might refuse to accede to a politics starting from such a fiction: get a wet nurse to wipe your nose (343a). If I am correct, Plato *could* explain Rawls’ originating fiction as a necessity to escape a certain kind of delusion. When all of us see ourselves placed in a cosmos other than the one we think we are in, we are shaped mimetically by that *opseōs kosmos* to act and choose in a way quite different from what we do under our more normal presumptions; the will works differently there, a passional choice *within the poem* turns us, in feeling, to see differently *in life* because we have been shaped to do so in the poem. But Plato would criticize Rawls’ fiction as not moving the deluded sufficiently from their belief in possessive individualism—the root delusion; in fact, it keeps them in it. Socrates’ own noble lie, quite explicitly, does not allow possessive individualism the least entrance: all are born from the same mother, are already brothers and sisters, have been formed for a communal purpose, have obligations and are raised by and into obligation.⁷⁴

On the other hand, contrary to Popper’s infamous claims, Plato’s and Socrates’ method may be considered a liberal democratic one insofar as *Republic* is the *mimesis of* “an inclusive process of opinion formation” which simulates “the self-binding of free choice based on insight.”⁷⁵ However, as

our very first case (the madman at the door) indicates, the opinion formation and self-binding insight may depend more upon response to a *fiction*—or even precognitive or extracognitive mimesis—than on a rational argument. Furthermore, while his interlocutors clearly require Socrates to “decenter” his perspective (*BNR* 84–86), and the philosopher king’s noble lies’ attempt to shake the deluded from their mistaken center as a more contemporary school would like, it is not the case that the discussion proceeds from or leads to any requirement that politics be “neutral with respect to world views” (*BNR* 78), or that a “truthfulness condition for participation in discourse” (*BNR* 83) is being (or can be) literally fulfilled. Indeed, if there is such a thing as delusion, these requirements are impossible, and a political theory founded upon such requirements is itself delusory.

As a final contrast with our contemporaries, if we attempt to evade the problem of delusion and the true lie by accepting “post-metaphysical thinking . . . , [which] eschews the rationalist presumption that it can itself decide which aspects of . . . doctrines are rational and which irrational,”⁷⁶ then either we are denying that there is such a thing as delusion or we believe that there is such a thing, but it is not known by us, and so the term is of no possible use to us.⁷⁷

A story may shake us from such postmodern *aporiai*: Is the Nazi at the door mad? Perhaps, but we can’t tell—we should give up the presumption of deciding about worldviews; postmetaphysical postmodern political theory holds that we have the duty to decenter our perspective towards his, and the duty to truthfulness in our discourse with him.⁷⁸ *Sed contra*, what *Republic* presents to us is a defense and a mimesis of a discourse in which the speaker (Socrates to his interlocutors, Plato’s poem to us) does decenter his perspective towards his interlocutors (for otherwise the verbal lie will not be accepted) and requires orientation of his discourse toward the truth (otherwise it would not be good or useful), but the truth, for all that, may not appear in the propositions of the discourse; in fact, frequently it will not and can not. As Socrates says later about the Good: such truthful and complete discourse as Habermas and other contemporary political thinkers imagine is not within our present range (506e). If, like Slavoj Žižek and some other postmoderns, we think that it is only through a thorough reconstitution of all our political ideas, and most importantly those of our unconscious fantasies which organize the very structures of social space and our relations within it, that we can even begin to envision any paths of worthwhile political practice or change, then we have not yet caught up to Plato, who not only knew all this, but knew that such a change could not take place through reason’s power acting alone. A mimetic reorientation must prepare the way for any such intellectual process. Therefore he created mimetic solutions. Philosophical essays, on the other hand, are enactments of the disempowered promoting their own contin-

ued disempowerment whenever they are not preaching to a trained choir. Which is this essay, I wonder?

Perhaps we should be more generous. Suppose we treat such modern political (and psychological) stories of origins (in the case of Hobbes, Freud, Locke, Rawls, et al.) or of legitimate political action (in the case of Habermas, Gutmann, *et. al.*) as ideal models (in the latter case), or admittedly fictional (but unbiased!) frameworks from which to build real justice.⁷⁹ In other words, we are to accept them as noble lies. But how do we already know what noble is? How can a lie be noble or good when what it has as its *archê* (or attempts to lead to as its *telos*) is a being who is *certainly not human*, for the possessive individualist idea is not the idea of a human being, but of a god (and not Dionysus, but Athena sprung fully formed). How, then, can these ideals be either ideal *teloi* or origins *for us*? Apparently the “smaller coin” that we are has not yet learned the lesson Zeus meant to teach (according to Aristophanes in *Symposium*); we still think we can grow up (at least) to have the independence of divinities. And why would such beings need a noble lie, like Rawls’ original position or a nonhistorical social contract, to get clear on justice *as adults* or (especially) teachers of political philosophy and ethics? Don’t adults already know what the noble is? There must be significant delusions about if such lies are needed. And the delusions must be deep if such fictions are necessary for origination of our political argument. The thing about delusion that makes poetic fictions necessary is not merely mistaken thinking, but a highly cathected, much practiced, inadequate orientation, in which mimetic framing all thinking gets done; a different mimetic must begin to turn the soul around and out. The modern *confesses that Plato is right about the mimetic* precisely through beginning his own philosophy with a fiction: the veil of ignorance, a social contract—once upon a time.

We may consider that Platonic dialogue can look something like, and does have “some affinity to Habermasian principles . . . of deliberative democracy,” while, because of its Bahktinian polyphony, it also runs the opposite risk of “politicizing philosophy:” turning it into a multivocal contest of the will to power.⁸⁰ But unlike the latter (recently seconded by Habermas above) Platonic dialogue does not eschew allowing decisions about what counts as rational and not. In fact, like other comic poets, Plato *depends* on being able to turn his audience (through the discussion Socrates has with the others) to laughter at some of the agreements, or surprise at the disagreements, among the characters. Such laughter and surprise uncover, and mimetically arouse, a shared emotional substrate already present (though hidden) in the community of readers, as Socrates himself does in rousing the laughter and surprise of Glaucon (e.g., 398c, 509a–c). These reactions do not yet disclose intellectual clarity on the part of those laughing, but they are feeling’s confession of a turn toward some unsought, unexpected and hidden

beauty or truth. Unlike the Habermasian, Platonic dialogue does not expect to be able to be completely truthful with every interlocutor (nor does Socrates), but Plato does shape his dialogues so that they can strike into the true ground of every reader. With or without their awareness.

Remember that we started this discussion from *the event of a fiction*, in which a verbal lie was universally accepted as just—without argument. This shows that we find that the decentering of the philosopher king's speech toward the perspective of a deluded interlocutor *requires* that truthfulness not appear in at least some propositions; but even such decentering does not and cannot eschew deciding what is irrational and what is false. That Plato writes poems indicates what he thinks of a) his Athenian citizens and b) his likely readers beyond that polis. They both need a catharsis, a musical turning and tuning; pure philosophical treatise is unlikely to be successful. Part of Plato's aim is accomplished simply by the fact that we must let go of our own position in order to join the fiction and the world it sets before us; we do not do so when reading a treatise on political philosophy or psychology.

This fact—that entering the fiction loosens our fixations in our much cathected real world—is hinted at when Socrates suggests that the only one allowed near the tyrant (who is the extreme of madness) is the tragic poet: their “hymns to tyranny” (568) charm forth the hubristic eros and lead it into destruction (in their story); perhaps the mimesis of such passions leading by likely incidents to the suffering of the hero will wake the tyrant to his danger and so help cure him of his own *hubris*. So then, far from condemning tragedy or mimetic art here, Socrates is ironically presenting the only possible human cure for him: a powerful noble lie working directly on his hubristic passion. This fact about fictions (that they put us in a world distinct from actual satisfaction of desire, while arousing the same passions we suffer in the real world) explains why someone like Rawls begins an argument on a theory of justice with a fiction of origins: it frees us from decision and action directed to our particular possibilities of satisfaction. Socrates similarly presents his noble fiction, precisely as a *mimetic* support for an already built city which began from an agreement about the nature and aim of politics. *Plato's poem illustrates* thereby that we *are already sharing* in some kind of agreement about good and purpose even whenever we tell a story; just so, his own mimesis has *already called us* into the circle around Socrates at the Bendidia. Plato's dialogue shapes us more exactly within that already recognized agreement, leading us (through mimesis) more deeply into the culture forming around Socrates. Or, perhaps he recalls us to it (having been lead away by Glaucon's interruption—also something in us); or perhaps he aims to move us from the city instantiated in speech toward something as yet unthought of, but implicit in the agreed origin of cities. These are not exclusive.

We can, then, understand the general matter of lying this way: In one case, the child, for example, is (unknowingly) also lying about human agreement and purpose and the good when it (knowingly) tells a fiction to its mother concerning (e.g.) how something got broke; he is taking advantage of the *opseôs kosmos* we (he unknowingly) share regarding human agreement and purpose and the good in both our language and life to invent his own separate good—one apart from the truth language and life would reduplicate. The full truth is impaired in the child: it is not clearly seen or known. Yet it is only by *already* sharing in *language and life* that he can even communicate. On the other hand, mother and friend are using what we still or already share of that *opseôs kosmos* given in life and language to weave the child or madman more closely into the world of shared human good. This is the aim of her stories. How dare she presume she knows what this good is? This maternalism, like the paternalism mentioned above, is a maternalism of and into the truth. The tooth fairy is not part of the truth, but a fiction useful for coming further into the true ordering of goods in the world. Could a human being ever begin to get there in some other way? Something divine must be happening in such stories; that, or we are deceived by something demonic (a mirage, like that created by the child's lying use of words).

That Plato thought that different speeches really were required to differently constituted souls is clear not only from what we have seen (and seen argued for) so far in *Republic*, but also from the theory defended in other dialogues (*Phaedrus*, e.g.) as well as from the practice of Socrates in the dialogues as he discovers what the soul he is talking to is really like; he tells his noble lie in *Republic* after uncovering the soul structure of his main interlocutors. Other delusions appear in the discussion that follows; they too will need cures. There is additionally the explanation Plato gives of his own (lack of) political participation in Athens.

Constitutions, like species of animals, have each their own language—democracy one, oligarchy another. . . . Many people would say they know these languages, but for the most part and with rare exceptions they fall short of understanding them. . . . If anyone hears this and says, “Plato apparently claims to know what is good for a democracy, but though he is at liberty to speak in the assembly and give it his best advice, he has never yet stood up and said a word,” you can answer by saying, “Plato was born late in the life of his native city, and he found the *demos* advanced in years and habituated by former advisors to many practices incompatible with the advice he would give. Nothing would be sweeter to him than to give advice to the *demos* as to a father, if he did not think he would be risking danger in vain and accomplish nothing. (321d–322b)⁸¹

This “habituation” of the *demos* “to many practices incompatible with the advice he would give” is precisely that mimetic *diabolê* we have, intermit-

tently, been pointing to; Socrates saw it too. When it is impossible to speak directly the truth that an auditor needs to know, one must tell stories, make up fictions, become a poet. *So he did*. The dialogues *are* his political involvement in the city of Athens, and in our city too—which is also his. Through his dialogues Plato fulfills the political requirement Socrates lays down for philosopher kings, that “it makes no difference whether [his city] is or will be somewhere, but he minds the things of this city alone and of no other” (592b). Only in this artistic mimetic way can the truest polity come to be—and it does—all too briefly and in a leisure usually generated within far different polities (as was Plato’s)—but across the ages, among all who work—and play—similarly. Plato greets us in our most to be loved city each time we take up and read. How “far can this city grow and still be willing to be one?” (423b) This experience ought to make us consider that children brought up in the healthy city—the city whose leisure is spent in sweet intercourse and praise of the gods (whether Bendis or some unknown god)—would perhaps, unlike our own children, not be chained in a delusive cave.

NOTES

1. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (henceforth in text as *CD*), translated by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961), chapter 2, page 24.

2. *CD* 24, emphasis added.

3. *The Future of an Illusion*, translated by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961): 56.

4. Despite reaching maturity in the age of Victoria, it would be a mistake to think our good doctor has any socially conservative bent at all; his word choices are as revelatory as his statements—more so, if we are analysts. Civilization began its constriction of sexual life with “the prohibition against an incestuous choice of object, and this is perhaps *the most drastic mutilation* which man’s erotic life has in all time experienced” (*CD* 59, my italics); further restrictions to *heterosexual, legitimate* and *monogamous genital* satisfaction are each severally and all together a further source of “serious injustice” (60)—one to which “only the weaklings have submitted” (61). A Freudian reading of this book reveals that it is written by Id, with only occasional interruptions by a guilt producing super ego (97) or more logically demanding ego (94).

5. See *Future of an Illusion*, 36–37. Of both religion and stories he concludes that, “it is better to avoid such symbolic disguisings of the truth in what we tell children and not to withhold from them a knowledge of the true state of affairs” (57).

6. David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978): XII.3.132.

7. Aldous Huxley, *Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: HarperCollins, 1956), 29.

8. Freud is critical of “two main points in the programme for the education of children today . . . : retardation of sexual development and premature religious influence.” He likens them to deforming children’s (especially female) heads “by bandaging them round from their earliest years” (*Illusion*, 60–61); the age of consent could be easily lowered if society would be less repressive, and it would be less repressive if we lowered the age of consent. In any case, early sexual experience is a desideratum. “Many kinds of many of them,” Glaucon might add (373a, cf. 468b–d). These are the real satisfactions.

9. Jacob Bernays’ (Freud’s wife’s uncle’s), *Zwei abhandlungen über die Aristotelische Theorie des Drama* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1880) was a seminal essay in the intellectual

culture of its day; it forcefully presented Aristotelian catharsis as purgation of excessive passions. Art is, then, unhelpful for those whose passions are deficient or at the virtuous mean—Dr. Freud's, I presume.

10. See, for example, Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London: Duckworth, 1986), briefly recounted in his Loeb translation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 17–19. An emotivist explication of catharsis as purifying for the excessive, deficient and virtuous (rather than merely purgative for the excessive) was defended as Aristotle's in my *Love Song*, ch. 1.

11. Mitchell, *Plato's Fable*, 43 n106; italics in original.

12. See the Introduction to this book and *Love Song for the Life of the Mind*, 40–89.

13. As, for example, Gregory Vlastos, "The Theory of Social Justice within the Polis in Plato's *Republic*," *Interpretations of Plato*, ed. H. F. North (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1977: 1–40), who says that while Plato requires "equal right to functional equality in the city" (26), he has no concept of "equal dignity as individuals" (noting Kant), and "rights must start from such substantive equality" (27); or Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 138, who complains that medicinal lying is mere "political expediency" aimed at "collective utility" and exhibits the "totalitarian character of Plato's city." A true Kantian argument would recognize madness as a case of treating oneself as a means only, a kind of maxim with which no rational being can agree—the contradiction of practical reason with itself—but such discussion takes us too far afield.

14. Mitchell, *Plato's Fable*, 22–23, for example; this interpretation is all but universal.

15. Devin Stauffer also points out that the event of Cephalus' concession shows "Cephalus holds another opinion about justice, . . . something even more important than the rule." He rightly suggests that this has something to do with piety—but a piety that runs deeper than Cephalus' as I shall show. See *Plato's Introduction to the Question of Justice* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), 23–25; quote at 25. Unfortunately, Cephalus has neither the courage nor the desire (nor piety) to investigate the source of this blinding and painful insight.

16. It is a festival in Piraeus, perhaps he is just drunk; we wouldn't return his car keys either.

17. Stauffer points out how the discussion with Polemarchus expands the issue from weapons to all private property and its use, and any "unsoundness" of mind not just mad rage (*Plato's Introduction*, 28).

18. We should agree with Malcolm Schofield that such a "binding unity" is Socrates' "'footprint' of the good." See "The Noble Lie," in G. R. F. Ferrari, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 156.

19. The fact that the historical date of the dialogue may require that Cephalus has been dead for some time allows that his return to slumber was terminal. Compare Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers*, 302 n43. Brann, *Music*, 118, also compares the night at Cephalus' house to a stay in the house of Hades/Pluto (the blind god of wealth who will appear by name in discussing oligarchy), and from whose realm Er escapes to save the final (saving) tale. Nails, in *The People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and other Socratics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), regards the dramatic date of the discussion as problematic, suggesting Cephalus is still alive (84, 324–326). The dramatic date is problematic. If it is the first festival of Bendis in 424 (327a), he probably is alive; if after the battle of Megara in 408 (368a), he certainly isn't. Perhaps Plato means him to have precisely such a questionable existence—is the unphilosophical person ever truly alive? Or is he always already dead? Maybe Plato isn't nodding but means even history to signify.

20. The connection between "the madness of the many" and having "fallen in with wild beasts" is made explicitly at 496c–d, just after the acts and desires of the many have been compared to those of "a great strong beast" from which one learns the names (and worth) of things (493b–c). I take it that Plato's comparison of a human being (or the many) to a wild animal (*thêrion*, 336b, *thêria*, 496d) is poetic shorthand for losing one's reason—even though such a body still speaks, as Thrasymachus does. Perhaps he is thinking of mimetic madness—how the many become one beast; even one using words—*diabolê*.

21. Curiously, some readers are blind to this blindness as well. Ramona Naddaff says, "Cephalus' naïve and unreflective interpretations of poetic teachings have indeed resulted in a life that is moderate, pious, just and wise. . . . [He] has *no need* for ethical wisdom to be transmitted through philosophical knowledge." See *Exiling the Poets: The production of cen-*

sorship in Plato's Republic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 139 n9, her italics. There is a poem about things not turning out well for those “decent without philosophy” (619d). C. D. C. Reeve (*Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988] also considers Cephalus’ “character is already as good as Socrates’,” 9).

22. Catherine Zuckert’s *Postmodern Platos* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996) explores how various postmodern philosophers disagree regarding Plato—even whether he accepts these theses.

23. Late in *CD* Freud notes that religion provides good service to society in reducing super ego anxiety—which anxiety is a real problem for both society and individual. It does so without increasing aggression. All in all this seems a very positive operation.

24. A postmodern Freudian admits this also: even if each person’s dignity is “precisely what is ‘absolutely particular’ about him, [namely] his fantasy, . . . the very aim of the psycho-analytic process [is] to shake the foundations of the analysand’s fundamental fantasy.” We must *all* undergo this process, then, thereby achieving the “subjective destitution” once called ironic distance. See Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 156. In even older language than the postmodern, or even romantic ironist: “The good you love is from him, but only insofar as it is used for him is it good and sweet” (*Conf* 4.12.18). Thus only are we freed from slavery to all things in the world.

25. So we can *perhaps* be somewhat more friendly to Cephalus than Blondell, who says that by abandoning the argument “he symbolically abandons his claim to patriarchal authority over his sons.” See *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 170. Her view of his character and moral principles (168–174) is very finely tuned to the dialogue’s nuances. On the other hand, perhaps his own piety would (back then) mimic Augustine’s in his own confessedly mad youth and further: “O God give me chastity, but not yet!” (*Conf* 8.7.17).

26. Plato’s prescriptive description of the best soul, as well as its defections, will be discussed in chapter 5. Consequentialists have a prescription too—generally, the greatest possible pleasure; some go so far as to prescribe what should count (or how weightily it should count) as pleasure. But what if I am most pleased in acts of necrophilia?

27. *New Introductory Lectures*, Standard Edition (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), Vol. 22, 80.

28. As mentioned above (27–28 and 51n20), this beast, while using language, is not precisely a rational animal.

29. Compare the introduction’s brief discussion of this word, (7–8 and 18n28).

30. Perhaps killing Socrates will cure Thrasymachus. Socrates is willing to take the risk. See my “Libidinal economy and the life of logos,” *Philosophy and Literature* 18 (Fall): 320–325.

31. Augustine, *City of God*, preface; “the earthly city, though all peoples serve it, is itself dominated by the desire to dominate” (*ipsa ei dominandi libido dominatur*).

32. Slezak, *Reading Plato*, 23, see also 70.

33. Cushman, *Therapeia*; the following quote is from page 72.

34. As the Athenian Stranger explains:

everyone who cares for something is blind when it comes to the thing cared for, and hence is a poor judge of what is just and good and noble, because he believes he should always honor his own more than the truth. . . . This same failing is the source of everyone’s supposing that his lack of learning (*amathia*) is wisdom. As a result, we think we know everything when in fact we know, so to speak, nothing; and when we refuse to turn them over to others we necessarily go wrong (*Laws* 731e–732b).

Or, as Augustine says, human beings “want what they love to be the truth, and because they do not want to be deceived, they refuse to be convinced that they have been deceived. . . . They hate the truth for that very thing which they have loved instead of the truth” (*Conf* 10.23.34).

35. Callicles ends his part of the discussion by first threatening Socrates (*Gorg* 521b, c), and then telling him to finish the dialogue by himself and holding silent (522e). He is Plato's Iago.

36. Here we may be tempted to raise the issue of invincible ignorance. But I wonder if Socrates (or Plato) believes in such a thing. Socrates says that the cave is open along its entire width (514a), which pictures a mouth as wide as the room it leads down into. A very strange looking cave; if it is an image of our want of education, it seems to mean that the way out is equally far from each of us, all must walk uphill and through the fire; that done, each is equally close to the entrance. No one is invincibly cave bound; all are in some need of turning and *blind practice*—for the fire puts our eyes out. “Blind practice” sounds like mimesis, for it *cannot* be something based on knowledge. People who have been sitting in the same position for the most considerable time will be much harder to move: perhaps only a God could turn them. Perhaps not; perhaps they—or some mad master in them—*aim* to become rock, to grow into stone. Thus could God create a rock he can't lift; only he didn't create it that way.

37. Socrates clearly holds truth a good superior to pleasure, in contrast to utilitarians; see note 26 above. When Freud asks, “must not the assumptions that determine our political regulations be called illusions as well?” (*Future*, 43), one must wonder if this question can really call anything into question, illusions being less questionable than delusions—being, it seems, absolutely necessary for Id to have any social life.

38. We should read both the incorrectly named *Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and its Discontents* as efforts in the direction of cultural therapy. “We are very often obliged, for therapeutic purposes, to oppose the super-ego. . . . Exactly the same objections can be made against the . . . cultural super-ego” (*CD* 108). Were Freud rigorous in his use of language, the first book would have been titled *The Future of a Delusion*, as pages 67 and 69 of that book imply. A similar misapplication of terms (this time in political philosophy) can be found in Daniel I. O'Neill, Mary Lyndon Shanley, and Iris Marion Young (eds.), *Illusion of Consent: Engaging Carole Pateman* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008). If the arguments in their book are valid, the proper titular term is delusion: a thing believed despite contradicting reality. Dr. Freud seems to think *logos*—the talking cure—is effective on neurotic fixations (in both individuals and society); it seems he means *reason alone* can cure since he writes treatises, and has an already noted animus against stories, considering poetry merely substitutive satisfaction for Id or picture thinking for psychoanalytically validated truths. Plato thinks that is madness, as indicated by his working with *logos*, but in the mimetic arts and by showing, in Socrates' editing of stories, that one may need to excise precisely those likely to be considered ‘the good parts’ by Id. Both cannot be correct. So then, one of these men is, necessarily, deluded. Further, that I am writing in accord with Freudian practice, rather than Plato's, must be taken as symptomatic, unless, of course, I expect that all my readers are undeluded.—Are we not all philosophers?

39. This problem of delusional citizen interlocutors recognizes moral life as “dispositions of affection and conduct” which can be badly formed, leading to what Alan Donagan called “corrupt consciousness.” Rather than take up the theoretical conundrums such corruption entails, Plato's mimeses undertake to exhibit and produce a solution to the problem of having a variety of such citizens. Compare *The Theory of Morality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 11 and 140.

40. It is popular, since Existentialism, to deny that the human being has a *telos* by nature (see note 50 below). But even if treated as a methodological principle, rather than an ontological or metaphysical one, in practice modern political and social theorists never seem to deny the Freudian (or Utilitarian) *telos*, that is, feelings of pleasure, which may be differently shaped in diverse cultures, or even be idiosyncratic, but always amount to the satisfaction of (variably constituted) desire. Such a (supposedly minimalist) teleological modernism can be found in Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau, Mill and many postmoderns as well.

41. Norbert Blossner explains the source of this mutual implication in formation of city/soul as a function of classical Greek; *polis* “is nothing over and above the organized citizen body;” “*politeia* . . . involves the citizens of a *polis* in customs and traditions, in values and norms, in patterns of education and ways of living. It is not a concept that can be reduced to its constitutional aspect.” See “The City-Soul Analogy” in Ferrari, ed., 369. But the idea of a constitution as a wholly artificial construction “set over” an original and individual human nature *is the*

modern delusion. So, Blossner's explication of the ancient Greek *polis* expresses the truth of our mimetic nature more clearly than modern languages' "city" or "constitution." Our very language involves us in the delusion.

42. Freud suggests whole societies may be neurotic at *CD* 110; he had previously intimated that American politics was delusive at *CD* 74; he had humbly refused to evaluate the rationality of that large country between Europe and Asia (in *Future*, 10–11), but a few years later is willing to say, "the psychological premises on which it is based are an untenable illusion" (*CD* 71). Freud is not clear on the difference between untenable illusion and delusion. Socrates will present a variety of regimes that choose as their chief good something self-destructive in book 8. That devolution ends in the extreme of madness: tyranny.

43. *Leviathan*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1991): Introduction, 9 (cf. chapter 17, 120).

44. *Leviathan*, chapter 17, 120; fear of death brings the sheep together.

45. *Leviathan*, chapter 3, 20. Hobbes' use of the word art seems, with one exception, exactly equivalent to the Greek *technê*—considered as rule-reducible learned technique wholly unrelated to *mimesis*, against (I argue) the ancient understanding. The arts of the muses for the ancients are a marriage of both *mimêsis* and *technê*. Hobbes' examples of art are arithmetic (the exception to an ancient *technê*, ch. 5), drawing an accurate picture (ch. 8), architecture and gardening (ch. 30), saddle making (ch. 42), as well as mentioning arts medical and diabolical.

46. As Joshua Mitchell says, for "most political scientists and many political theorists . . . imitation is scarcely a subject of debate, because human beings are considered first and foremost to be rational beings, not imitative beings" (*Plato's Fable*, 1). This is exactly right—even the understanding of imitation is rationalistic. Mitchell helpfully contrasts two modern understandings of imitation (identity politics vs. socialization) with *Republic's*, which "precedes these two understandings of the relation between imitation and reason" (11). Choosing a side between identity politics and socialization works wholly within the mad modern premises.

47. *Leviathan* (ch. 11, 70); Hobbes considers the natural state of war was "never generally so, over all the world" (ch. 13, 89); I am unsure whether he thinks the social contract historical or (merely) moral. Freud clearly considers it historical fact: the contract of the father-killing brothers in which "the power of the individual" is replaced by "the power of a community" is "the decisive step of civilization. . . . The development of civilization imposes restrictions on [natural liberty], and justice requires that no one shall escape those restrictions" (*CD* 49). Locke considers it real, as Freud; though Locke's original father was a more fit and affectionate governor than Freud's. See John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (New York: Hafner Press, 1947) treatise 2, ch.8, §101–112).

48. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 3. This myth is still fully present in Rawls; it is just that behind the veil of ignorance we know nothing about our particular person or capacities (which shouldn't matter anyway if we accept the gospel of equality as Hobbes, e.g., does).

49. The complaints are Adeimantus'. Ferrari points out that Adeimantus imagines that he "is self-contained. What is more, that self-containment is represented as a refusal to be contained by society." This self-image is expressed in his quietistic *hauteur* regarding the politics of Athens. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 20.

50. Compare Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957): "If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. . . . Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. . . . [I]f existence really does precede essence, man is responsible for what he is . . . , [and] the full responsibility of his existence [rests] on him" (15–16).

51. A phrase of G. K. Chesterton's; *Orthodoxy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 53.

52. Compare Mitchell, *Plato's Fable*: Without proper "education, laws will be enacted that constantly adjust the boundaries between 'mine and thine.' Yet these alone can never bring the soul unto health. Legal adjustments alone are like bad doctoring: The poisons they administer to sick souls only make 'ailments multiply and worsen'" (53); it is unclear what Mitchell's quotes refer to, there is a reference to *Rep* 426e, which his language captures but does not quote. The point is that all the "medicines" which accept this founding myth of individual

autarchy can only be poisons when the founding myth is itself a delusion—which, we shall see shortly, it is.

53. Freud agrees; “Only the weaklings have submitted to such an extensive encroachment upon their sexual freedom [as modern society demands]” (*CD* 61). That no one in the dialogue interrupts here may be Plato’s indication of Thrasymachus’ “corrupt consciousness”—he “is unable to recognize . . . his situation for what it is, even when it is pointed out to him. And it is not necessarily confined to individuals. A whole society . . .” may not recognize the contradiction within which they are living (Donagan, *The Theory of Morality*, 140).

54. Santas, in *Understanding Plato’s Republic* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), considers that “Glaucon has given a very different account of the origin and nature of justice” from Thrasymachus (41), despite the fact that they have “the same conception of the human good . . . freedom and power to do as one pleases” (44). But Glaucon is explicitly rebuilding Thrasymachus’ argument; his “contractarianism” proceeds from the same root as Thrasymachus’ positivism—thus only does the ruler have power to do what pleases him; the sheep rule in exactly the same way, to achieve the same goods, and must fear the same thing as Thrasymachus: a shepherd with a working Gyges’ ring for instance.

55. Thomas W. Smith, “The Glory and Tragedy of Politics,” in John Doody, ed. *Augustine and Politics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005): 187–213; quote from 202–203.

56. *Leviathan* ch. 13 defends the thesis that men are *by nature actually and really* equal, not just morally so, that is, with equal rights or liberties. This is laughable to Thrasymachus; a real man would be mad to agree, though the sheep may well be equal. Mitchell points out a similarly laughable gosselling to ‘equality of the power of judging’ in Descartes (*Plato’s Fable*, 27n29), Adam Smith (171n12) and Tocqueville (188n71), the latter of whom says Christ’s purpose (and the Church’s success) was to make us understand this natural equality. Plato’s story presumes natural human *inequality*—along with natural and inescapable dependence. Thrasymachus’ delusion is unlikely to submit to the gospel except by miracle; Plato constructs a human cure, one which admits the real human inequality Thrasymachus insists upon.

57. Bloom helpfully glosses this as “each contributes according to his ability and receives according to his needs” (*Republic*, 344).

58. I see no reason to suspect that “without disharmony ‘all talents would remain hidden, unborn in an Arcadian shepherd’s life’” or that the soul without fever “would remain in its original and undifferentiated form” as Mitchell, among many others, does. See *Plato’s Fable*, 149n570—the quotation within is from Kant’s “Idea for a Cosmopolitan History,” and 150. *Socrates presumes the opposite* in building his first (the healthy) city: there are wide differences in nature and talent, each is most happy in that distinct task most fit to his nature and talents. He accepts with Thrasymachus the inequality of nature and a wide (and useful) distinction of talents.

59. I will not be agreeing with Ferrari (*City and Soul*, 29) that Socrates is presenting a model whose “ultimate goal lies beyond human society altogether.” Rather it lies in a particular kind of human society: one united with the divine. Ferrari’s view of the Socratic *telos* would have us accept the myth of individual autarchy as *telos* if not as *archê*.

60. Bloom misses precisely this point; he says, “It would appear from this presentation that war is requisite to the emergence of humanity” and that this warlike city is “paradoxically . . . the first human city” (*Republic*, 348). This oft repeated thesis seems to owe more to Mandeville than to Socrates or Plato. That such overstepping which leads to war is mimetically induced in all societies is Girard’s thesis (e.g., *Things Hidden* 8–17). He recognizes that not all universal actualities are natural necessities; consider the doctrine of sin.

61. This same beginning is posited by Kleinias in *Laws* (625e), seconded by Megillus (626c), and thoroughly discredited by the Athenian Stranger, through his story of the divided family (627c–628a). Freud posits a similar beginning to society: *CD* 48–50, 55, 73–74, where he presumes his argument from *Totem and Taboo*. The Thrasymachus situation threatens to return to infect the city of the noble lie; if the guardians ever become landowners, “they’ll spend their lives plotting and being plotted against, fearing those inside the city” (417b). They turn themselves into those self-made (autarchic) lunatics—unless their *paideia*, and their city’s music helps them remain in the truth.

62. Basil Mitchell and J. R. Lucas suggest a modern pluralist must argue so against Plato's critique of democracy, *An Engagement with Plato's Republic* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 124.

63. The modern imaginary has as its heroic figure the person who works and lives outside of the law but on the side of the community, for its safety; generally he is divorced, which marks him as someone who has attempted communal life, but discovered it too constricting (Jack Bauer, e.g.). His opposite figure is the person who lives and works outside the law against the community; he also is generally unmarried, still the best marker of autarchic antinomianism. Thus, in each case the modern imagination orients itself in accord with possessive individualism; no matter which side (terrorist/terrorist fighter) is taken, possessive individualism is being mimetically rehearsed. These two are the "solitary strong"; their object of attention is the sheep—one by one (serial killer), en masse (terrorist), or as object in need of protection (Jack Bauer). None of them are small enough (or fearful enough) to join (or remain long in) the social contract. Are there *any* examples of such heroes in Medieval literature? If not, why not? The modern political *archê* demands these figures; *therefore* they exist—and not merely as poetic figures.

64. Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 102.

65. By contrast, Augustine considers that "a people is well ordered and serious . . . whose every citizen places the public good above his private interests," and *only they* rightly are allowed to elect their own magistrates (*De Libero Arbitrio*, I.6, my italics). The idea that the public good falls out of the voting of each for his private good would be a sign of lack of seriousness for Augustine—precisely because it imagines the individual as self-sufficient.

66. We would even need a certain kind of doctor (the Asclepian, 406a–407e) to help in the case of accident and as aids against such other natural shocks as flesh is heir to (ct. Mitchell, *Plato's Fable* 39, and other scholars who hold that, "doctors are only needed after the moderate city has been set aside"); nor does overcoming scarcity evaporate the need for division of labor, for the conquering of scarcity is not a permanent victory in nature (ct. Marx, rightly criticized on this matter in *Plato's Fable*, 150 n572).

67. This quotation and the previous are from Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers*, 292, 293–94.

68. The quotation is from Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 27; he considers that Glaucon and Adeimantus want an argument from Socrates that, in praising justice for its own sake, will also justify their quietist self-containment. Socrates, in providing the first, will destroy the possibility of the second. No man is an island.

69. Thus I disagree with Žižek that "instrumental reason *as such* is capitalist, grounded in capitalist relations;" rather it is a determination arising within a possessive individualism which far precedes modern capitalist relations, available, as it is, in Thrasymachus. See *The Fragile Absolute* (New York: Verso, 2000), 18. It still follows that "'actually existing socialism' [retains this] key ingredient" of capitalism and does not present a different historical realization of it.

70. Jurgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 134, italics original; henceforth abbreviated *BNR*.

71. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates suggests to Phaedrus (and can be seen practicing on Phaedrus) the medical-rhetorical principle of suiting the speech to the soul (270b–272b) lest our friend or fellow citizen buy an ass when needing a warhorse.

72. Habermas *BNR*, 120; these quotes are Habermas' summary and critique of Rawls.

73. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 136–142.

74. Simone Weil, in *The Need for Roots*, translated by Arthur Willis (London: Routledge, 1952), begins her political philosophy with this notion—obligation, rather than "inalienable rights." Such complete opposition to the regnant delusion guarantees her status as outsider to contemporary political discussion.

75. Habermas, *BNR* 92. This is a requirement for Habermas' own political theory.

76. Habermas, *BNR* 143; in these last three quotes Habermas is speaking of his own views, and I mean to read Plato as critical of them, as Habermas was (rightly) critical of Rawls, above. Mitchell points out that Socrates' views about the two kinds of lie do not bode well for Mill's version of liberalism either (*Plato's Fable*, 39 n86, 42 n102).

77. In “Must Democracy Be Reasonable?” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39, 1 (March 2009): 1–34, Thomas Christiano argues against Joshua Cohen’s (Habermas inspired, Amy Gutmann seconded) stipulation that democracy be reasonable in the sense that “debate be limited to considerations on which there is reasonable consensus” (1) favoring rather a “wider conception of deliberative democracy” not requiring that limitation. His criticism, including that oriented to the use of the ideal deliberative procedure as a model (3n3), seems legitimate. Christiano’s own wider conception of deliberative democracy still requires, however, that citizens’ “abilities to participate are not affected by the distribution of power or wealth . . . [and that they] both provide arguments for their proposals to each other and are ready to accept the better argument” (3). The first element is patently counterfactual; the second two are impossible under conditions of delusion about the reasonable or the good. “Better argument” begs the question delusion already has answered; “better argument” only appears within an already accepted, mimetically engendered *opseôs kosmos*. His wry comment against Cohen seems to apply, then, to his own preference as well: “the inference from the justification of the outcomes of the hypothetical procedure to the justification of the outcomes of an actual procedure that approximates the ideal procedure is highly problematic” (3n3).

78. The moral equivalent of the Nazi at the door asking about the Jews in your attic appears twice in Socrates’ life: As the lot-chosen head of the assembly, which wants to try ten generals at once, Socrates refuses to allow the question to be called; assigned by the Thirty to assist in the arrest Leon of Salamis, Socrates stays home (*Ap* 32b–e). Both the demos and the Thirty are mad masters—or the mad attempting to be masters. One does not discover who is mad by taking a vote, nor by presuming that all who speak are sane. In the face of such fellow creatures, reasonable and truthful speech is contraindicated: the verbal lie is the only reasonable *logos*. Under such laws disobedience is required.

79. This is the usual interpretation of Freud in the present day for people like Lacan and Žižek. Still, “the fantasmatic narrative of a spectral event that definitely ‘did not happen’ (like the Freudian myth of the primordial parricide) . . . [cannot be registered] as neutral,” for the story (and others of that type) are the ground or frame for the coming to be of *logos*, history and the conscious self. See Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute* (New York: Verso, 2000), 70–72, at 70.

80. Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy*, see 55–59; quotes from 86, 58–59.

81. The tone of this (Plato’s fifth) letter is proleptic of Robinson Jeffers’ “Shine, Perishing Republic” even to its advice: “While this America settles in the mold of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to Empire . . . but for my children, I would have them keep their distance from the thickening center.” Change but the name and it could be from two and a half millennia ago. Alternatively, if Plato were alive now, he would perhaps write the same letter, or perhaps he would give up poetry to undertake the problem of invincible ignorance in a philosophical essay.

Chapter Two

Psyche's Pharmacy

It will frequently be needful that our leaders be furnishing falsehood and deceit. . . . We said that all such things are useful as forms of *pharmakon*.

—Socrates, *Rep* (459c–d)

Zeus has *pharmaka* for all things.

—Simonides

THE PHARMAKON: VERBAL LIE, ILLUSION, MOUSIKÊ

By the end of book 1 we have seen Socrates tell a story (*mythos*) about a madman and give an argument about what art (*technê*) entails—namely, knowledge of how to achieve the good for that on which it acts—in his efforts to break Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus out of their varying degrees of enchainment to a true lie: a false, or at least incomplete, idea of justice.¹ To say he has not been entirely successful would be to understate the case, but he has, momentarily, put the gears of each soul into neutral from being stuck hard in reverse, or to be less anachronistic, he has shifted the rudder of each so as to take the wind of a practiced passion and accepted belief (momentarily) out of each soul-ship's sails. Such momentary passional breaks and such aporealizing of settled opinions allow the in-breaking of the Good, which we shall describe in more detail later. Thus the muse's arts *allow*, leaves open a way for, such an in-breaking; the aporealizing of settled opinions and freezing of habitual intentions does not necessitate, still less create, the vision of the Good. It is possible to turn away, to turn back to the sacrifices one knows how to make—those one can make even in one's sleep, or sitting in a cave. Socrates' art (*technê*) has not, of itself, cured; it is midwife to a cure. Or perhaps we should say that the purifying activity of the

god is granted entrance by the arts of the muses, which arts partake of both *technê* and *mimesis*—and, perhaps, divine inspiration.

An *Aporia* about the *Pharmakon*

Socrates explicitly likens the second kind of lie, the verbal lie, to a *pharmakon*, itself an ambivalent word.² As the doctor is the one best able to bring health or disease (332d), and his *pharmakon* may be a helpful drug or a poison, so, too, the verbal lie can be either curative or debilitating for *psychê*. It would seem that there might be a third and fourth logical possibility: a *pharmakon* could be an artificial adjuvant to strengthen a (good) natural process, or it could be a prophylactic. So there are in a modern pharmacy drugs to remove illness, prophylactic drugs and devices, and drugs which aid in ordinary healthy natural processes. Of course they can also kill or sicken if used inappropriately, and there are some that seem merely poisons (also *pharmaka*).

Socrates' description of the verbal lie is very careful: it is "useful [and] not deserving of hatred" (382c) on some occasions. This implies that the verbal lie is not only the kind of good Glaucon began book 2 by setting out as a drudgery—good for its consequences alone, like medicine or surgery (357c)—but also implies that in all other cases it *is deserving of hatred*; that is to say, the verbal lie is *never morally neutral*. At least, the description indicates the verbal lie is only a conditional good, and perhaps conditional upon some preexistent evil—like disease.³ Socrates first explicitly brings out this *pharmakon* for the sake of friends suffering from madness or folly who "attempt to do something bad" (382c). In this case the lie seems to participate in both the aspect of cure and of prophylactic (for it at least aims to prevent the further debilitation of happiness which would follow from action in, as well as to begin the cure of, the madness).

Socrates then adds a second case, which muddies the waters considerably:

And, in the telling of tales we were just now speaking about—those told because we don't know where the truth about ancient things [about the acts of the gods and heroes] lies—likening the lie to the truth as best we can don't we also make it useful? (382c–d)

Let us take the last part first; we make the verbal lie useful by likening it to the truth as best we can. This is clearly how we operate in the first case—the madman—as well. As in Socrates' speeches to Phaedrus, the truth referred to here seems to look two ways—to what the objective truth is, and to what the person lied to can accept as true. So, the lie suggested earlier for the madman at the door says something he can consider quite likely; namely, that my use of his weapons has required their resharpening or refurbishment since I would not wish to return them in worse shape than I borrowed them. It also

figures something quite true though he would not accept it; namely, that since it is not the weapons that make a man adequate in battle (374d) but the man, something of his—his soul—does need retooling and is not adequate for the task intended and it will take awhile for this retooling to be effected. If we told him a lie he wouldn't believe to be true, the *pharmakon* would not be swallowed, and if the *pharmakon* did not produce some element of what the madman, in truth, needs—in this case a two week cooling off period (at least) without having his weapons available—then it would not be helpful.⁴ The useful, medicinal verbal lie moves the person lied to closer to the truth, and the most important truths are those about the soul (and city) and what its happiness is. That his mania is disallowed any real action is something like removing it from the world; this attenuation of its real effectiveness will thereby weaken its perceived reality, for other realities continue their effects—and the more the better, which is another reason we make the lie like the truth as much as we can. So long as the noble lie(s) continue this attenuation (or incapacitation) of the true lie *in act*, their prophylaxis is also instigating (or adjuvant to) a cure of the mania by allowing the other ties to the truth of the world to continue acting, which the natural world does of its own accord.⁵

If that is the correct understanding of the last part of the quote, then the first part becomes perfectly opaque. First of all, we must recall that this distinction between kinds of lies takes place just as Socrates is beginning his story about the gymnastic and musical education⁶ the guardians will need. The first part of the musical education is precisely the false stories (*muthoi pseudês*, 377) we tell the children; and first of these are those we tell of the gods and ancient heroes. So far, so good; but if we do not, as Socrates admits, know the truth about those ancient deeds, how are we to “make the lie as much like the truth as we can?” Either we do not know the truth about the gods and their activities (which is what he says) and so *cannot* make our false story like the truth (though he says we *must*), or we do know the truth about the gods (though he says we don't) and so we can make such an adjustment, but in that case there is the prior question—why tell any verbal lies about the gods at all? Why not just tell the truth about them? Verbal lies are only useful and not worthy of hatred when the person lied to is already in the *delusional* position—a position in which his ignorance or mistake cannot be cured by direct transmission of the truth. If it could be so cured, lying would not be needed, only truth telling. A *pharmakon* in such cases is contraindicated, for it puts the hearer in the most hated position: believing the false about a matter of great importance.⁷ This is why verbal lies are hated whenever they are not necessary: they work by infection with a lie. This is what poetry will be accused of in book 10 (605c–606e). A defense of poetry begins here, or no defense is possible.

If they are not curing an already diagnosed delusion, the other plausible uses of verbal lies are prophylactic or adjuvant; but again, why not just tell the truth? Surely that would be prophylactic and adjuvant as well! So the children or citizens Socrates is telling such false stories to must either be ignorant *and* incapable of the truth direct—not yet ready for metaphysics, for example—or they must be delusional (not merely ignorant, but believing—here implying a developed cathexis for—the false) about the gods. But in both instances, if Socrates and company are going to make rules about the stories we tell to those living under that incapacity or true lie, the tellers *must know* what the truth is, though Socrates has just said that we don't. So, although Adeimantus *agrees* with Socrates that the lie “is very useful in such cases” (382d), it seems *impossible* for him or us—if we are in the ignorant situation Socrates presumes regarding the gods—to come up with a useful lie, or even a *pharmakon* we can know will not be poisonous. Nor could we know when to use it unless we already know what the truth is so that we can adequately *diagnose* the delusional. So the distinction between useful and harmful verbal lies is both necessary to make and impossible to know in this, its very first instance.⁸ Nonetheless Adeimantus thinks it a fine idea: “Yes, Ollie, that's right!” “Let's go; let's do it!”⁹

The Mimetic as Pharmacokinetic

Plato has presented us with a piece of dialectical slapstick: a proposition not merely difficult, but impossible—yet all parties within the mimesis have agreed we must accomplish it! Before we question further about *this aporia*—in the text, but unremarked upon by it—let us consider again two related issues. First, what must the nature of the delusional position be if merely telling the truth straight out is not a plausible solution to the problem? Secondly, consider more closely a logical possibility that might be what Socrates has in mind: Perhaps the *pharmakon*, with which Socrates is saying our education of children always begins, is neither a cure for an ill, nor a poison, but an adjuvant—a lie that helps a natural process achieve its good more fully, quickly, robustly—perhaps not exactly “a breeze from salubrious places” (401d, for artistic mimesis is not merely and entirely natural), but a particularly mixed all-natural fertilizer, for mimeses are made to raise particular passions in particular patterns through the human being's natural mimetism.

Returning to the first question, the delusions we are particularly concerned with are those having to do with the soul and its happiness; such believed untruths, as we saw in the discussion of book 1, are quite different from believed untruths about the moon or geometry precisely because such untruths immediately involve (if they don't arise from) desire. In those other cases (like Meno's slave), ignorance or false belief may well exist too, but

that ignorance or error is not necessarily linked to a passional incapacity to accept (or even hear) the truth. There might be a similar (purely intellectual) incapacity: having not yet learned commutativity and addition, calculus is out of the range of our present thrust, for example. However, if a being has a natural *telos* for pleasure or happiness, then beliefs about things or deeds which are elements of, or are, by thought, imagination, or mimetic habit, associated with those ends—or lead there—are naturally desired, and that desire and its practices, becoming habitual, inhibit—if they do not disallow—other orientations. Reason, or the reality principle, may say the object upon which desire has fixated does not achieve what one really wants, but unlike discovering that five is not the result of 2+2, the object of mistaken cathexis is not so easily released.¹⁰ Further, if our first learning is through mimesis of what is going on around us, such can be operating without the intervention of any beliefs at all; this is what it means to say the mimetic is precognitive or extracognitive; it is pure mirroring. Babies will laugh and cry and smile merely on this mimetic basis; frequently adults will too. Through mimesis not only habitual affects, but singular and sudden affects would be formed, before or without thought or any reality principle operating: “without [our] awareness” (401d) and “before [we] are able to grasp *logos*” (402a). When this has happened desire must be weaned, the affect and habit changed or disabled, before knowledge or true belief—or perhaps even a different (like the true) false belief—can become effective.

The way out is also what was the way in to this enslavement: a *mimetic* cure is the necessary beginning. Further, if we are mimetic by nature and we are always taken up into mimesis of what is around us (as children certainly are), then even if we are not yet enslaved to an inappropriate desire or habitual pattern or thought, it will be the case that we need what is around us to be an adjuvant for the full development of our being. Whenever it is not so, we will fall into mimesis of things which inhibit that development, becoming our socially or familiarly engendered (and sceptred) delusions. For a naturally mimetic being, *tertium non datur*. Even if we are not already delusional, insofar as we are mimetic we need what is around us to rhyme with the fuller flourishing we do not yet know of or desire, so that when knowledge of our good does become possible we may follow easily, unencumbered by habitual cathexes for objects and activities leading otherwise. Noble lies and divine music are absolutely necessary, then, either to draw out of delusion, or to prevent it; but *the only prophylactic* for a naturally mimetic being *is an adjuvant* which, “beginning in childhood will, escaping their notice, lead them with fair speech to likeness and friendship as well as accord” (401d). There are good mimeses and there are bad mimeses; that there are morally neutral mimeses is necessarily false; that it is a lie many contemporary societies (particularly liberal democracies) prefer indicates its status—delusion. The ancient view of the mimetic contradicts the modern wish for an

art realm entirely separate from politics and morals. The idea of the autonomy of art is of a piece with the modern misunderstanding of the human mimetic nature.¹¹ Thus, the argument given here, though decisive, will be unacceptable. If we ignore it, perhaps it will go away. Maybe it needs hem-locking.

Illusion/*Mousikê*: Can We Distinguish among *Pharmaka*?

Let us return now to our textual *aporia*, one which not only “escapes the notice” of every character in the dialogue, but in fact grounds an agreement between them! This *aporia* is an obvious logical problem: we don’t know the truth about the ancient deeds of gods and heroes, yet we must make the lies we tell as much like the truth as possible.¹² This nonsensical agreement between Socrates and Adeimantus must have been put here by our poet for some purpose—unless he is one of those who just mixes his drugs willy-nilly (377b). Perhaps he means it to escape our notice and for his work of art merely to be a piece of agreeable nonsense?—that would satisfy the Freudian definition of art: providing pleasure and a mild narcosis (*CD* 31). Perhaps he means us to fall into head-nodding agreeability through mimesis of this Adeimantan agreeability? (The Adeimantuses in the classroom generally do this.) Perhaps he means to spark a more Thrasymachan reader into rage at Socratic nonsense? (This can actually be helpful in a classroom of Adeimantuses.) What does Plato mean to do by presenting this mimesis of agreement built on a vacancy? What does Socrates mean to happen by speaking it? Half of the next book will be designing a complexly filigreed arch anchored on this vacancy, including (and concluding with) the following (missing) key-stone, concerning the stories we may allow about ordinary *anthropoi*:

Well, my friend, it is impossible for us to arrange that at present.

“Why?”

Because I suppose we’ll say that what both poets and prose writers say concerning the most important things about human beings is bad—that many happy men are unjust, and many wretched ones just. . . . We’ll forbid them to say such things and order them to sing the opposite . . . , or don’t you suppose so?

“I know it quite well,” [Adeimantus] said.

Then if you were to agree that what I say is correct, wouldn’t I say you’ve agreed about what we have been looking for all along?

“Your supposition is correct,” he said. (392a–c)

Adeimantus’ admission here, and Socrates’ question, seem about ten Stephanus pages late. Clearly the same argument should apply to stories of gods and heroes: if we don’t already know what counts as divine happiness or holy deeds and heroic virtue, or even action (for we were not there), we cannot

make good verbal lies about the happiness and virtues of such beings for those children who don't yet know, or who have delusions about what those heroes and divine beings did or do. Should we allow the story of Zeus becoming a swan in order to commit (yet another) adultery, with Leda? We can't (according to their agreement) even know what a delusion about this would be. On the other hand, if we do already know what divine activity or the heroic relation of justice and happiness is, the merely human question about them—ten pages on—should be small beer. Perhaps Plato is opening the postmodern road: we should eschew the rationalist presumption that we can “decide which doctrines are rational and which are irrational.”¹³ Or else, “something divine must certainly have happened” (368a) to Socrates and Adeimantus that they can be so clear about divine goodness and heroic virtues (and so what lies should be told about the ancient deeds of which we know nothing) while yet having no clue about the human; either that, or they are in some cloud cuckoo land¹⁴ from which they can get to heaven, but cannot get to earth. In any case, their agreement is a divine mystery to us readers.

Perhaps it is swinish wallowing in lack of learning to be so accommodating as to accept this blather (cf. 535e); and perhaps Plato means us to discover that it is not only certain objects of sensation that summon the intellect to activity (523b), but his mimesis of Bad Logic also means to arouse us—though not to Thrasymachan madness. Before we try to respond to this third level *aporia*—brought on *in us* by the characters missing an obvious *aporia* on the first level, while agreeing on a conclusion following from it on their own (second) level—let us finish examining the surface relationship concerning the *pharmakon* known as a verbal lie and the arts of the muses, comparing it more closely with Freud's ideas about illusion and art.

The Illusion of Art: Ancient and Modern *Mousikê*

For Freud, art is the primary example of illusion; it is known to be false, but supplies substitutive satisfactions for the desires of Id. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud only mentions such artistic substitutions while discussing the erotic drives, but there is no reason to deny their applicability to the destructive drive he discusses in the last half of that book. So, a visit to the Art Institute or any number of video websites on the world wide web would offer us illusions that provide erotic substitutive satisfactions, and a suitable video game—Grand Theft Auto or World of Warcraft—might provide such satisfactions to our instinct for destruction. While it lasts we treat it as real, knowing it isn't, and so are provided with a sublimated substitute for the real thing: sex or destruction.¹⁵ Insofar as all such mimeses provide a satisfaction and so (Freud says) weaken or prevent a more dangerous outbreak of eros or thanatos into society (or their return into the psyche to produce neuroses or

increase the super ego's guilt quotient, cf. *CD* 103), they are a necessary and prophylactic release for both social solidarity and personal happiness (= pleasure). They do not institute any cure for the problem that ails the individual or society (there is none), but insofar as they prevent the outbreak of erotic or thanatopic outrage, such things are an adjuvant to sociality; like oil and radiator coolant they help the engine of society (and *psyche*) not burn up so quickly. And it seems that all those things which fall into the category of the mimetic as it is discussed in *Republic*, or in Aristotle, and as it applies in our world (of video games, movies and instant web access to all kinds of "art") are what Freud calls illusions. Freud does not make anything like the distinction Socrates does between a kind of verbal lie "useful and not deserving of hatred," much less "noble" and a kind which is deserving of hatred—except to agree with Socrates that delusion, or the true lie, is the worst situation.

It is not merely a fact that Freud does not make a distinction between useful and dangerous illusions of art, but he is also *incapable* of making any such rationally principled distinction. Such incapacity should be considered symptomatic. Since the purpose of art is to induce a mild narcosis and "bring about a transient withdrawal from the pressure of vital needs" (*CD* 31) by providing a substitutive pleasure when the real one is not available (or is socially costly), *whatever* does this for me is legitimate. Freud does open the postmodern door: we should not attempt to judge which pleasures are better or true, nor which art is good. Since pleasure—like suffering—"is nothing else than sensation" (*CD* 27, cf. 25), whatever causes such feelings cannot be argued about, though access to such illusions may well be regulated by an overactive cultural super ego, or the IT department at your place of employment. If "the prohibition against an incestuous choice of [sexual] object . . . is perhaps the most drastic mutilation which man's erotic life has in all time experienced" (*CD* 59), the continuing and extensive outlawry of child pornography (to say nothing of clever uses of animals and the dead) must be a close second. After all, they are merely pictures—an illusion! If it pleases, it pleases; and feelings of pleasure—preferably intense—are the purpose of life (*CD* 25). The pleasure principle is the only judge here, nothing beyond it can be.

Socrates, on the other hand, by distinguishing the useful and noble lies from those which deserve hatred in beginning his discussion of education's necessary use of the arts, is defining some works of art as poisonous, and *Republic* 2 and 3 look to be excising by token and type a significant portion of Greek society's cultural, artistic and educational pharmacopeia. By implication he would be outlawing much more of ours. The danger of such lies, according to Socrates, is that, though sweet to hear (387b), they encourage cowardice, self-indulgence, lamentation and disobedience—among other sweet things. When Socrates returns to the (ostensible) antipoetic argument

in book 10, what was originally discussed as important in the education of children is analogically brought into every adult as works that “gratify the soul’s foolish part . . . nourishing it and making it strong” (605b). The childish aspect of our being, which learns first through mimesis, continues operating according to the same pattern; even in adults the mimetic is operative. Freud calls all illusions good because he thinks that feeding the beasts of the soul with such unrealities puts them to sleep. He thinks of *mimeses* merely as *representations which substitute* for realities. Socrates does not deny that the artist’s illusions are pleasant—for (among other things) mimesis itself is naturally pleasant to us: Socrates only denies that all art’s pleasures are good; this makes sense for him, but not for Freud, because Socrates does not think all pleasures are good; Freud is more liberal—pleasure is the principle (*CD*: 25). Further (according to Plato), the mimetic mirroring of the work by the soul is our first learning, and thereby shapes desire and habit—for good or ill. Mimesis is not merely representation. Those verbal lies we should not allow are those which set delusion—the true lie—in the soul, or encourage or allow it to act in the world. And principal among these delusions is the foolish adolescent idea that the primary good of life is feelings of pleasure (509a).

Socrates’ distinctions about lies present a plausible set of relations: they allow us to compare two kinds of verbal lie. The child’s verbal lie to his mother about how the toaster got broken, when accepted, puts the mother in a state of believing the true lie about both her child and the toaster. This verbal lie puts the person lied to in the worst position—the true lie; from this position mother cannot put matters right safely—in fact, she is less able to do so. On the other hand, the parent’s verbal lie to the child about Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy puts the child into a similar delusional position, but her lie gets the child to at least practice the right actions—stop whining about the missing tooth, for instance. That the baby’s tooth is worth a nickel (and a more inflated value is a less adequate lie) is still a delusion, but it is closer to the truth about the tooth than that it is something worthy of tears: the child’s new delusion, we say, is closer to the important truths about its own life and the life it shares with all the rest of us than the old one. In addition, beliefs about fairies and fat men who fit down chimneys are rather easily escaped from; the belief in Aphrodite as the one true goddess rather less so—until one gets to a certain age, according to Sophocles and Cephalus. But that was then; now we have pharmacies.

In telling either lie (the child’s or the parent’s) we are already within a certain horizon; a certain set of conditions is active in every communicative act (truthful or lying). These conditions need not be consciously agreed to, or even known, by all parties at all times. Now, to become more particular about them: 1) the communicants share a world—of language, things, and human psychic nature; 2) the world has ordered goods and dangers; 3) we communi-

cate about these goods and dangers in our talk to each other; 4) we can have or lack real concern for the person with whom we are communicating. We should probably add the fact (which moderns may deny but Plato and Aristotle accept) that: 5) in any case, we will continue sharing this world (1+2) in the future.¹⁶ The child's lie (but not the parent's) is forgetting or disregarding (5) and is not concerned about the good of the parent (though the parent is concerned with the good of the child) in its communication (4). While both parties assume 2 and 3, they do not have the same knowledge or order of what counts as goods and dangers (one of them is deluded or ignorant) and so in the child's lie the aim of the communication is *really* for a world in which the all elements *will not be able to share* (for it is not a world in which the adult can safely fix the toaster); the adult's lie also does not share the same idea of goods and dangers as the child, but *does* aim at a world in which they *will all be able to share* (which entails sharing not only the world, but the ordered moral vision of it). The child's lie leads on, in its extreme case, to disaster and singularity: the child loses both toast and parent to electrocution. That this doesn't happen in every case is a happy accident that comes from not taking the child at his word. The parent's lie leads on to a more fully shared world, sharing both the properly weighted measure and actuality of goods and dangers. The child's lie leads on to the world Thrasymachus posited as origin—the solitary individual who orders his world as he wills (whether he knows what he wills or not); the parent's lie induces the child to participate in the world Socrates posited as the real truth about us: one in which the good enlightens us all about the truth and value of things in a world of human interdependence. *Tertium non datur*. Mother's lie is a Janus that leads the child into the world of fuller reality; the child's is a Janus leading mother into a world completely different from the real—perhaps to the separate world of death. The child does not know its lie is doing that, but that is because the child is not seeing how things really are—including their real relative importance, goodness, value. Thus his true lie produces as “a mere reflection” a verbal lie (382c). Mother's will in telling the lie does not abandon the truth about the world we all share, but weaves it tighter; the child's lie is the will to abandon that world—to negate or hide some part of it.

We may think of the therapeutic or educational situation as one in which the deluded or ignorant patient is brought, by a series of verbal lies, to see, believe, and act on the truth that is shareable by all, in the world of goods and dangers we all share. More accurately: first to act on, thereafter to believe, and only much later, to see and know. There are pharmaceutical remedies that work something like that—step down nicotine patches for those attempting to escape the mad master known as the Marlboro man, for instance. In moral matters it is particularly plausible to think that right action *has to* precede true knowledge: habituation precedes both moral knowledge and

moral action in the full sense, and it makes us more capable of both—or less. That is Plato's (and Aristotle's) position, and it both notices the fact of, and *requires*, a certain sort of precognitive mimesis—as well as the kind of thing Socrates calls a noble lie, the kind of lie that moves one to act in accord with a truth he does not yet see or believe—by getting him to feel, believe, or act something like it. If we are in a cave, getting out means facing a fire; but the first effect of facing the fire is painful blindness; where one cannot see, one must believe, or be moved by blind mimesis. How one moves here “matters a great deal, or rather, makes all the difference” (*NE* 1103b 23–25). Illusion, or the verbal lie, then, can be an adjuvant, it can mitigate or cure, or it can cause delusion. By contrast, Freud holds illusions are one and all palliative measures: there are no bad drugs. Whatever gives pleasure in this realm should be allowed.

Socrates' basic distinction between true and verbal lies, prescinding from the distinction between types of verbal lie, is equivalent to Freud's distinction between delusion and illusion except perhaps for one issue: Freud describes both the artist *and his audience* as recognizing art's illusion as not the true reality; Socrates' verbal lie is recognized by the maker as not the true reality, but seems *not* to be so recognized by the hearer (or audience of the work of art)—in fact the verbal lie works to move the hearer toward the truth precisely because it is *believed*. This looks to be an important difference, and that Plato misunderstands something about art that Freud has got correct. Dr. Freud points out, however, that the life of the imagination “was expressly exempted from the demands of reality testing” in psychic development and that works of art “bring about a transient withdrawal from the pressure of vital needs” (*CD* 31). Such descriptions of how art works correspond to something important in the Socratic verbal lie, namely that it is a *transient* illusion; it is meant to produce a temporary affection in the soul, and so is unlike the delusion it mitigates, cures, or protects us from, by being an adjuvant into the truth. The verbal lie is built by Plato, as Marx imagined a certain state, to be self-dissolving. The truth that is in it, and the truths it is connected to, dissolve the noble lie from within *and* without. Further, if the life of imagination is exempt from the demands of reality testing as Freud says, then so long as we are entranced by the work of art, the question of whether we believe it to be true (as the verbally lied to person does) is at least unanswerable by Freud, and perhaps best answered by him as Socrates himself understands it—for the time being we are *living in* the verbal lie of the artwork, we are “believing” it, we are undergoing the order (*kosmos*) the fiction organizes around us, which order is the horizon for all else. Thus too it provides a substitutive satisfaction for Freud—we undergo its imaginary ordering—one in greater accord with Id.

The Noble Lie

We should consider one further distinction Plato or Socrates might be making. Book 2 regarded some verbal lies as “useful and not deserving of hatred” (382c), but in book 3 he recalls that contrivance—“one of those lies which comes into being in the case of need”—as “a noble lie to persuade, in the best case, even the rulers” (413b–c). The noble lie of book 3, though called “what we were just now speaking of” (413b), seems perhaps a step more positive than the merely necessary, good-as-a-means-only contrivance of book 2. First, it is “noble” which might be higher than the kind of thing that is good merely as a means. On the other hand, the adjective is perhaps not as strong as *kalon*, for while *gennaion* (true to one’s birth, well bred, noble) has an opposite (*agennes*, low born, sordid, literally without a genetic line) and an intensive (*eugenês*, well born, noble), a completely neutral term is not available. Thus Plato’s word choice may indicate a point we have already made: *gennaoin/agennes*—no morally neutral lies; all works of art are either cathartic or polluting. But a second point still seems strange. If the well-bred lie is the one that leads into the truth—or breeds true, why would we want a lie that takes in even the rulers, those who are going to be making rules about which lies the visiting poets may tell (414c)? How will they be able to judge correctly of new poems and songs if they too are believing the false—even if it is a well-bred falsity?

That the story Socrates proceeds to tell (after much hesitation) echoes the mythic foundation of Thebes as well as Athens’ own legend of Erichthonius also gives us pause: why all the throat clearing before telling a tale that is not, after all, so unusual? Glaucon has no device for convincing the first inhabitants, but—rather surprisingly—thinks the second generation might not have so many problems (perhaps birth will be something they come to be inattentive to?). It is hard to tell what Plato or his contemporaries made of such myths of origin, though at least the earlier mythographers had the sense to put such stories deep in the past rather than saying the child was born yesterday out of the earth. (How will we get the golden mothers to be taken in by this I wonder?) In any case, Socrates hints that it does not much matter: “well, then, this will go where the report of men shall lead it” (415d). We know where the report of men leads: to mimetic repetition. The important thing about such stories, then, is the habitual practices and horizon for thought and feeling they give rise to.¹⁷ In this case, the story has clear aims: to challenge the children to prove they are well born, rather than base; to promote their brotherhood with each other and love for their mother, the land they live on. The noble lie, then, is not well bred, so much as something that breeds true—from it truths flower. What is *gennaion*, like the noble lie, breeds *into* the truth.¹⁸ So the children (and adults) will prove they are well born by behaving at all times like those who the story says are golden: those

who know their own good and the good of the whole city are indivisible, those who are gentle to their fellow citizens, and watch out for their good rather than private gain—indeed they treat others as if they are their own family. These are things we want the leaders—and, if possible, all the citizens—of the city to think, but even though *the story* is false, *the practices* of such leaders and citizens are the same as those of the true city: the one that grows truly from Socrates' opening principle—no one is self-sufficient, each depends on all. In their speech—to themselves and others—the leaders will repeat this familial rhetoric (462b–d, 463b–e). Thus the noble lie in speech brings forth truth in deed: the philosopher kings really do believe all are one family; they believe it in deed. They really do believe the earth is their mother, and they believe in deed that it is the mother of all. They also know they have a superiority not having anything to do with money or property. With that sort of superiority they want nothing to do—in fact, they consider it hazardous in deed both to themselves and their city. For, among other things, such property superiority generally arises from, and always breeds, mimetic competition—not a mimesis of what is really the good for the human being and for all. The later leaders are, in this way, believing the noble lie—even when they know who their biological mother and father are.

So too, a city founded on the proposition that all men are created equal would (I imagine) have leaders who spoke and acted according to that story at all times and in every decision;¹⁹ their literal and historical beliefs about the foundation of the city may go where they will. The well born or noble lie, then, is not necessarily to cure a mania, but to bring up citizens within the horizon of a story that *incites to true* citizenry in the true or healthy city—the only city where citizen is a true word.²⁰ It would be told even in the healthy city because children operate wholly in the realm of imagination and story, not that of philosophy and history; in a world of mimesis, not reflection or knowledge: such a story breeds true in them. And the mimetic practices and speech this story engenders will even take up the next generation's leaders, who will know and believe its spiritual sense—in which spirit they always act. On the other hand, Thrasymachus' story of origins breeds false; breeds, in fact, from impossibility (*poleis* are entirely artificial) to impossibility (I am the solitary strong man). Perhaps some other story will breed true so well as the one Socrates invents, but by breeding true we mean breeding the children toward the “true and healthy city”—and we *need a story* to do this; we must have *mimeses* which breed this way—*gennaios* lies, for this is how we first learn. “We will be satisfied if [such stories bring us] as close as possible, and participate in [the true city] the most” (472c). This is one mode of answer to that Platonic problem: what is participation in the form of the Good?

Socrates' more exacting distinctions among verbal lies, as those which are useful and not deserving of hatred (disabling delusion), those that are positively noble (the adjuvant), and those which are not so but are dangerous

(and so excised from any state serious about raising its children) are not available to Freud. They do, however, depend (in the case that started this long discussion) on knowledge of the truth about the gods' activities—which Socrates has said we do not have (382c), or alternatively about the good for the human psyche, which is the matter the discussion of *Republic* as a whole is meant to resolve and so cannot be answered this early on without begging the question (392c). It is also a matter of debate between Plato (and the ancients) and Freud (and the moderns). Unfortunately, if Socrates really doesn't have knowledge of what counts as either human virtue or holy deeds and divine goodness, then while his distinction between useful verbal lies and dangerous ones may be objectively true, it is not true *for us*; it is a truth beyond our application, so useless for us. As some say is the case with God, we can know that he is, but not what he is; perhaps we can know what he is not. So here, some drugs may be noble, but even if they are, we have no idea which ones; can we know which are not? Or is it impossible for us to liken our stories about the god in any way to the truth? How can we find a truly medicinal *pharmakon* in the music of *Republic*? Or does Socrates mean to imply here a postmodern political theory which eschews such questions?

COMING TO KNOW THE TRUTH (ABOUT THE GODS AND HEROES)

Mimesis in the Dialogue/Mimesis of the Dialogue

Instead of following along with the surface of this dialogue as *Socrates* continues to build his story of a city filled only with beautiful stories, by which he seems to mean stories approved by Thomas Bowdler, let us consider what *Plato* must be gadflying us to consider by having his characters agree to such blank stupidities: we must tell only truth about the gods or heroes even though we do not know what they have done. Short of divine inspiration (something divine happening to us, 368a) how can we have any knowledge of what those things are, or what the true good is for the gods—much less for a human soul—so that we can make the correct laws about our stories, the mimesis of which mimeses will lead us there? Is something divine happening to us that we can even see that this question is necessary here? Is there something divine in the fact that we ask? Does Adeimantus reveal something about the divine in the way that he answers, even as he confesses ignorance about it?

If we are really going to understand Plato's views about delusion and illusion, we eventually must come to terms with his explanation of what counts as knowledge and how we get it, which topic surfaces in the middle books and which we will examine in chapter 4. In book 1, however, Socrates had presented several possibilities for persuading people to the truth when

they disagree with one another. The first is “setting speech against speech . . . counting the good things and measuring how many each has. . . . Then we’ll be in need of some sort of judges to decide” (348ab). This, of course, implies that we can find a judge who knows about these things, which begs the questions of a) how the judge got such knowledge—which we don’t have—and b) how, not having knowledge of the matter, we would know which judge to pick. The second method he suggests is to consider together: asking questions of each other’s definitions and distinctions, and answering until each one’s questions are satisfied or the definition or distinction is abandoned—thus coming to “agreement with one another, [where] we ourselves shall be both judges and pleaders at once” (348b). The interlocutors *within* the dialogue agree to the second method and, as Socrates points out, they have been practicing it all along; moreover, we have been involved mimetically in just that kind of discussion, and Plato expects us to be working in the same way *with his* dialogue. Furthermore, even to see that this way is better than the first seems to require that we are already seeing things in the light of the good; as if something divine has *grasped us*.

If this second is the better approach, then perhaps we can get some way along to understanding how we can distinguish good drugs from bad by looking carefully at how Socrates leads Adeimantus, and considering whether we should agree with the agreements they come to. I am suggesting, then, that when Plato presents in the dialogue either an *aporia* where we are looking for an agreement, or an agreement among interlocutors where we see an *aporia*, he is constructing an *artistic gadfly* to instigate our thinking, and he is probably also opening a particular way out of the difficulty for those of us who have been bitten into movement—or at least stopped in our blithe skimming—by the dialogue. More precisely, as a mimesis of philosophical activity, what is going on *in* the mimesis (at what we have called the second level) draws us into a similar activity on the third level—unless we are trying to read “Platonic teachings” off the first level surface of the dialogue (which reading is mimetically instigated by someone else—not Plato). We are drawn into mimesis *of* the dialogue when we stop at the *aporia* Adeimantus and Socrates have skated over. Something divine is happening—the golden cord, which connects us to the gods (*Laws* 645a)—is stopping us from skating exactly as they do because we have been mimetically drawn into practicing the very process the interlocutors have agreed to and been practicing: not to treat a question as resolved until it is clear to us what we are agreeing to. An *aporia* is a window through which it is possible for the light of the good to come and grasp us. The mimesis we are reading thereby aims to initiate an attentive activity in us, and it does so—if we are truly reading, not flossing our eyeballs with the lines of the text or looking for evidence for some idea we have or have been given (which may be delusive and so disordering to our reading—as well as our life). Not philodoxy, but philosophy is the activ-

ity of “ascent to what is” and has the power to “bring [the philosopher kings] into being and lead them up to the light” (521c). Plato’s production of mimeses aims at *producing philosophy not philodoxy* in the reader; philodoxy, especially concerning “Plato’s position” is expressly blocked by the fact that in his mimeses *the poet nowhere appears* (cf. 393c).

Immediately after introducing Adeimantus to the idea that we don’t know the truth about the ancient deeds of gods and heroes, Socrates asks several theological questions; let us first examine these two: would the god tell verbal lies because he does not know the truth about ancient things? or because he is frightened of enemies (382d)? Adeimantus’ negative answers imply that ignorance (particularly of past deeds) and fear of enemies are not ever the divine position: “far from it” (382e).

A historicist might wonder whether these negations are true of the Greek gods. Though there are no stories of any of them being ignorant of their own past deeds, Zeus does seem to have some fear of what Prometheus knows (and he does not) just as Kronos was afraid of his own children, though he did not know which and did not find out about the hiding or know the difference between the flavor of a rock and that of an infant. Since he knew one of the children would be his downfall, but not which, the Titanic father swallowed all of them (he thought)—at birth. Knowledge would have helped him sort things better. This is one token of the type of story Socrates is cutting out—for the good of the children. But I do not think that this historical-scholarly quibble is of any use either to understanding Plato’s point or for our own investigation of the truth (as well as delusions and illusions) about the human soul and its happiness; to follow it up as being important is delusory. It might be a well-respected, neatly footnoted delusion, but nonetheless it leads away from knowledge about the most important things.

More important for our consideration than such historical niceties is whether it makes sense to think of a god as not knowing the truth about things (especially himself) or being frightened of enemies. Can a god be deluded? Or chickenhearted? Only in a comedy. That Aristophanes has already provided an example of such a ridiculous deity in *Frogs* is a sign that the Greeks recognized this same theological truth. Their laughter at the Dionysus on stage springs from their pious recognition of the truth about the god on the god’s own festival day.²¹ Piety is a comic and ridiculous virtue (i.e., not a virtue at all) unless the god has knowledge (particularly about himself) and is a being beyond both courage and fear. Through Socrates’ questions, Plato is taking us a bit further than Aristophanic laughter; his questions move us to consider the conditions for the possibility of our laughter, and what it signifies. Here, the source of laughter (and of calling the idea ridiculous) is *knowledge of a truth about the god*—which the pretender on stage is clearly not, nor even personating. Our judgment is the same regarding each of Socrates’ godly gadfly suggestions: any such as this would not be god. But *how do*

we know this about the god? The real divine power must be enlightening our mind already.

Perhaps the main difference between Plato's mimeses and those of Aristophanes or Euripides is that, besides raising laughter or tears, fear, pity, sympathy, or desire, the dialogue is constructed to raise suchlike questions in us. A dialogue's *telos* is not merely catharsis of emotion, but while moving through that catharsis to get us to consider (among other things) the conditions for its possibility, for its necessity, to consider what we may not have been able to see before this catharsis, what we can see now, and how we know it to be truer than what we were thinking (or just mimetically rehearsing) before. This would be why it looks like Plato's "'action' is either non-existent or disjointed and aimless" as Gonzalez complains.²² Plato is not aiming *just* for emotional catharsis, but *through that* to better understanding of the truth about ourselves; the dialogues' *telos* provokes the kind of self (and politic) examination Socrates effected in person; it is not possible for a work of art to finish this task off neatly (*pros ta theatra*) even though it may itself be perfectly finished (*kath auto*, cf. *Po* 1449a7–8). Aristophanes (who also never wrote a philosophical essay) might very well share with Plato the view that under the condition of delusion we cannot approach the second effect (understanding) without having suffered the first (catharsis of emotions).

So, regarding the original vacant-seeming agreement voiced by Socrates and Adeimantus, despite the fact that we don't know what the gods did in ancient times, we *are* (*mirabile dictu!*) still able to make laws about which stories are closer to the truth, particularly those which will bring us closer to the truth about the god by mimetically inciting the practice of those who *are* closer to the god—the pious: Stories that make the god foolish, deluded, or chickenhearted can't be true; piety requires their falsity—and laughs.²³ So, let us harmonize with Socrates and Adeimantus on their first two theological conclusions: the god can't be that way. In doing so, we too must already have *some* feeling for, and understanding of, piety (as do Adeimantus and the entire theater of Aristophanes' play). Something divine is already working in all of us, and in the citizens of Athens when they laugh at the Dionysus Aristophanes presents, just as Socrates says something divine must be working in the sons of Ariston that they can defend injustice so effectively yet not (it seems) believe it (368a). This laughter is explained by the Athenian Stranger as the loosening of hard and iron cords so that the divine puppet responds to the gentle pull of the golden one (cf. *Laws* 803e, 804b). We now see how that happens, and that it is happening. By such choral dances the gods become propitious to us—for we are hearing them better.

The two agreements that follow each of these—"so there is no lying poet in a god?" and that they would not lie "because of the folly or madness [of their friends]" (382de)—we should, however, probably sing counter to. In

fact, it seems most pious *for us* to do so. For the fact that he has knowledge and no fear does not imply that the god would not lie, since he must *know* that lying can be a useful *pharmakon*. A healing Apollo, then, would use it, particularly if one of his human worshipers were foolish or mad. I would myself prefer this *pharmakon* to the sending of a plague, and hope that my *hubris* never goes so far as to inflame the god in the latter direction. In fact, just as a human being with a madman at the door, the god might find it *necessary* to deceive a mistaken human friend—not for the god’s safety at all, but for the friend’s. And the conclusion, “there is nothing for the sake of which a god would lie . . . [and] the daemonic and divine are wholly free from lie,” far from being “completely certain” (382a) is, then, necessarily false.²⁴ If the god cares about men who can sometimes be deluded, and if the only cure of such delusion is through use of a *pharmakon*, as we have discussed, then it is *necessary* for the god to be a lying poet.²⁵ Indeed, what Socrates says next, that the god “does not deceive others by illusions . . . or the sending of signs either in waking or dreaming” (382e–383a), is exactly opposed to what we should think is required “if there are gods and they care” (365e) about men, all of whom may some time be ignorant, foolish or deluded. That Socrates’ divine sign speaks *directly* to him is evidence that he is the least deluded among men; for the rest of us. . . . No pious and thoughtful human being can agree that it appears (*phainetai*, 383a) as Adeimantus says; no matter that Socrates has said it. If it is possible to be deluded, it is necessary that a god who cares use the *pharmakon* which can cure or mitigate our madness; we must and can only hope for, and in, such a god. We *know* this through our consideration of the relation of illusion, delusion and truth. How else could a god break through our mimetically induced and strengthened delusions?²⁶

Is such a divine lie a deception *simpliciter*? Such a question forgets the distinctions among lies. Let us call it a deception into the truth, constructed for a foolish and impious creature, who can only make himself and all his society unhappy so long as he remains as he is. That we can see Agamemnon is such a creature when he presumes to interpret the signs and dreams of the god—as if his own heart’s desire is to come true that very day (cf. *Rep* 383a; *Il.* 1.2.1–40)—is something we can see in Homer’s poem, too. If we are “to be god-fearing and divine insofar as a human being can possibly be” (383c), then the conclusion given above is what we should agree to, not what Adeimantus and Socrates say. Further, if it is true that human beings, especially poets, lie frequently, and many—if not all—are sometime believing the false about their own souls and happiness, then much of human life is the drinking of poison from the mouths of others. Perhaps we are already in that happy place of constant drunkenness Adeimantus’ earlier indictment of education only posited as achievable after death (363d). In such a case any friendly god has a lot of work to do. Especially since, unless we “drink this wine of errors,

proffered . . . by [our] drunken teachers, [we are] flogged as being good for nothing and have no freedom to appeal to any sober judge.”²⁷ Or perhaps we are offered hemlock, or brought to a conclusion *ad baculum*, for failing to join the party, or worse, for attempting to drag someone from it.

So should we ban *Frogs*, or bring Aristophanes up on charges of corrupting the youth? Hardly: the creation of an open absurdity allows us first to feel (and now) to see more clearly some truth.²⁸ Plato is practicing a similar comic trope by having his interlocutors agree to the inconcinnyities we are investigating: we should laugh at such inanities, and then consider, and consider the way that the discussion itself is (backasswardly) walking itself. Plato's creation of such an absurdity as 382c–d (which escapes every interlocutor's attention) and then having a character point out an absurdity very like that whale at 392a–c can, and does, engender a certain wonder (what can these clowns be thinking?), which passion leads us to consider more carefully, and on to a further wonder—how is it *we know* what the pious should say? How is it we felt Aristophanes' Dionysus to be wholly *geloion*? Something divine must be happening to us. Just so, representations of a cowardly foolish god awakens to a truth: this is a slave in god's clothing. The real god is so far above such a one that we laugh at the pretense—and in that laughter, laugh too at the attitudes and passions that pretense embodies, which at some time we might have felt, or might yet feel. It is a laughter that opens us up not merely to glory in our superiority to such foolishness, but to humility before the real divine, by virtue of whose presence to us we see the contradiction. Such laughter is symptomatic of a purification, a catharsis, a loosing from a mad master; we thereby begin a truer freedom, and are protected from believing such passions as are at play in the play worthwhile by having already laughed at them heartily. It is also an indication that we already know, we have already felt and seen enough of the good to recognize the truth.²⁹

Once upon a time, it was a popular trope to precede references to Plato with the epithet “divine.” In presenting this *aporia* about speaking of the divine within the mimesis, has Plato not done all that he can to gadfly readers who are participating by mimesis and—at least occasionally—thought, into the antistrophic chorus we have just outlined? The *aporia* recognized *in* the mimesis (after missing a logically similar one ten pages earlier) sets in motion a counterdance of philosophical discussion in those of us attending *to* the mimesis. Thus the god's portion (493a, cf. 492a) within us—the golden cord of reason (*Laws* 645a)—begins to work in the same way as every other human thing: through mimesis.³⁰ But it alone can free us from slavery to mimesis; only by virtue of the golden cord can a human being (if ever) come to stand against the mimetic infections of society. The defense I have presented of how the god would work upon men (if he cared) is not *in* Plato's mimesis, but instigated *by* it, and this antistrophe is shaped in us through attending to the strophe of his mimesis. In this way the divine Plato proves a

friend both to us and to the truth—even while his characters are lying or foolish, and Plato himself inventing a fiction. If Plato can lie so well, could not the god? Perhaps the whole cosmos is an apparent order hiding a truth deeper than itself, and we are shaped to that truth first of all through mimesis of that *opseōs kosmos*. *Timaeus*, too, is a fiction made as much like the truth as possible; it speaks of engendering an order (30a) and truly bears one in its readers.

NOTES

1. In the case of Thrasymachus, Socrates has managed the argument while keeping what his interlocutor most insisted upon: that ruling is a *technê*—indeed the most masterful of all. What keeps Thrasymachus quiet for so long might be precisely this open door to a real *technê* for ruling; Socrates' masterful use of Thrasymachus' own premise shows Socrates is not merely one of the sniveling sheep, but more the lion tamer (343a–b, 341c). Nor does this mean Socrates thinks politics a mere matter of technocratic expertise, as Thrasymachus very well might.

2. I presume Derrida's play with this word's significance in *Phaedrus*—"Plato's Pharmacy" (*Dissemination* [Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981]—applies in the context of *Republic* as well; indeed Derrida suggests tracing this word through the entire corpus. The entire corpus is a set of *pharmaka*. I also presume Plato is aware of the multivalence of the term, not—as some Derrideans would have it—surprised to find himself within the retort of his language. Richard Robinson's difficulty—that there is an "inconsistency between Plato's principles and his practice about images: According to [his principles] . . . he ought never to use them; yet his works are full of them" (*Plato's Earlier Dialectic*, 2nd [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953]), 220–221)—is both too weakly stated and misses Plato's point. *All* of Plato's works *are* images Robinson's sense—they are mimetic works; Plato does not just *use* imagery within them. *Republic*, which Robinson particularly criticizes, makes perfectly clear that mimeses have an inescapable presence and importance in every polity: we must get them right, not get rid of them. Robinson reads only the *surface* of book 10; he reads Plato's mimeses as if only *containing* mimetic elements.

3. Mitchell at times seems to consider (1) that mortality itself is an illness, and at other times (2) that mortal man has contracted an illness or been poisoned or become drunk. The first strikes me as a plausibly Judeo-Christian, but not plausibly a naturalist, view—for death first comes into the world by sin on the religious view, rather than simply being a natural fact. In this case either the Christian or the naturalist must be deluded. The second might take no stand on mortality's naturalness, but holds we are all poisoned or drunk as well; this view both Christianity and naturalism, such as Freud's and some modern political theory, could accept. It is merely trivially true that "there can be no cure . . . unless the patient is first ill" (*Plato's Fable*, 19), but it is also the case that proper catharses might prevent one from developing an illness (as a prophylactic), and proper regular exercise might help one to grow stronger and more healthily (as an adjuvant). It is certainly true that "Plato's fable" presumes human beings are quite susceptible to poison, inebriation and illness, and so need *pharmaka*, but it clearly allows *pharmaka* to be adjuvant as well as curative (cf. Mitchell, *Plato's Fable*, 18–19). Socrates' prescription of certain mimeses (and proscription of others) for children indicates such adjuvant, not merely curative or poisonous, conceptions. But if prophylaxis or adjuvant working is possible, then the disease is not necessarily (or *a priori*, Kant would say) universally true about human nature. It may still *be* universally true that we are all foolish, ill, drunk or even in sin, but the fact is contingent. Insofar as we grow *into* reason from the infant world of desire and sensation, we are all born encaved, but we *need* not have stayed seated there so long as to get stuck. Plato's position on this particular gets clearer in chapter 4. Kant's understanding of our moral corruption is similar: it is universal, but not *a priori* necessary (*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, book 1).

4. *Laws* presents a similar mixing for “those things we call songs, but which are really incantations for souls:” they must mix “the needed nourishment . . . with other pleasant tasting foods and drinks” (659e, 660a).

5. The use of a verbal lie which is like enough to the truth to disable a passion’s working thus does as Nietzsche suggests: “under iron pressure at least one of these [self-contradictory] instinct systems [must] be paralyzed to permit another to gain in power. . . . Today the individual still has to be made possible by being pruned.” See *Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes of an Untimely Man” #41, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1968).

6. The Greek word *mousikê* refers generally to all the arts of the muses, not just music. So epic, lyric, dance, comedy, tragedy, music and song are all included. Socrates will later add that all the other craftsmen—including painters, embroiderers and housebuilders (401ab)—must be subject to similar rules. It seems counterintuitive not to include all of what we call the arts—movies, video games, advertisements, cartoons, etc.—in what this discussion implies.

7. That every verbal lie attempts to put the hearer in the position of the true lie is also pointed out by Schofield, “The Noble Lie,” 145.

8. Naddaff agrees that the “pharmakon—the useful drug . . . becomes a necessary lie speaking the truth of which everyone, including the philosopher, is ignorant” (28). She seems unaware that stating things this way is itself entirely problematic; certainly her book disallows that Plato solves the problem, since he doesn’t see it.

9. Immediately after these last words appear in Augustine’s *Confessions*, there follows these: “and it is shameful not to be shameless” (2.9.17). We might read that scene as Augustine’s presentation of the mimetic infection of sin. Here in *Republic*, Adeimantus, admitting to knowing nothing about the ancient doings of the gods, yet follows Socrates’ instigation to tell a story about what it would have been good for them to do. *Either* this act is impious hubris (as Augustine’s) *or* the truth about the gods must somehow be present to Adeimantus even in his self-confessed unawareness (also true of Augustine).

10. As Augustine describes it, “the madness of lust . . . took me completely under its scepter, and I clutched it with both hands” (*Conf* 2.2.4). There is no free hand with which to grasp a newly seen truth, or even a seeming which should be investigated.

11. The historical connection between the modern political delusion and the modern misunderstanding of mimesis was discussed in the previous chapter.

12. Freud notes a similar problem curing cultural neuroses: “For a group all of whose members are affected by one and the same disorder no [normal] background could exist; it would have to be found elsewhere. . . . [Further,] what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses authority to impose . . . therapy upon the group?” (*CD*, 110).

13. Compare Habermas, *BNR*, 143.

14. This reference to Aristophanes’ invention of a place between the mundane world of current social and political stupidity and the world of divine happiness has sometimes been applied to Socrates’ creation of the *kallipolis* in *Republic*; generally the reference is negative (as here). But both in the case of Aristophanes and of Plato *the comedy* may be effective in our city, even if the city created in the comedy is impossible or you can’t get there from here. It may show a real stupidity or delusion so clearly that we no longer accept it; our laughter (or disgust) is part of a curative cathartic practice. Laughing at some passion or desire of our own weakens enchainment to it. It is the comic version of 2 Samuel 12:1–7; as Nathan told his story there, so the king’s passions were turned strongly and correctly—and then he sees: *de te fabula narratur*.

15. It is not at all necessary to posit these two instincts as basic. As Rene Girard points out in *Job*, “one principle is enough for both” sorts of activity: the mimetic nature of the human being (63). Both of Id’s basic operations arise through the mimetism which is natural to us. Then the rest of Freud’s story remains unchanged: art (taking the place of religion in Girard) is a weak repetition of the mimetic disaster, briefly satisfying, putting off the full blown repetition.

16. This fact is indicated in Socrates’ distinction between war among Greeks or against barbarians (469e–471a); those of shared language and land we must eventually reconcile with. This seems a noble lie; it is literally false, but figuratively true. The falsity consists (like a

Polemarchan error about justice) *in the limitation* of concern to Greek speakers. If we really are speaking with each other, we must—even if we are understanding through translation—be already in agreement about what our words say; the question is whether our speeches are in accord with the way things are (including their worth) in the world we all share. The world will enforce the matter. There is only one of these; we are all in the same world.

17. Schofield considers that the conviction supplied by such stories will become “so deeply entrenched that its unphilosophical and predialectical dictates will in the end trump all other considerations” and lead the philosophers back to the cave despite having “discovered something incomparably more important than the city, and also far more desirable as a good” (“The Noble Lie,” 163, 162). The first part is exactly correct, but, if my argument holds, the noble lie, while indeed being more deeply sourced than the philosophical and dialectical, must find its fulfillment *in the truth* philosophy discovers, else it is not noble or true breeding. The *gennaios* lie perfects nature—breeds it truly—(this is why it is self-dissolving), rather than perverting nature. The philosophers, in *any* city in which they come to be, know that they are not the godlets Thrasymachus or other round men (*Sym* 189e–190c) think themselves to be; they will go down out of love for the truth about themselves—they are part of the human enterprise, necessarily and necessary, no matter that their city thinks them useless or a corruption of the youth. And this is justice, which they also entirely love, though it leads to whipping and crucifixion (362a). Considerably more argument concerning this matter will be taken up in chapters 5 and 6.

18. The same word is used of the true bred hunting dogs who model the gold and silver marriages at 459a.

19. I suppose this implies there would be no private pork (ct. 373c).

20. That the true and healthy city Socrates is forced to abandon due to Glaucon’s desire for luxuries really is the true and healthy city will be defended in chapters 5 and 6. It is assuredly not a city of pigs.

21. “*Geloion*,” laughable, ridiculous, is Adeimantus’ evaluation of the idea of an ignorant god (382d). As a historical note, I do not think it possible to doubt that Plato is thinking of Aristophanes when he uses the word here. To see (or listen to) such stories and *not* laugh would itself be a sign (cf. 388d)—and not of something laughable.

22. See Francisco Gonzalez, *Dialectic and Dialogue: Plato’s Practice of Philosophical Inquiry* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 145.

23. Timaeus uses a similar argument (again on the festival of a goddess): “it would be blasphemous even to say,” that the god looked at a model “that has come to be,” rather than one that is eternal in crafting the universe (29a). Where one option is blasphemous, the other must be true—or truer. Using a model that has come to be would imply that the god was ignorant of the truth until such time as the appropriate model came to be.

24. Mitchell thinks we cannot tell whether a god would lie until “after the nature and magnitude of human self-deception is disclosed”; certainly a god “does not harbor the truth from himself” (*Plato’s Fable*, 38). There is certainly nothing of the true lie in the god: that would be utterly ridiculous (as *Frogs* illustrates).

25. The other option (given human delusion and divine care) is given by Aquinas: divine revelation is necessary because without it the truth about their own happiness will only be discovered by a few human beings, after a long time and with an admixture of much error (*STI*, q.1, art.1). This answer admits (as does what I am arguing must be Plato’s position) that philosophy cannot, in principle, be self-sufficient: we are in need of the God’s care. Philosophy is handmaiden, or midwife, to the divine truth. This “or” is not necessarily exclusive.

26. I suppose the god could become human, dwell among us and willingly suffer under the mimetically induced delusions of men, all along lighting up our ignorance of what we are doing and its source; this is what Girard says is the case, in *Things Hidden*, book 2.

27. Augustine, talking about his teachers in the liberal arts in *Conf* 1.16.25.

28. So I do not agree with Gonzalez that dialogue is unlike poetic imitation in being a flawed, flat and pale imitation lacking “a distinctly aesthetic” unity, which—according to him—makes it “a work of art we can see through” (*Dialectic and Dialogue*, 145). That is near the purpose of *all* worthwhile mimesis: to be that through which we come into and feel the truth about the world and so are turned to see; all worthwhile art is that through which window the

light of the good might strike us—if even in the back; to be that through which we might, even before reason, be brought to likeness of and love for the good. Other art merely increases our drunkenness.

29. So cartoons of Allah's prophet are either not of the prophet of God, or else are of a prophet who is not God's. To riot over them is a confession, in less religious language, it is symptomatic.

30. "Isn't it evident that he, who under another's questioning moves himself within to God to know the unchangeable truth, cannot be reminded by any outside warning to see that truth, unless his memory hold *his own same movement?*" But how could we already move that way, and when did we begin it if not by mimesis, uncognizant as we are of its presence—until reminded? See Augustine, *De Musica* (tr. R. C. Taliaferro), in *Writings of Saint Augustine*, vol. 2, edited by Ludwig Schopp (New York: CIMA, 1947), 361; 6.12.36.

Chapter Three

Enlarging Homer

An Aristophanic Sex Comedy

Better well hung than ill wed.¹

Book 5 is often considered Plato's most Aristophanic comic writing.² The question is, what is the import of this comic, ironic—or is it serious?—part of the dialogue? Is it a proleptic *amicus curiae* brief that dares bring Title Nine to face “Brown v. Board of Education” as a jury-rigging attempt to offer “separate but equal” about a matter which in principle is demonstrably unequal if it is separate?³ Or is it a *reductio ad coed naked absurdum* of the demands democracy is likely to make regarding “equal rights and freedom . . . in the behavior of women toward men and men toward women” (563b)? Or is it merely male hegemony by another name, that is, a proposal that “dispenses with the notion of gender,” but in such a way that “the female guardians . . . should simply turn themselves into men”?⁴ And what should be thought of the entire class of public servants who have no private to call their own and whose sacred matings last maybe a week, and in any case less than two months?⁵ Or what should we make of the expenditure of much time, testing and educational effort to produce exceptional female guardians—whose prime will be spent in celebratory matings—as many as possible—and their consequent pregnancies? Perhaps paying attention to this discussion's place in the dialogue we can measure the extension, purpose and intended dramatic force of these wave-borne questions.

THE NEED FOR THE COMEDY

Socrates and his interlocutors have (supposedly) finished consideration of the city that has been built as a catharsis for Glaucon's excessive desires; they have investigated the just soul that is like it, and the virtues within both city and soul. One half of the terrible, fear-inspiring project laid out by Glaucon and Adeimantus has been accomplished. In book 2 the brothers had demanded that Socrates set up the just man as he is, without rewards and reputations, in order to compare him to the ideal unjust man and answer the question about human happiness. The "just" and purgative city has been founded, the statue of the "just" and purgative man set up, and both city and soul have been polished to finished products with their virtues detailed, and Socrates is ready to go down to the ideally unjust; he is "about to describe [the devolving regimes] in order" (449a) to conclude the projected great argument when Polemarchus pulls on Adeimantus' cloak and whispers something of which Socrates only hears the question, "shall we let it pass or what?" (449b). The question is about sex; Polemarchus, the symbol of the desiring part in the original ex-urban polity of scene one, is at least not demanding and enslaving as he was then, but he still has the ear of the spirited brothers, who are easily co-opted by desire's tongue.

Socrates has been attempting to tamp down and shape desire through most of the discussion, and was hoping he had managed it. Since Glaucon's spirited approval of courtesans and cakes—"many kinds of many of them" (373a)—Socrates has presented a cathartic city, a purification of their souls through the story of a city, in which they agree it is necessary for the education of real guardians to send away certain of the previously invited luxuries—Corinthian girls and Attic pastries among them (404d).⁶ In the course of that long purification there had been one sentence about sharing all things in common with regards to women and children (424a), but despite this rather close girdling (or perhaps face covering, 503a, cf. *Phaed* 237a), Socrates has not been able to spirit Aphrodite far enough away from the quick eyes of Polemarchus. So, just as in an already excised passage of Homer (390c), in which unsleeping Zeus suddenly—at the sight of Hera flitting past in the girdle of Aphrodite—forgets all the plans he had been carefully making, the model polity that has been forming now forgets all about its own high charge and master design, and votes unanimously to pursue *ta aphrodisia*. We will see in a later chapter that this three-book *interruptus* about the details of coitus is itself something of a test—to see who can hold on to the truths about cities while being tempted through the wizardry of sexual pleasure (413d); it is, as well, a further education of desire, and we see that Glaucon (having come to the end of the tale) passes—not only remembering where the train of the discussion got caught in the train of Aphrodite, but also seeing something further about (and through) the argument Socrates has entrained as well.

Having attempted (and largely succeeded) in keeping the youthful and unruly desires in place by inspiring spirit to a way of life directed to an invincibly wisdom-directed honor while building up the city, Socrates now needs some stronger medicine for the desires which are both symbolized by, and introjected afresh into, the discussion by Polemarchus—modernly called Id. The latter's desire for the sex talk is infectious and runs through the whole polity of the house in moments—surging up to Thrasymachus' forceful re-entry into the dialogue (450a, b). It doesn't take much for these noble dogs to start baying together: a whiff of . . . something. The new medicine will have to be stronger than any so far used—a lie that can reach deeper than honor, deeper than the *thymos* which has thus far been Socrates' ally against desire; so no ordinary ridicule will be sufficient—that seems socially constructed and ordered (as is mimetically engendered thumotic competition); something *ridiculous to nature* will have to be brought in: something on par with flying to heaven on a dung beetle, or soldiers—and even old men—with day long and week long erections.

In his book on Greek laughter, which is perhaps a bit too culturally limiting for its most important points, Stephen Halliwell says that “Socrates' case here [in suggesting coed naked wrestling] depends on driving a wedge between local, mutable cultural perceptions . . . and the rational standards of good and bad which he believes should . . . underpin justified laughter.”⁷ I only wish for a little *less* distinction here: suppose Socrates is not *making a case*, but wants to provoke a laughter that will be *cathartic*? Or what if he aims at both at once? That is, suppose the laughter he aims to provoke is our *natural* response to a division between a cultural *nomos*—real or imagined—and a *physis* that can't bend its head so far in the direction the *nomos* pretends it should go? Laughter is nature convulsing. Seeing or feeling what is the case and the laughter occur at the same time, *through* the acrobatic misshaping of *physis* in the comedy. The convulsion is both caused by, and brings us back to, a nature which cannot possibly be all things to itself, or to anyone else; nor can it be whatever it wants (for itself or another)—despite what its hubristic delusions pretend. Eros is full of such things; such excessiveness must be cured or purged; we may not excise eros itself.

At any rate, we see in beginning book 5 that the power of Aphrodite has once again (cf. 373a, 420a) performed a reversal on Socrates in the psychic wrestling of the dialogue, just as she is the most likely contributor to the downfall of the city (546b, d)—and just when he was “rejoicing at having already gotten to the end of it” (450a), perhaps echoing a line Cephalus had put in the mouth of Sophocles (329c–d), or Shakespeare gives to Mercutio. We should not be surprised. As Homer says, she was the downfall of noble cities long before Socrates' time, and many heroes found their death because one among them failed to resist her promised rewards. If the eros of these young men is to be turned rightly—back to a concern with justice, as is

fitting of would-be rulers—Aphrodite will have to be pinned by their mind and spirit, rather than pinning them, as she just has—through the tongue of Polemarchus—to do her service. Or perhaps the wave born golden one must be mocked; according to Homer she runs away from that (*Od.* 8: 360–370, e.g.). The laughter loving goddess does not love to be laughed at: she rather shrinks from it.

PLOTTING THE COURSE

Book 5's first two waves are dialectically structured to make the reader play *between* an essentialism of ungendered human capacities and an essentialism of sexual difference; it is the “between” constructed by these dialectically related poles which defines the realm of the complementarity of the sexes.⁸ Considered as a geometry problem, both of the two hyperbolic endpoints are *exhibited* (not logically demonstrated) as ridiculous solutions to the issues of the upbringing and relation of the sexes. Plato thereby implies that the true relation between the sexes lies somewhere between the ends of these legs, denying both extremes: the true relation is one of natural and necessary complementarity in which an autarchic essentialism of somatic sexual difference is as mistaken as an ideal antimateriality. The sexes have neither definition nor existence except in relation. In other words, if these waves are read correctly, *Plato's* point is that *the male/female relation has logical and ontological priority* to the “parts”; this thought is one of the details implied in the city-founding principle that “no one is self-sufficient.” The *relation* of the sexes has to be understood correctly before the *sides* of the drama can be anything other than ridiculously laid out. *Socrates* proceeds precisely oppositely: he starts from the wrong end, and then closes with the correct first question. Let us call this comic procedure headasswarding the problem; perhaps this is the wrong way. Pretending, first, that the sexes can be understood separately, *Socrates* begins sailing into the first wave by suggesting, “maybe this would be the right way, after the male drama has been perfectly finished, to finish the female drama in turn” (451c). He then concludes the argument at the end of the second wave thus:

Do you agree, then, with the partnership of the women with the men, which we have rehearsed,

. . . that they'll be doing what is best and nothing contrary to the nature of the relation of the female to the male, nothing contrary to the natural community of the two with each other? (466c,d)

As with Thrasymachan and modern possessive individualism this process begins with one, turns to the other, and then asks about the relation. Maybe this is the wrong way; maybe the community is first; that, at any rate is what

Socrates claimed as his first principle of city building. Socrates' dialectical headasswardness here mirrors the movement Polemarchus' book 5 question instigates in the dialogue. For, if the important question is the relation of justice and injustice to happiness and its opposite—and without answering this *no other questions about justice or happiness can be answered correctly*, then skipping over half of that first assignment in order to come—quickly—to discuss the proper measure of *ta aphrodisia* and its enjoyment is as skewed and inconsistent as to talk about the parts of something without an overview of the whole. What such argument results in, then, cannot be expected to be “Plato's teaching about families” or the relation of the sexes, except in a comic, twisted, headassward way. If the head belongs here, then this follows.

But the discussion is more than a fun-house mirror or a contortionist's trick possible only in speech; by inducing disordered desire to shape itself into ever more absurdly acrobatic positions we might be able to *unbend* ourselves into something less queerly ordered; we might, at least, tire of following such a desire's exercises, or the exercises it requires as foreplay. In addition, as true-born (*gennaios*) but comic (*geloios*) and perhaps even common, cheap or low (*phaulos*) lies,⁹ the pictures Socrates' arguments paint must shape to a truth; there must be something in them able to “persuade even the rulers themselves” (414d). Both a good joke and a medicinal lie open one up to a truth, even if neither joke nor lie expresses it directly—or even presents anything possible.

In the case of this headasswardly designed dialectical discussion, each hyperbolic essentialist extremity has political and social implications that Plato is exhibiting perspicuously. Each set of implications is necessarily true if one accepts its hyperbolic originating premise.¹⁰ So, if men and women are essentially and naturally quite different in their psychosexual functions and capacities (gender essentialism concomitant with the autarchy of the sexes—or at least of the male), then the only legitimate argument for equal education and opportunity dissolves. Ancient Athens and modern fundamentalist Islamic regimes are willing to accept these political and social consequences and, quite naturally, think they are right to do so. They are right to do so. The premise of gender essentialism (with or without male autarchy determining the female) *requires* inequality of education and opportunity. Anything else is both ridiculous and a waste of social resources. It follows that adjusting budgets regarding variety and extent of equal looking *divertimenti* for essentially distinct genders is an utterly unsolvable problem (for there is no equality at the root), therefore it can be answered differently every day, guaranteeing full and useless employment to the political class as well as administrators of educational systems. Gender essentialism certifies liberal “equal” educational policy as necessarily incontinent.

Following the other leg, accepting the essentialism about *human* nature which treats gender and sexual relations as inessential and an entirely social construction, leads to—at its best—an entirely utilitarian construction and *technê* of those relations: very like the *technê* of dog breeding. As we might breed dogs for hunting, show, racing, or leading the blind, each society may set up the relationship between the sexes for *whatever* result is considered best (perhaps the greatest pleasure for the greatest number¹¹ rather than Socrates' best moral gene pool—whatever that is). Further, there is nothing in the nature of sex, gender, or natural relation to stand in the way; there is only the stolid impassivity of previous social constructions, now demoted to atavistic prejudice preventing the progressive—or, even better, avant-garde—prejudices from achieving their progressive goal: whatever. Illustrating precisely this point, Socrates takes pains to show how his “sharing” arrangements are “most advantageous” before considering their possibility (457d, 458b).¹² But such a way of arguing is the equivalent of offering a bribe; if the bribe is sufficiently aphrodisiac we have a good idea how his interlocutors will respond—Plato's interlocutors too. At its worst this view would merely leave the sexual relations in a Hobbesian state of nature,¹³ outside political consideration and deliberation—that is, just that total un-touchability of the sexual relation from political and legal “interference” for which some modern liberal democracies argue. Unfortunately for this position, where there are no limits *naturally* drawn to law, the force of law is unlimited, and any arrangement is possible. (Stage direction: the previous sentence should be read with teeth clenched.)

The complementarity *Republic* implies between these hyperbolic legs insists that while it is not an entirely incorrect approach to weigh the embodied difference between men and women, the presumption that the man is one thing and the woman is another (an autarchic notion of the sexual) and only thereafter raising the question of (hegemonic or non-) relations (political, social, economic, and sexual) is a logical and ontological error. Further, this sexual complementarity does not merely lie in their “roles in procreation”—though that is necessarily part of understanding the natural relation, nor is it “in the first place political,” since it is natural.¹⁴ Plato's point is that men and women cannot either be or be humanly understood apart from one another. The first wave, according to the reading to be explicated in this chapter, does *set up* the question of the sexes as a somatically essentialist one; this is how the problem first *appears*, and Athenian social practice read everything off of (or into) this somatic *appearance*, a procedure which Socrates is mocking at 453e–454e.¹⁵ We have been seeking real justice, however, not its appearance; we should seek for it “in some need these have for one another” (372a)—a phrase standing athwart any attempt to define an autarchic being.

Socrates' sailing over the first wave thoroughly discredits the somatic sexual essentialism Athens presumed. His argument there is frequently read

as positing (in its place) a *human* essentialism, discounting most physical, sexual and psychosexual facts (be there any) entirely.¹⁶ It seems the dialectically less sophisticated (or are they more erotically driven?—perhaps these are not really separable questions?¹⁷) young men take it that way, but being more interested in sex than in the person, don't see that the women might be losing something of being a person. Nor, being under the hold of Aphrodite, do they feel that they themselves might be losing something as a person; as Hermes said in another previously redacted story (390c), being held in the newly designed Hephaestan net with a golden girl sounds like a pretty good deal to this godlet.¹⁸ Close attention to the metaphors used within the waves (dogs, horses, fighting cocks: decidedly not persons) and then to the question Socrates asks when sailing over the second wave, requires considerably more dialectical sensitivity. Perhaps the question also requires a bit more humanity, a little less dog. Socrates, in closing, asks his interlocutors (and us) *neither* to consider what is essential to an ungendered human being, *nor* what essentially belongs to one somatic sex rather than another; rather, he asks us to consider the *natural community* of women with men. By emphatically phrasing his concluding question this way Socrates suggests to his interlocutors and to us that we need to think a new tack through these waves—one which is neither as ridiculous as the one he proposes following the first (ideal ungendered) heading, nor one which turns us in the trough to be rolled back under the previous wave as would occur by our following the second (essential and autarchic psychosomatic difference) heading—Athens' own.

As a merely literary point, it seems to me that this Platonic organization of the discussion is an example of how irony works. Satire we might see as single edged; the one coming at you is very sharp, behind it is a blunt moral, relatively easy to grasp. If we are not to reduce irony to satire, we must see that irony challenges us to find a way between the dialectical extremes it posits: the moral, as it were, is "to be discovered" by the one faced with the irony. If a person sees only one of the extremes operative in an ironic situation or text, one is confessing one's dialectical incapacity; perhaps it is due to a hindering eros, an eros that stands between the soul and the light of the good. In attempting to answer he will grab, perhaps, the opposite edge—and something totally unexpected (and probably bad) will happen. Here in book 5 we might see the following irony about the city: The best leaders, we have agreed, are those who cannot possibly make laws for their own benefit apart from the good of the whole city; the denial of all privacy to them effectively controls for this matter. Unfortunately, these laws also destroy the natural human erotic relationship upon which all cities depend for the continuation of the city in time. It looks like the laws must destroy either the best guarantee for good leaders, or destroy the natural human eros for the continuation of the community in time in those leaders. Every city (and citizen) has to solve both problems, at once. We must take the problems and solutions Socrates is

raising in this section both seriously and not seriously at the same time. Seriously, insofar as it makes visible a moral problematic; not seriously, insofar as seriously means taking the literal story as the solution to the problems.¹⁹

Returning to Platonic scholarly particulars, I will be agreeing with Wendy Brown²⁰ that “Plato’s challenges to Athenian masculine practices . . . are delivered not from the standpoint of masculinity’s ‘opposite,’ that is, femininity . . . [rather] his aim is to reduce the distance between them.” I do not, however, agree that “elements of soul, temperament, ethics, thought, and politics, which existed in an antinomous (and gender specific) relation in Plato’s own milieu, he accepted as inherent antinomies.” He is, rather, showing precisely how dialectical antinomies are or are constructed, how they work, and, if not handled with considerable care, how they swamp us with laughter (457b) or reduce us to an absurdity we perhaps are too involved in—are too strongly cathecting—to see. Philosophy is the practice Plato instantiates for sailing in the high seas dialectical antinomies naturally raise; comedy has already been invented to draw us into such extremities as our own cathexes would instantiate, and, through laughter, to purify us of them.²¹ Plato is marrying these.

THE FIRST WAVE

When Polemarchus pulls on Adeimantus’ cloak to restart the dialogue “as if from the very beginning again” (450a), we should see that while he is slightly better behaved than he was on the road out of Piraeus, his desiring part still runs the polity of his own soul, and infects his companions. Whereas earlier he had *demande*d that Socrates come to a party, now he *asks for* details about sex; not unexpectedly, his suggestion wins the vote of all the others, again (cf. 328b, 450a). Socrates responds to the small polity’s newest resolution with trepidation, for he considers that it raises a whole swarm of arguments, which appear to him as three waves—each higher than the next. My argument is that as the waves of argument and threatened laughter grow higher through the middle books, so wave-borne Aphrodite is (again) being brought to order in the participants.

This “re-beginning” of the building of the original city has a number of formal elements that repeat the beginning of Socrates’ first city building. There he had stated as his first hypothesis (H1) that the city is like the soul, only writ large. In what follows we will see (H1’) how the community of man and woman is (writ small) like the community at large (the polis). Socrates uses the same principles used in building his original city, but in reverse order. The two original principles of city building were (H2) non-self-sufficiency and (H3) divergence of natural talent; in the discussion of the

sexual community, the last appears first. This formal argumentative chiasmus performed through the beginning and “re-beginning” gives a very strong indication that Plato, who constructed the poem this way, considers these two principles (H2 and H3) the warp upon which any culture necessarily weaves. Whatever colors or patterns a polis pulls through itself, if these two matters are not anchored according to nature in its laws and practices, the weaving—that is, the polis—will eventually ball itself up into uselessness, or worse.

The first wave Socrates escapes, the then countercultural “equal educational opportunities and requirements” for women, does not seem like a very difficult bit of swimming (or sailing) for contemporary swimmers/readers; it is, however, “not a small swell” (*kuma*, 457c) in Socrates’ and Plato’s Athens. Socrates’ argument about the natural talents of *psyche* “being scattered alike among both” (455d) must have been almost revelatory in its time, and its implication, that each sex *must* receive an education which will discover its talents and educate it properly—both for that soul’s sake and for the good of the city—was clearly beyond the projects of any Athenian politician. That Socratic argument now rings in contemporary Western ears almost as a self-evident truth.²² I say almost self-evident because Plato doesn’t think of education as an opportunity so much as a demand, and this demand does not include much in terms of electives, and will require considerable physical training for all. A state of self-governing citizens logically and ontologically requires things of those citizens, arranging otherwise is madness. Men and women are equally capable of the virtues—intellectual, moral and practical—according to Socrates’ argument. But virtue is only gained through proper education and practice, therefore insofar as the virtues possible are alike, the education and upbringing must also be so. Since human beings are not thought of as originally self-sufficient in Socrates’ argument, their education is not merely their *personal concern* and a matter for *personal* possibility and freedom; to treat it so would be to lie to oneself about one’s own nature as a human being. Rather, one’s education is *a concern of the whole* polity, of which each is first of all and necessarily a member, and in which each has some necessary function to perform, therefore our education is constituted with considerable necessity and law.²³ The necessities and laws apply to each sex equally and each sex will be tested equally throughout to see if they can hold on to what they have learned against the thievery of time and persuasion, the bewitchments of pleasure and terror, or the force of pain (413b, c). The young men are surprisingly easily convinced of the psychic capacities of the women; one might hope that such a conviction would open to a more adequate vision of female personhood; unfortunately, that shows itself not to be the case. But they are answering in a rather doglike manner about themselves as well. These are equal opportunity hounds.

Socrates grounded his original building of the just city on two foundational facts (H2, H3); The first fact of nature (H2) in that founding was that “our

need,” our lack of self-sufficiency, is what creates a city (369b–c). The second fact (H3) was that “each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but rather differs in his nature; the different are apt for accomplishment of different work” (370b). In returning (first) to H3 in book 5 Socrates gives some further details about how one can tell what nature each human being has, details which are more exacting and one might say “outcomes based” than book 2’s weakest in body (371c) and weaker in mind (371e) distinctions. The argument thus far in book 5 has not explicitly gone back to H2, but in returning to H3 finds it is a “frightening and slippery” place (451a), though Socrates sees the nature of this step as clearly as anyone can. It is clearly *culturally forbidding*, as his comparisons with barbarian, Cretan and Spartan cultures brings out (452c–d), but his argument makes it highly dubious that there is any *natural* danger or injustice in female education or open opportunity across the sexes. Quite the contrary; it seems required. In the course of education and testing, some of each sex will discover aptitudes for medicine, music (455e), carpentry (454d) or shoemaking (454c) as well as city administration and protection. In every case we can discover a soul’s nature by three tests: a) the nature “learns something connected with the thing easily,” b) “starting from slight learning it is able to carry discovery far forward” and c) “the body gives adequate service to the thought” (455b)—he or she has the muscular strength, control, endurance, visual or hearing acuity, etc., necessary for shoemaking, surgery, politics or cithara playing. Any darkness and danger in this first argument seems a matter of *nomos* not *physis*. For precisely this reason it seems to most modern Western ears that there can be no reasonable disagreement with Socrates’ solution here.

Socrates’ correction for the vision of Athenian *nomos* is a lens which seems to dissolve sexual difference entirely into an essentialism of human nature. Like a joke or a noble lie, however, a corrective lens is not itself precisely true, though lens, joke and lie can all be true or bear true (*gennaiois*), produce truly. Socrates’ resulting vision of differences in the nature of *psyche* and the individual’s talents—differences which cut across the sexes rather than along that bias—our culture now seems to agree is the natural distinction, nor is there much disagreement with Plato about how one tells about those differences of nature among souls.²⁴

But whether this lens sees accurately that there is a need for complete naked equality in education and opportunity is not precisely exhibited here. The young men may not be answering Socrates out of geometric necessity (458d) when they agree with Socrates that “the women will need to strip off their clothes” and wrestle (457a). That answer *is* natural (and geometrically necessary) if the premise of ungendered human nature is true, but Socrates has gone over this first wave headasswards, without first asking about the natural relation of men and women. Glaucon seems not quite as supernaturally excited about what the net of the new education will enforce upon him as

Hermes was in considering the possibility of being held in Hephaestus' net with the golden Aphrodite, but none of the men complain of any natural ridiculousness or unwillingness to sport themselves in the newest required way with whomever they happen to draw. Socrates' erotic story "persuades and attracts most of the populace" (458d)—actually everyone in the discussion. I imagine that if Cephalus were present he would wish to be young again and wrestle here, for while the old may still wrestle, certain holds they can no longer—hold.

It is important to note that Socrates, in the "re-beginning" of book 5, does not yet go back to H2 of his original beginning (our individual insufficiency); he will do so in considering the second wave. He does explicitly point out that he is returning to that original founding however: "*at the beginning of the settlement you were founding, you yourselves agreed that each one must mind his own business according to nature*" (453b). The first wave has required him to become more exact on this matter of "own nature" (H3) but leaves H2 unremarked upon. There is also an unremarked upon point about the nature of swimming or sailing in high seas, particularly between islands—an image of a fact about dialectical arguments. Besides high waves, one must also be careful not to get turned in the trough of a high sea, or caught by a rebound off an island's shore, lest the next wave roll you over, or coming from a different direction, push you back under the first. This is a fine image for the fact that in a series of dialectical arguments one must make sure that in answering one problem, one does not turn broadside to the heading one must take in sailing over the next; both hyperbolic endpoints are mistakes.

Plato regularly illustrates the wrong procedure in the so-called earlier dialogues. In *Ion*, *Meno*, and *Euthyphro*, for example, a dilemma is presented and, after the interlocutor takes one side, Socrates drives the argument on that heading until it turns into its opposite and is swamped. Socrates did a similar thing with Thrasymachus in book 1's argument about the art of ruling, and Thrasymachus (though not Cleitophon) saw that taking the opposed heading would merely result in an equal but opposite swamping (340b–d). There are shiploads of scholars who take Socrates' first tack—an essentialism of human nature—as the correct way of sailing. Under such a bearing Title Nine's separate but equal athletics is an inadequate, because inexact, educational procedure—it does not go far enough. Coed naked wrestling is a required course, every year. In addressing the higher and "second wave," let us keep Socrates' as yet unremarked-upon first principle of cities in mind, as he will hint at it to adjust the tack taken over the wave.

THE SECOND WAVE

Socrates continues on the line of what is beneficial for the city into the second wave of communal families, but now carrying the equality of the human *psyche* into *soma*, suggesting that the men and women be bred as *gennaios* dogs, horses, and fighting cocks, so that the goldenest girls and boys get married most frequently. Where the first argument seemed to be aiming at moral and intellectual excellence through methods requiring the practice (and testing) of moral and intellectual excellence, the second seems to want to breed virtue, as one would racehorses or birds (459a, b); having left the body almost entirely out of the first consideration (“except that the woman is weaker,” 455e), Socrates now seems to make physical intercourse the source of human perfection (459b), while continuing to treat absolutely all distinctions between the sexes as being as accidental as baldness to tinkers (454c). He then adds that the responsibility for “wakeful watching and the rest of the labor” of child raising should be handed over to those who have been found particularly suited for the task (and made more fit for it by their education no doubt).²⁵ Plato’s day care will, in turn, allow the golden women (and men) to continue in the work and training to which their nature is most appropriate, that of ruling and guarding the city, a matter which is apparently unrelated to wakeful watching over children and other like labors. As mentioned above, he considers the utilitarian advantages which would come from this communal family at some length (460c–465d), and ends with a rather complicated question:

Do you, then, accept the community of the women with the men in education, children, and guarding the rest of the citizens; and that . . . they must guard and hunt together like dogs, and insofar as possible have everything in every way in common; and that in doing this they’ll do what’s best *and nothing contrary to the nature of the female in her relationship with the male, nothing contrary to the natural community of the two with each other?* (466d)

In contrast with his manner of cresting the first wave, which was a starkly phrased declarative condemnation of the then current cultural practice as contrary to nature, while their newly proposed law is in accord with it, Socrates breasts this wave with a question.²⁶ And where in the first case the distinction contrary to nature/according to nature seemed to refer to the nature of soul in individuals or sexes *per se*, the second case plainly asks about the nature of the female *with regard to* the male, about the *natural community of each with each* (466d).

These contrasts themselves suggest several things. First of all, it is perhaps telling about Socrates’ or Plato’s relative certainty regarding each point; where in the first case Socrates and Glaucon (and Plato) are willing to condemn Athenian culture in the strongest possible terms, the second case poses

a question, so in fact declares nothing at all. Secondly, the difference in phrasing requires that we consider not the nature of each individual (from which the first wave took its heading—finding psychic difference distributed across the sexes), but rather the nature of the *relationship* of the sexes to each other (which question's posing presumes upon—at least—the somatic biological difference). Plato hits upon this mutuality a half dozen times in this one sentence in a stunning combination of *koino-* and *sym-* (“common” and “together”) words, strung together by an equal number of “ands” in 466cd. Such phrasing emphasizes the linguistic and biological truth that we cannot consider the one sex without regard to the other. This closing question, then, brings back the first Socratic point about a city (H2)—necessity joins us. Just as the solitary individual was a Thrasymachan delusion, so too the solitary self-defining sex.²⁷ As in book 2 no one was self-sufficient, so in book 5 neither sex is; if the sexes are naturally joined, if there is a *natural common* relationship, neither sex can exist humanly without the other, or be correctly understood except in relation to the other. We are now really back at “the beginning” of the argument—individual insufficiency. I suppose that coming back to it Plato expects us to see more clearly some truths about that hypothesis as well, just as Socrates became more clear about how differing natures of *psychê* exhibit themselves in returning to that book 2 issue (H3) at the beginning of book 5.

The difference between Socrates' sure declarative captaining through the first wave's problem and his concluding *question* here is to test whether or not any of his young male student captains can direct safely through the second wave; thereby Plato means to make sure we think about the questions (and the answers the young men give!). The stark dramatic contrast between these two wave endings makes clear that the boat of the dialogue is not directed solely by Socrates; we are not in the city where what the philosopher king says is law—or even seen and understood appropriately. The questions Socrates asks are not merely rhetorical, but the kind of testing education requires at every stage. We should then see Glaucon's acceptance of the Socratic course of *sharing* spouses and children with the *syn-*word (*sugchôrô*, 466d4)—I concur—as a kind of Platonic joke. After all those “share” words and “together” prefixes in the question, Glaucon's concurrence has him agreeing with Socrates about the sexes *without seeing them together in the way Socrates' question has required: in accord with their natural relation*. Their agreement is one of sound, not sense, and indicates that Glaucon is not yet ready for prime time captaining. His error (as we shall see) about the *necessities* of relation embedded in his own nature exhibits that he is not yet to be trusted with the ship of state, which requires understanding and correction of the relations of each one to all of the others, *starting from our natural relation*. This failure repeats (in the key of sexual relation) the movement of book 2: there Glaucon's personal desires made

him make a similar mistake about civic necessities: *his own* desire for courtesans and cakes led to the feverish city and war (372d, 373d,e). Plato might expect some of his readers to prove more golden than Socrates' interlocutors here. He certainly expects such readers in *Meno*, *Ion*, *Hippias Major* and *Euthyphro*, as well as in the so-called later dialogues.

This idea of natural and necessary relationality, which was stated as a matter of foundational fact in book 2, was read there as if "nature" was a bare place holder for a civic functionality aiming to achieve some part of the complex of goods humans need: carpenter, blacksmith, poet, farmer, shepherd, doctor, guardian, auxiliary. Those civic functions had no necessary relation to sex according to the first wave's argument. One may say all this without holding to an ideal essentialism of human nature, though that looks like the star by which Socrates had taken his bearing. The sexual distinction and relationality, which has now been called up for discussion, requires a richer view of the human person. But Glaucon aborts the issue by his concurrence in the ridiculous literal sense of "share."

Socrates immediately sees that the largest wave, "whether the city is possible" (466d), is fast approaching, but like a ridiculous sailor, he puts off facing it until 472a. He puts it off by imagining how they'll go to war and *starts* by "bringing as many of the children as are strong enough" to the battle (466d) despite the risk to the city. Though Glaucon is the one who raises the problem of the risk entailed, he does not put up much of a fight to keep the children safe from the ravages of war. This is not entirely surprising. Earlier he had not raised any fuss at all about giving up the child born of his sacred marriage(s). In fact, Plato had emphasized this point by having Glaucon jump in before Socrates seems to have finished his description:

And as the offspring are born, won't they be taken over by the officers established for this purpose—men or women, or both, for presumably the offices are common to women and men—and . . .

"Yes." (460b)

Glaucon not only does not pause to consider the naturalness of giving up one's children, Plato has him *rush to not consider it*. Perhaps this merely indicates Glaucon's preternaturally quick insight into the fact that some people are naturally better at parenting than others (like himself?).

Stanley Rosen says that, "Socrates takes it for granted that no one will object to being deprived of his or her children."²⁸ This is too weak. Glaucon, in fact, seems *in a hurry to get rid of* the children, and no one else among the young men does object, so Socrates would be reading his *interlocutors* correctly by thinking that no one from among them will object to it. But this is far from proving Rosen's (implied?) more universal statement. Should we object? "Is there nothing contrary to the natural community of men with

women” in such separation, nor anything “contrary to the way the pair is naturally fitted to share the common things?” Does it do anything to our consideration when Socrates’ *first* statement about going to war is that it is obvious we will take the children along? That is the first thing I would think to do too!

We should also note that it is now *Socrates* who is interrupting the order of the argument, and not briefly. Having seen the approaching third wave, he proceeds to face an issue already discussed (453a, 456a–d). If this rather large swell (*kuma*) about how war is to be carried on is not considered a wave of its own, it must be seen as being carried along in the second wave (a *kuma* within a *kuma*), which supposedly is concluded with Glaucon’s easy concurrence. Glaucon had accepted Socrates’ dog-paddling solution to that second wave, and both had remembered what appeared next (466d), when Socrates starts up this seemingly exiguous swell. I suggest that we should take this long, seemingly digressive, discussion of military matters as a sign of something, rather than as merely a digression, as Glaucon eventually complains it is (471c–e). Socrates’ swelling *logos* bringing the children to war is to make us consider in more detail whether we have really got over the second wave by considering humans after the manner of dogs. The consideration of this (uncounted) *kuma*, like the consideration of raising the (absent) children, is something Glaucon wishes to get past quickly—though he puts up with a much longer discussion about war than about raising the children. But surely there is something less natural in war than in raising children—except among Thrasymachans.²⁹

Apparently Glaucon is still dreaming; of what soon becomes obvious, when, discussing the rewards for valor, he *fights* for a reversal of a Socratic suggestion, that the valorous shake each one’s hand, but not “that he kiss and be kissed by each.” Then he requires an addendum: “that so long as they are on campaign no one should be allowed to refuse his kisses” (468c). Beautiful. We could not imagine a happier warrior—but let’s try: they will also have more marriages, “the whole back of the ox,” “choice seats, meats and full wine cups.” These additions rouse Glaucon to say “Now you are speaking most beautifully (*kallista*)” (468c–e). We would naturally do things this way with our prize dogs (of both sexes)—except for the wine. I suppose Glaucon’s remark might be echoed by a suitably socialized and spirited young woman, whose thoughts and deeds are also perpetually victorious. Absolutely most beautiful! Paul Shorey calls this interchange (468bc) “deplorable,” vulgar, “almost the only passage in Plato that one would wish to blot.”³⁰ Perhaps Shorey has something, and Plato means it to be deplorable and vulgar and purposefully keeps it in: *is there anything contrary to the nature of the female with regard to the male, or to the nature of their community here?* Professor Shorey is being touched by something rather different from what is stroking Glaucon; Plato’s comedy makes him feel it.

Socrates is fighting with Glaucon as he should, as he would fight with other Greeks: trying to “bring [his] opponent back to [his] senses, . . . intent on producing moderation” (471a). So far it is not going so well—though it did work for Shorey. Glaucon *almost* sees a difficulty, and must be feeling it somewhat, when he says, “in addition, if the women joined in their campaigns, either in the same ranks or positioned in the rear” (471d). But clearly he does not yet see what his grammar expresses and he is vaguely feeling: conditionality (*if, either . . . or*), inequality, and mere addition. This is assuredly *not* what the two arguments he has agreed to demand: unconditional equality; nor is it yet the complementarity Plato is aiming that we consider (which is neither mere addition, nor conditional). The absurdity of Socrates’ suggestions is beginning to stroke him the wrong way; he wants to put some of it off. This “not and not yet” indicate that Glaucon must be feeling that *something* is not quite right here, despite his eager agreement to several of the preceding laws. His feelings are not as strong (or humanly adequate) as Shorey’s, but he is hunting (confusedly) in the same direction. The fire of desire still seems to be the light he looks by. Even the reality check of war,³¹ which Glaucon and Adeimantus (at least) have been in, fails to wake the young men up from their erotic dream of drawing the long straw frequently at festival time.

Just as Socrates’ interlocutors do not recognize the import of the way he asks his final question about the second wave, they do not notice the height of impiety to which this wave has carried them. They are boldly following into battle, looking to the long straw of the reward—the consorting of Amazons and heroes. One clue about precisely how Plato and Socrates think that the mounting of prize bitch by stud dog is by nature significantly different from the marriage of woman and man is marked when Socrates says “irregular intercourse with one another isn’t holy” and “marriage (*gamos*) is to be held most sacred” (458d,e). It is, then, rather ridiculous that *immediately* after saying this, Socrates asks Glaucon to consider—“*by the God*”—“the marriages (*gamoï*)” of his hunting dogs and noble cocks (459a5–6) in order to illustrate how the marriages of the best human beings are best set up. But these are concepts (marriage, the sacred)—and beings (the gods)—that bitch and stud dog know not of. To question as Socrates does is surely—by the God—either to mock the holiness of human marriage outright, or else to be proleptically mocking the animal view to which he is giving birth. By having Socrates question in precisely this ridiculously (un)holy way, Plato is suggesting we consider that the natural community between men and women is ordered to piety. This virtue (a *natural requirement* for any rational being less than God) embraces (and exceeds) the relation of the two sexes; their relation is not merely a useful and pleasant reward for excellence, or a *technê* for the production of guardian pups. Glaucon has already agreed that it is unjust to allow unholy and irregular intercourse (458e). After this agreement

Socrates asks about what is “most beneficial” in marriage and lays out the problematic animal analogy, beginning with this remark about canine marriages. In other words, Glaucon agrees that it is unjust to allow unholy intercourse, but then he seems to consider holiness and marriage to be something shared in by his own producings of a better hunting dog (459a–b). A more subtle answer must take its bearing from a richer version of piety than this animalist *reductio*. Perhaps if we forget the gods, this is what we come to: woof! In any case, a richer—or let us say, human—version of piety will open up a rather richer view of eros than that we would attribute to bitch and stud as well. Not to consider so would not only be ridiculous, but also bad and unholy (cf. 452d). And Plato, if his construction of this mimesis is purposeful, means us to feel it—as Shorey did. Perhaps the other way is beautiful for dogs—and produces beautifully, but that (the beautiful) is another concept (and being) the animals themselves lack.

In case this impiety is not sufficiently ridiculous, Socrates *orders* another: Glaucon considers that the multiple marriages and lack of knowledge about biological parents might lead to incest; he asks, “how will they distinguish one another’s fathers and daughters” (461d)? The point of sharing is precisely to make this impossible so that the rulers cannot make laws favoring their own, so Socrates answers quite reasonably that, “they won’t at all.” Then he adds, “all the children born in the tenth month *and* in the seventh from the day a man becomes a bridegroom, he will call [his sons and daughters]” (461d). Far from helping resolve the issue, this fairly well guarantees biological incest; nomological incest is absolute as *all* are called brothers and sisters. Socrates explicitly rules in as “available” children born in the eighth and ninth months after one’s sacred wedding. It is highly unlikely that a child born in the seventh month after one’s wedding will survive in Plato’s day, and it is almost equally unlikely that a horse riding, coed naked wrestling, battle-training golden girl is going to carry a fetus (*kuma*) into the tenth month.³²

We can tease out a further detail (kept from our wandering eyes by Plato’s construction of the discussion) at this point. That is, there is no private place for the holy assignations of the golden, so how will these most sacred deeds be done, and where exactly? Perhaps we are to imagine some temple precincts are set aside for use during the festival periods; unless, of course (it being a civic celebration), their mating is as public as horses, noble dogs, fighting cocks, or that divine suggestion of Zeus to Hera (*Il.* 14: 294–351)—seconded by the Beatles,³³ or the Hephaestan public revelation of Aphrodite and Ares (*Od.* 8: 266–342). Speaking of which, we see that Socrates is again enlarging Homer: what was originally a short scene or two in (or excised from) *Odyssey* or *Iliad* is to become a regular and weeks long religious ritual in the new city: oh happy town! How long the holy marriage is preserved is another question; such periods need not be as long as a month

for their divine purpose to be achieved; if the rulers manage to get the grooms and brides together at the right season (cf. 546d), perhaps a short celebratory week will be sufficient. Further, if the matings are public, perhaps they could be a sort of test for those *not* chosen—like the test which Leontius failed (439e–440a): those who spend a lot of time looking aren’t yet tempered. Or would it be those who do look on religiously are most interested in the holy deeds and thereby practicing piety? *Theoria* for its own holy sake. It is so hard to decide about such issues. . . . Perhaps I enlarge this small item too much; perhaps it should be merely a suggestive hint; I seem to prolong this hard, important matter in a way perhaps too insistent of its hardness and importance—not to say that it has been revealed to its fullest extent.

If, on the other hand, human beings (unlike dogs) are, by nature, ordered to piety, that would include being ordered to all the other virtues, as I will argue later is Plato’s (and Socrates’) view of the matter, and *is performed* in *Republic* (and here, by *phauloteros*, comic, but *gennaios*—true breeding—reversal). It would be better, then, to consider Socrates’ wave surmounting catechetical question (do you accept . . . ? 466d) under the auspices of his earlier remark about the sacredness of marriage: Is it pious, or in the nature of the holy relationship of man and woman, that they be *assigned* to each other for *short periods*, for *reproductive purposes only*, with the *children immediately removed*, and is there nothing contrary to the holy and natural community of each with the other, and nothing contrary to the way the pair is naturally fitted to share the common things? Or are such matters under the rather mysterious sway of Eros (a daimon, if not a god)³⁴ or perhaps even practical wisdom and choice?

If either of the latter are true of humans (though not of dogs), then it is an unjust and impious use of the natural relation of man and woman to make such assignments as the new city’s marriage laws do. If the natural community of men and women (though not dogs), daimon inspired and ratified by choice, aims at possessing and reproducing in the beautiful (*Sym* 206e) so as to achieve a kind of immortality for itself (*Sym* 206c, 207d), it would also be contrary to the nature of the community in such a “godly affair” (*Sym* 206c) to abandon either the one in common with whom one produces, or the product of that union to the care of others.³⁵ If, in fact, Eros and choice have taken the beautiful precisely *with* the desire to reproduce in it and hold it as one’s own forever (*Sym* 206a, 207a), it would be absolutely impious, unjust, and contrary to the nature of the human erotic relationship to separate man and wife, or for either to give up the other or the children, who are their tokens of immortality.³⁶ It seems clear, based on our sailing through the first wave, that this eros of the soul holding to and reproducing with the beautiful could apply equally to both sexes.³⁷ If ordered eros can be thought of as a virtue, both men and women must be capable of it. The purpose of the city’s up-

bringing is to raise wave-swelling Aphrodite, with all her erotic power, into city-dwelling virtues. Not only do both men and women need these same virtues, but the pious relationship which should naturally exist between them would be one which encouraged and strengthened such virtues. Glaucon's erotic power is carrying him to the dog pound, not to holy Phaeacia—or anywhere nearby.

One would be right to consider, under this reading, that Glaucon has a rather glaucomic view of the human “erotic necessities” (458d) which he says lead to the intercourse of the sexes. But this is not surprising. We have already noticed both his quick abandonment of the children (460b), and his argument in favor of laws enforcing positive responses to whatever the promiscuous desires of the goldenest guy happen upon (468b–d). Glaucon's erotic vision here extends only to the first third of Diotima's ladder—body and bodies (and many kinds of many of them). If we were beasts, we should love the life Glaucon's eros insists upon; it would be our sufficient good. We should not, however, think that Socrates or Plato has so limited a view—as book 9's discussion of desire (580d–582a) will make clear. That later three-fold division of desires, including the desire for wisdom and for the vision of truth, and the soul's desire for respect or honor, as well as those desires belonging to bodies which so occupy Glaucon at this point, echoes the basic outline of Diotima's ladder: bodies, souls, ideas.³⁸ If Socrates is serious about marriage being most holy, then, by the God, the next question about doggy marriages ridicules Glaucon's limited vision in an attempt to cure him of it. The fact that, at this point, Socrates is unsuccessful does not require us to foist such a limited (by its excessive concern with the bodily) view of eros upon either Plato or Socrates. This is emphasized by the fact that 1) *Socrates* widens the scope of desire considerably in book 9, beginning with *his own* complaint about the inadequate dealing it has had thus far (571a) and 2) *Plato* has Diotima's discussion divide eros (210a–211a–212a) in a manner clearly parallel to that in *Republic's* penultimate book. Moreover, 3) Diotima's description of human eros is a *precise* contrary to the practice of the noble dogs in *Republic*. So, against Glaucon, but *according to Plato and Socrates*, it is contrary to the nature of the holy community of women and men that they a) come together by assignment, b) separate after impregnation, c) give up the resulting child to the care of others. It is not contrary to one nature more than the other, but contrary to their natural community, the community formed *under* the aegis of eros and formed *to* piety. That Glaucon or the others fail to suggest any of these things, or explicitly recognize any impiety, proves that they themselves are not golden; their eros are more demon than daimon, and their view of marriage more “by the dog” than “by the God.” For there is, we should agree, nothing contrary to the nature of the community of bitches and studs in Socrates' marriage laws, but the doggy head of the human soul (cf. 588c) should not be directing the ship of state—

or even the individual soul. Indeed, it should not even be allowed to vote, for its good is not the human good.

THE THIRD WAVE: IN WHICH THE PHILOSOPHER KINGS ACCEPT THEIR ENLARGEMENT

The third wave considerably enlarges the testing the golden ones will have to endure; their hope for the long straw is going to have to carry them through a significant period of difficult and abstract education: not only arithmetic and geometry, but astronomy and music (not as practical, but as theoretical sciences) and also a science almost yet to be invented—solid geometry. That long and involved *discussion* is apparently sufficient to cause everyone to lose track of the original interest that got these seas to be swelling—sex; the studies themselves will require a far deeper and longer concentration on things other than the golden Aphrodite. The would-be golden ones will have to turn their back on the fire of their desires for a long time if they are to succeed in those higher sciences, without which they are unworthy. Perhaps the discussion of mathematics is a more successful response to the wave born goddess than even ridicule; she seems to disappear.³⁹ After the third wave there are no more interruptions from Polemarchus; Glaucon seems to see a much more attractive life than physical pleasure (519d–e), and then praises Socrates, by Zeus, for his spirited defense of Lady Philosophy (536b–c). Clearly a different woman than the sort he has been (imaginatively) consorting with—though on another level, she consorts most willingly with *all* who prove worthy. And he praises Socrates against Socrates' own self-denigration for getting carried away in Philosophy's praise. Glaucon considers that Socrates' spirited and erotic defense of Philosophy is not at all excessive. This conversion allows Socrates, in the last books, to open the heretofore constricted discussion of desire to a less Aphroditically limited one: he admits desire as the general power of the soul in all its parts—a love for wisdom and one for honor are visible once Aphrodite and her party (looming large whenever desire is even passingly mentioned) have been worn out, ridiculed, or tire of waiting for the mathematics lessons to come to an end.

This comic reading of the three waves allows us to reiterate—in greater detail—the continuing commonality between male and female psyche: each being moved by Eros, in a way that is similar, to a good which is common; these goods are both spiritual (the virtues—including intellectual virtues) and physical (the children). Further, what the goldenest among these couples will recognize is that *all* the children are the *city's* way of reproducing with the beautiful and reproducing the virtues which the city itself instantiates across time; and so the true rulers will still be “caring for all the children in common,” recognizing all of them as “their own” (462b–464b). The moral signif-

icance of “holding all in common” is absolutely true and pious, where the literal meaning is its ridiculous opposite—false and impious. Just as Athenians recognized Aristophanes’ Dionysus as comic rather than merely false and impious, for he has just as much connection to divinity as a comic actor has, so Plato’s golden couplings have as much connection to the human sexual relation as doggy relations have to the human sort. Like Aristophanes, Plato is either a comic poet or a blasphemer; Aristophanes an atheist, Plato an ahumanist dogophile.

The true leaders (and citizens) Plato is comically limning would, then, for example, think it shameful and impious to create a position flying recon over South Padre Island for their biological own while the children of others are sent to die in jungles far away. They would recognize as injustice their reservation of familial wealth on some other island, while sharing in all the goods of the life of their own city. Such leaders (and citizens) would know that the justice of a city requires that not only is education more than a merely personal concern and a matter for personal possibility and freedom, but eros also must be drawn in and bound, by our shared logos and practices, to the common good. Thus, the love which conduces to our living well—the love of justice—grows. When eros is not so drawn, it is the “mad master” who appears at several points in the night’s discussion (329c, 3301c, 336b, 573b–d, 575); something like each “head” in the soul or city making a rule for its own benefit—as if an independent, autarchic being.

This explication of the familial relations Plato’s comedy allows—and aims—us to think our way into answers a (rhetorical?) question Stanley Rosen has raised: “What lies in the middle between the community of women and children and traditional families?”⁴⁰ Our answer is: a city in which children are produced by “private” spouses coming together by choice, aiming at production in and unending possession of the beautiful in each other, to be shared with all others, all of whom are concerned with the education and erotic upbringing of all the children, in public. Socrates, both in *Republic* and in Athens, would be an example of such a human middle.

So, under the literal lie about sharing spouses and children is a figurative truth about how the best rulers (and citizens) think of the good of the city and its children: they are all ours. This is exactly how a noble lie works; it tells a moral truth to the one who is under the sway of a mad master (or mistress) and so can only hear it literally. When they find the literal to be ridiculous (how does that fat man fit down the chimney anyway?), they may discover (having practiced being nice rather than naughty), that the way they have been tending both feels and is right anyway. That Eros is a great pretender at granting gifts of self-realization unbounded by any natural or even divine limitations, Glaucon, as well as many of the speakers in *Symposium* attest. Perhaps this is not merely an ancient cultural supposition. For all such men and women, as for the young men of this discussion, sexual intercourse is

best treated as a promised reward for only the best—in other words, until such time as they see that their weapons have been kept from their use for a very good reason by their friend (cf. 331c). We should note that not only does the city Socrates builds for these young men (under repeated interruption by their eros) *prescribe* just that cure, but their intercourse with Socrates takes up the entire night; thereby he *performs* the formal priestly presentation of a short straw to each on this festival night. By the dog, no one gets lucky—and then again, all receive a portion of the goddess' most proper feast (cf. 354a–b).

Our human nature should see for itself—if something divine touches us—that this story of coed naked wrestling and of the somatic canine reduction of the male–female relationship is a comedy: a mixture of the vulgar, the ridiculous and the imagined impious. The vulgar and ridiculous are to heal us of considering such bestiality a high and noble, or even human, good. Between the hyperbolic legs of the ridiculous wrestlers and the vulgarly open but impiously bound marriages, Plato limns the true and the good relationship; and the true and the good are that alone by which we see the ridiculous as ridiculous, the vulgar as vulgar, the impious as impious. The three waves Polemarchus' question generates exhibit that if a society considers absolute equality the form, and the pleasures of Aphrodite the matter, of the holy grail, it will be both ridiculous and impious. Unfortunately, such words will likely fall out of use in that society; at least they will be regarded as old-fashioned. If we feel or see something vulgar, ridiculous or impious in Socrates' suggestions (or this enlargement of them), it must be that something divine is happening to us: we must be feeling the real truth pushing against our unnatural dreams.

I want to insist on several things in this reading: First, Plato is, with a subtle hand on his characters' speeches, outlining the dialectical problem about the relationship of the sexes, and with considerable perspicacity: If you understand nature psychically rather than physically you get one answer; if you understand nature physically not psychically (or import the physical distinction into psyche) you get another; if you understand the nature of male and female as primarily and necessarily relational you get an answer distinct from both. Secondly, I insist that Plato's drama and language implies the answer I have outlined to the issue of the relationship between the sexes, though it appears nowhere in the argument *per se*. Thirdly, that the true answer does not appear in any argument in *Republic*, but does appear through consideration of both arguments (and their accompanying images) together, as well as in considering the dramatic relationships and occurrences in the dialogue, is an indication that Plato constructs in an effort to dialogue with his readers; he does not write discourses that “roll about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it” (*Phaed* 275e), nor the kind that “if you question anything

that has been said because you want to learn more, it merely signifies the same thing forever” (*Phaed* 275d). Rather, if one comes with a different question, or feels a somewhat different question being posed, one receives a different answer. Finally, in writing mimeses Plato is not merely arguing, but through mimesis also setting into motion the passions of his readers, as Socrates is of his interlocutors; each provokes desire, disgust, sympathy, pity—perhaps even piety. Professor Shorey, *honestus piusque*, confesses so. Some of these, as Glaucon’s, are led by the movement of the dialogue into impious absurdity; this is to be their cure. Laughter is the outward sign of that inward grace. Other passions, simply by being charmed forth, turn us toward what our soul’s nature requires: the love that steers toward uprightness, and moves the sun and other stars. She is not called Aphrodite.

NOTES

1. The epigraph is an Aristophanic retranslation of Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel’s translation of William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, 1.5.20.

2. Bloom, for example, considers book 5 “preposterous, . . . more fantastic, more innovative, more comic, and more profound than any work of Aristophanes” (*Republic*, 380–381). He thinks, however, that Socrates is serious about the city and “must fabricate a convention about the nature of women” (383) in order to get the political project to go through. Howland, in *The Republic: The Odyssey of Philosophy* (New York: Twayne, 1993), draws connections from it to *Assemblywomen* and *Clouds*, 112–116. Saxonhouse, in “Comedy in Callipolis,” *Review of Politics* 72 (1978): 888–901, says Socrates “does not reveal how best to organize men and women,” rather the necessary injustices of any political system (888). She is right about the first matter.

3. Thus opens the scholarly explosion of debate about whether or not Plato was a feminist. A somewhat longer discussion of the scholarship can be found in my “Wave and Trough: The Natural Relation of the Sexes in *Republic*,” *Review Journal of Political Philosophy* 7, 2 (2009): 51–82. I have cut the notes to save book space.

4. Penelope Murray, “Tragedy, Women and the Family in Plato’s *Republic*,” in Destrée and Herrmann, eds., *Plato and the Poets*, 176.

5. The privates of the golden men and women are only for assigned public use—until they reach retirement age (461b–c); the length of the marriages is not precisely given in the discussion.

6. As Jacob Howland says, “to reconstruct [in speech] the bonds of *nomos* that bind a political community together is to reenact the shaping of one’s own soul” (*Odyssey*, 78). Glaucon has been aiding in his own cure of the fever which made him taste health as swinish.

7. Stephen Halliwell, *Greek Laughter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 285.

8. Susan Moller Okin, in “Philosopher Queens and Private Wives: Plato on Women and the Family,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6, 4 (1977), rightly sees that the waves must be taken together (359). Steven Forde, in “Gender and Justice in Plato,” *American Political Science Review* 92, 3 (1997), says that Plato is, “like contemporary feminists,” raising two critical questions: “where does the line between biology or the bodily and the rest of human nature lie, and how can the former be overcome in practice” (660). Plato is not attempting the hybrid project of overcoming biology—that is one source of the ridiculous, whether concerning human biology or that of dung beetles.

9. Aristotle claims that the comic is a *mimesis phauloterôn*—of the lower, cheaper commoner sort, and the ridiculous (*geloion*) is something base or ugly (*Po.* 1449a33–36); I hope my language throughout this chapter proves illustrative.

10. Paul Ludwig, in “Eros in the *Republic*,” in Ferrari, ed., *Cambridge Companion*, claims, “Socrates perfects the available politics by identifying tendencies and pushing them conceptually to their logical extremes. He thus shows the limiting case toward which the imperfect [existing] poleis [strive]. . . . He perfects politics not because a perfect politics is necessarily good, but because a perfect politics is perfectly revelatory of what politics is” (217). “Perfects” here has a mathematical sense; the possible answers to the equation all lie between the impossible perfect endpoints, where one variable or another becomes zero.

11. One could arrange this best by allowing free access to birth control for everyone past the age of, say, eleven, and of course allowing into the city all the great stories Socrates has edited out of the city—to say nothing of movies, painting, music, *etc.*: many kinds of many of them, and from an early age on. Also, the age of consent should be lowered—for the good of all (cf. 468c).

12. What Socrates’ laws are advantageous for is a further expression of Plato’s “elitism”: he seeks a better gene pool; a more democratic state would choose the advantages achievable by those laws suggested in the previous note: the greatest pleasure for the greatest number. An “ethic for swine,” some say; let’s vote on it! In a democracy, bet on the pigs. Thus each hyperbolic endpoint has a name for the other. Now we have a popular political discussion.

13. Morag Buchan, in her *Women in Plato’s Political Theory* (London: MacMillan, 1999), correctly notes that “there is a vital mutual dependence, the one [sex] upon the other, in the matter of definition,” but her implication that “the real importance of this is that it is possible for the one to be threatening to the other” (81) reads this relation as a natural blank, subject to the usual Hobbesian exercise.

14. The suggestions in quotation are those of Monique Canto (translated by Arthur Goldhammer) in “The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Reflections on Plato.” *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. Nancy Tuana (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1994), 53.

15. More accurately, *upper class* Greek social practice read everything into this sexual distinction; in the lower classes the women would (as the men) work in the fields and vineyards, sell goods in the market and generally take a much more active share in the political economy of the household.

16. Bloom says Socrates “forgets” the body (*Republic*, 382). Jean Bethke Elshtain accuses Plato of “[dictating woman’s] homelessness and the stripping away of her psycho-sexual and social identity.” See *Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton: University Press, 1981), 39.

17. Not merely a joking question: does eros sometimes make one less dialectically competent? Has it been known to make some people more sophisticated than dialectically competent? Then eros must first be brought into line, or the dialectic will go off its true line.

18. The original Hephaestan netting was “fine as spiders’ webs, so that no one even of the blessed gods could see them, so exceeding craftily were they fashioned” (*Od.* 8: 280–282) so crafty also, are the webs the older guardians weave for the matings of the golden ones in their prime (460a). So crafty, too, is Plato. Hermes’ supernaturally erotic response to the question of Apollo about being bound in the net to “golden Aphrodite” is *Od.* 8: 335–342: “would that the web were three times stronger!” There are a lot of Herms in this discussion with Socrates.

19. A rereading of Michael Carper’s thesis, *The Hammer and the Anvil: The concept of irony with continual reference to Kierkegaard*, M. A. thesis, University of Nebraska, Kearney (December 1998) reminded to make some of the points in this paragraph.

20. Wendy Brown, “‘Supposing Truth Were a Woman . . .’: Plato’s Subversion of Masculine Discourse,” in *Feminist Interpretations*, Tuana, ed. Quotes from 162, italics erased, and 177.

21. More detailed consideration of how comedy works its catharses is in my *Love Song*, 140–69.

22. As will be shown, Natalie Bluestone’s complaint that “Plato undeniably had no interest in equality for the sake of what we would call woman’s individual fulfillment” is false except where it ceases to be a legitimate complaint. See her *Women and the Ideal Society: Plato’s Republic and the Modern Myths of Gender* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 108. Plato’s interest is that each soul discover both what it is good at and approach as near as possible to seeing all things in the light of the good; that is every individual’s fulfillment. Doing so, each will also see how s/he can best contribute to the good of all. To desire any

particular task as a matter of “individual fulfillment,” whether brain surgeon, carpenter or teacher of philosophy, if either one has not the skills or capacity or there is no need for such, is not a legitimate moral complaint—for a member of either sex. If a person’s individual fulfillment of desire is what casts the light in which he or she makes decisions, he and she already suffer under the great delusion Plato is arguing against: possessive individualism, or, Thrasymachan political willfulness: *libido dominandi*.

23. Gerasimos Santas hits this point exactly when he says that the “division of labor by talent is a requirement of justice, whereas the moderns . . . favor freedom of choice.” See his “Justice, Law and Women in Plato’s *Republic*,” *Philosophical Inquiry* 27, 1–2 (winter-spring 2006): 95. The modern favor is false and therefore unjust; it proceeds from (and toward) the delusion of possessive individualism. The idea that the difference between these is merely a matter of personal choice of political principles is a production of the delusional *opseōs kosmos* in which we presently live.

24. As Janet Smith (“Plato, Irony, and Equality,” in *Feminist Interpretations*, Tuana, ed.) remarks, Plato takes a position which is “neutral or open” regarding the “scientific question on the differences between the sexes” and such neutrality yields the field “to a social and moral imperative” (31) requiring equal opportunity and education. Individual souls have more variability than “any differential in average (sex) group performance” (37). Against Annas, she argues that it is not merely “usefulness to the state,” but “a conception of justice which is worthy for its own sake” directing Socrates’ lawmaking about the education of women (44, cf. Julia Annas, “Plato’s Republic and Feminism,” *Philosophy* 51 [1976]: 312–313).

25. For, “each of the other citizens too must be brought to that which naturally suits him” (423d).

26. Curiously, Natalie Bluestone says that Plato “puts it unequivocally that by doing this . . . they are doing nothing contrary to the nature of the female in her relationship to the male” (*Women and the Ideal*, 123, my italics). But Socrates is clearly asking for agreement (“do you concur”) and getting it (“I concur” 466c, d). The first wave Socrates did conclude in the unequivocally declarative, and was returned a rather stronger affirmation by Glaucon: “by all means,” 456c).

27. See Page du Bois’ discussion of the Greek fantasy of masculine *autarkeia* in “The Platonic Appropriation of Reproduction,” in *Feminist Interpretations*, Tuana, ed., 143. This fantasy is not Plato’s reality; attribution of it to him requires not reading his poem.

28. Stanley Rosen, *Plato’s Republic: A Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 190.

29. As seen in chapter 1, war (and injustice) are not natural under Socrates’ view, though they do *grow naturally* and necessarily—if one has *surrendered oneself* “to the limitless acquisition of wealth, overstepping the bounds of necessity” (373d). Contrast Howland, who says Socrates is admitting that feverish behavior springs from nature (*Odyssey*, 91), and that such a city is “fully human” where health was not (88). That this surrender of self is instigated in mimetic competition would be the Girardian explanation, but he, like Socrates, denies that we *must* surrender to that mimetic fever. That we have done so is undeniable.

30. Paul Shorey, *The Republic of Plato*, 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 489.

31. It is a very short set of interchanges which leads from “many kinds of many of them” to war in book 2 (373a–e). The onset of war didn’t do much there either: “Let’s not say whether war is good or evil.” *Philosophy is prophecy*: Cassandra sees her city burning even as Hector and Paris still live inside its happy walls. Socrates sees where Glaucon is going, tells him, and the truth of the matter (the necessity of war) makes not a whit of difference to Glaucon; that is symptomatic of delusion, from which the whole city—save one—is suffering. The city is already burning; only one sees what is going on. Philosophy and prophecy see the true present, as it is.

32. As Freud said, the rule against incest is “the most drastic mutilation” human life has ever suffered (*CD* 59). Thanks be to Plato’s marriages, which put us back together un mutilated! Scholars wishing to avoid Socrates’ comic (as I think) extremity here talk about “children born within ten months after . . . [each] serial marriage,” as, for example, Ludwig, “Eros in *Republic*,” 214. Socrates is more exact.

33. “Why don’t we do it in the road,” *The White Album*, 1968.

34. In *Symposium* every speaker save Socrates considers Eros a god; Socrates argues Eros is a daimon, but one descending from the Beautiful itself (which is divine) in order to lead us up to it.

35. I trust it may be taken as an open question whether one must abandon each step on Diotima’s ladder as one moves up (body–soul–ideas), or whether one may both hold and move higher (or perhaps hold and move deeper); in the latter case the ladder of love is an ordered and enriching plurality rather than a serially exclusive one. That seems more beautiful; therefore it is more true.

36. So then, I deny that “Plato’s Eros, The Bound Eros of the Guardians, is an Eros robbed of its heart” (Elshtain, *Public Man*, 35) and that the Guardians’ “human identity as males and females, but most especially as females is damaged” (37). *Plato’s* Eros is most assuredly not *Glaucon’s* Eros; nor is it the comic *animal* eros prescribed to cure Glaucon. Correctly answering Socrates’ question requires one to consider human eros to be significantly different from a dog’s. This is hard, but it is possible—for a human, if not for a dog. It is not unlikely that Plato and Socrates were aware of this speciesist difference and Plato expects his readers to be so as well; the comedy in this part of *Republic* is that the stud who is answering seems not to notice it. (Nor do the other hounds.) Further, the complaint of some feminists, who read Socrates’ sailing through the second wave as Plato’s real answer, that “women’s sexual lives” and the claim of eros in women “have been restricted and silenced with considerable success” is a sexist complaint, for it forgets that the man’s sexual life and eros has also been constricted to that of a dog, or it presumes that men and dogs do not differ significantly in regard to the erotic, but women are not like bitches. The complaint is Susan Moller Okin’s, “Philosopher-Queens,” 354.

37. In this I agree with Andrea Nye’s view of Diotima in “Irigaray and Diotima at Plato’s Symposium,” in Tuana, ed. Against Irigaray’s view of the female as other, she says “Diotima grounds love and sexual desire in natural existence rather than in semantic configurations of meaning. Diotimean love is the same for all, men and women, and makes no distinction between feminine and masculine desire” (208). Bluestone also hits the right note on this matter: “If erotic choice is rare, special, and splendid, surely it is so as much for a beautiful young woman as for [a] beautiful young man” (*Women*, 161). The young men in the discussion have given no indication whatsoever of it being rare or special; quite the contrary. Maybe they are dogs, or at least the more doggy heads in Socrates’ soul, who “produces all these” interlocutors “out of himself” (588c). I suppose there could be women who are like these men.

38. Perhaps Glaucon’s vision here extends to love of honor—thus he gets lucky with the golden girls frequently; the important point is that the tripartite division of eros in *Republic’s* closing books echoes perfectly Diotima’s teaching about its stages in *Sym* 208e–209c, 210a–211d). The priestess’ teaching fits precisely where a human complaint against the doglike marriages would go. Both *Republic* (from Pireaus, 327a–b) and *Symposium* (from Phalerum, 172a) are framed as *journeys up to the city* from the sea; from the sea of mimetic indifference to the city of God?

39. As Rosen says, “years spent in the study of mathematics serve to detach the intellectual perception of the best guardians from the world of genesis” (*Plato’s Republic*, 354).

40. The question appears as a footnote in Rosen, *Plato’s Republic*, 397 n3.

Chapter Four

Out of the Cave

The Divided Line as Pharmaceutical Outline of the Republic

NEITHER spite, fellow citizens,
Nor forgetfulness of the shiftlessness,
And the lawlessness and waste
Under democracy's rule in Spoon River
Made me desert the party of law and order
And lead the liberal party.
Fellow citizens! I saw as one with second sight
That every man of the millions of men
Who give themselves to Freedom,
And fail while Freedom fails,
Enduring waste and lawlessness,
And the rule of the weak and the blind,
Dies in the hope of building earth,
Like the coral insect, for the temple
To stand on at the last.
And I swear that Freedom will wage to the end
The war for making every soul
Wise and strong and as fit to rule
As Plato's lofty guardians
In a world republic girdled!

—John Cabanis, in Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*

Each of the words that the failing souls of *Republic* Eight will hang on has two senses; Honor, Wealth, Freedom, and even the tyrannic Pleasure has one meaning (or set of meanings) in the politics and judgments lit by the fire of desire and quite another meaning in the polity formed under the light of the

Good. So, too, do words like Wisdom, Courage, Temperance and Justice.¹ All such words are *pharmaka*. As in other matters, the use of them by the many is not the same as that of the wise; we must also suspect that, like the tinker's apprentice who marries abandoned Philosophy (495d–497c), the popular sense of each draws its moral and rhetorical power from the true sense. What is true honor, wealth and freedom is only known by the wise, and they too are the only ones who know what is truly pleasure and their own will; but echoing alternatives abound and loose confusion. Other senses of the words are incomplete and, since “nothing incomplete is the measure of anything” (504c), such nonmeasures produce waste and lawlessness (of varying types and degrees as we shall see in chapter 5). Each word, like madness or love in *Phaedrus* (263a, 265a–266b), has a sense that is divine, and numerous others that fade away from it by degrees until finally they are opposed to the first, divine, sense. But that same fading by degrees allows a proper series of noble lies to bring the mad into the truth.

To repeat, in these other keys, an *aporia* we discussed in chapter 2 about the divine: if we do not already know what honor, wealth, freedom, or justice really are, how will we, weak and blind, ever come to see them rightly and so *be* wise or free, knowing the true words, not charmed by the false? How will we participate in political reasoning using such terms without deceiving both ourselves and others? If there is such a thing as delusion about these, and every failing regime uses each of these words wrongly, how is our speech ever sured into truth? From the mouth of the wise such words are food; but from other mouths always poison, producing weakness, blindness, and further failure. The poet who would bring up philosopher kings must know how to use these powerful drugs so that, while tasting suitable to the various sick or ignorant souls, their tasting brings the soul out of her illness and closer to the strength exhibited by the wise guardian—not merely to a different blindness or weakness, perhaps even a worse one. All other uses strengthen or induce only delusion. Without the true measure, all changes of political party or program are nothing more than exchanging a sieve for a can full of holes, while milking a he-goat.

If it is possible that all souls become as “wise and strong and fit to rule” as the guardians, this would be the best solution to our political and psychic delusions. That Plato thinks this possible has been denied, not only by extremists like Popper, but by many others. Malcolm Schofield, for example, says that,

Plato's overwhelming preoccupation is with the elite. His hopes rest with them. . . . *Republic* maintains an almost total silence on how the economic class is to be educated . . . [and] it seems fairly clear that Plato does not envisage it [the musical education] as applying to those who are to be farmers, . . . [etc.], except in indirect and secondary ways.²

As he notes in a footnote to this remark, however, the education set up for the guardians purifies the music and stories of *the entire city*. Further, since gold and silver children may be born even of the bronze, the guardians must have some way of picking these out, which requires that the children living privately with their parents be educated and tested with those who are born of the gold and silver—some of whom, Socrates says, will turn out not to be truly noble.³ All must have the first education together. Indeed, this is their culture, not merely their schooling.

Similarly, in the dialogue itself, while the sons of Ariston do most of the asking and answering, numerous others are there. They, too, are allowing their desire for partying and the wide variety of pleasures Piraeus offers on a festival day (and night) to atrophy while Socrates leads them all into the more appropriate and divine pleasures of philosophical intercourse. Socrates is thereby purifying *all* their psyches, not just the *aristoi*, by holding a discussion about purifying a city in which only *some* directly participate; the others participate mimetically. Plato's poem—a *gennaios* fiction—creates a similar *opseôs kosmos* for us; a history would be less philosophical. Finally, in the image we are about to investigate, Socrates says that the cave is open along its entire width (514a); so even though there may be human beings who are not quite up to snuff intellectually (cf. 371e) for making civic policy, they may yet be able to come out of the cave and participate in the city's vision of the good, and the truer joys which come upon all by virtue of the city's arrangement and mimetic enculturation under principles able to be seen clearly only in that light.⁴ The first degrees of being as strong and wise as Plato's noble guardians are courage—preserving “the opinion produced by law through education about what sort of thing is terrible, . . . not casting it out in pains and pleasures and desires and fears” (429c), and moderation—sharing in the correct opinion about who should rule (431e). Such correct opinion formation may well be brought forth through mimesis—as, in fact, occurs in the cave, though not often around the correct opinion. Further, knowledge of one's own capacities for various tasks is something both philosophers and craftsmen would be capable of learning.

THE THEORY OF PHARMACOLOGY: SUN, LINE, CAVE

Plato *exhibits* the way out of the cave of delusion in the *structure* of *Republic*; reading his mimesis *shapes us* to our necessary catharses, bringing us out. The poem produces in us a pattern, which, following again and again, becomes us. Socrates *tells of* the way out in the middle books of the dialogue, and during the whole dialogue he is also *mimetically leading* (as choragus) the young men at the first festival of Bendis; he is rehearsing that purification for himself the next day (all the interlocutors at the Bendidia are thus heads

in his own soul). All of these processes—Platonic, Socratic, and our own—are going on at once. We discover an abstract outline of *Republic's* curative process (the chemical or genetic code which supports its psychoactivity or bioactivity, so to speak) by turning our attention to Socrates' *teaching* in the middle images. Here we can see the steps necessary to come to knowledge of the good, and so how to look into the cathartic (psycho-) activity of *Republic's* action on the characters in our next chapters. In the central scene, Plato's exhibition is most intimate with Socrates' telling; among other things, Plato's word choices exhibit the differences in activity Socrates is both *defining for* and *requiring of* his interlocutors/hearers. We will see how Glaucon, Socrates' interlocutor during this stage of the dialogue, must mimetically *practice* what Socrates is preaching even as Socrates is *telling* it to him in the central trinity of images. So too must we be practicing—or we are merely reading the surface, or less: flossing our eyeballs.

At 505d Socrates points out part of the problem of proper measure we played out in chapter 2 regarding the true measure of divine wisdom and courage, with the further *topoi* of which we opened this chapter (freedom, honor, wealth, pleasure), and which will be investigated more closely in chapters 5 and 6. We only really care about the true measure in what is most important to us. Hence, the many “would choose to do, possess, and enjoy the reputation for things that are opined to be just and fair, even if they aren't, while, when it comes to good things, no one is satisfied with what is opined to be so but each seeks the things that are so.” This consideration implies a lack of desire to investigate whatever is merely a means, which as Glaucon determined earlier, was the opinion of the many regarding justice—a thing in no way good for its own sake (357b–358b). If justice really were a good thing of itself, *no one* would be satisfied with only having the reputation for it. Unfortunately, carrying the opinion of the many around with us binds us *from* investigating justice carefully, for it does not show up on the “good for its own sake radar” stamped out for us by the many, which we grow up using and believing in (as Adeimantus complained, 363a–366a) before reason, while we are malleable children or adolescents (cf. *Ap* 18b–c). There is probably fear operating here as well, as Socrates himself notes (368c); only, among these, the fear is not of impiety, but fear that by treating an argument about the worth of justice or injustice seriously (*kath auto*) one might *either* seem not to be serious about pursuing it *unless* it can demonstrate its absolute worth, which would give one a reputation for perhaps not being wholly trustworthy in a world where it is precisely this seeming of justice, the seeming of taking it seriously, that must be guarded, *or* one might seem too serious about something we all know just to be a game one dresses up for. Thus does a slander (*diabolē*) one has resided with for a long time (cf. *Ap* 19a) format one's unexamined *modus operandi*.

Furthermore, the many have many opinions about what is good for its own sake (about which they do not want mere opinion—though that is all they have or can have given their mimetic *modus operandi*). Among the most popular are honor, wealth, freedom and pleasure—terms which orient the devolving regimes. Presuming each of these things to be good *tout court* and presuming they know what each really is, each regime of book 8 chooses a distinctive delusion as the god term it follows into its own destruction. Because outside of wisdom operating in the light of the good each (and all) such terms are incomplete and lacking measure, the soul “divines (*apomanteuomenê*)” that the good it seeks is something “but is at a loss about it and unable to get a sufficient grasp of what it is. . . ; and because this is so, the soul loses any profit there might have been in [the good it does achieve]” (505e).⁵ Unfortunately, this cave of delusive, and largely deluded, opinion is where we all begin; so we do not know the true measures of the words echoing around us. We all are really *inside* the problem; the unmeasured goods we pick within this blurring, buzzing confusion are not to be entirely condemned, they are just not good for us precisely so long as we lack their true measure.

By telling his interlocutors about some prisoners in a cave, Socrates investigates this problem of delusion and ignorance as if from the *outside*, as if we are outside the problematic, looking at the strange prisoners; but then he says they are “like us.” Presenting a story this way, a story which is “like us” but which we are also outside of, lets Plato and Socrates—like Nathan, Aristophanes, and the tragedians—open up a difference between the “outer” us (the watchers—outside the cave) and the “inner” us (the watched—inside the cave) through which difference the door of self-examination, of judgment by the light of the good, can open. We are drawn into the passional play instigated through the mimesis, *like* what would happen if the passions were ours; but the motives operating are not real—they are phantastical; we are sitting at a play, listening to Nathan or Socrates or Plato tell a story. Our real life importunate desires are disabled, but not unrecognizable or entirely inactive while we are in the *opseôs kosmos* of the mimesis; *we* are feeling and thinking, but in a different world, about a different world. It is possible some of our passions will get sunburned in the light of such a theatre—as happens to David (2 *Sam.* 12:1–15); perhaps some will be titillated, as Freud considers, hopes, and expects. Perhaps we will be outraged, or laugh at a passion grown ridiculous. And perhaps, as well, thinking about the simpler world before us will enlighten us about the more complex world we live in.

Socrates explains the relation between ignorance and knowledge, delusion and truth with three images; that he *can only give images* to his interlocutors is a sign that while he presents the problematic relation of ignorance and knowledge *as if* from the outside—that is, as if *knowing* it—he knows that this “as if” is itself an illusion; at least those to whom he is speaking are

not outside the problematic he is clarifying. So he *must* give them a fiction, a mimetic *pharmakon*. This is particularly true of (and visible in) the last image—the cave—the making of the map of which requires one be (or have been) entirely outside it. By making an image of our present ignorance as if outside it, Socrates marks his story precisely as a *pharmakon*, not a pure draught of knowledge of the truth. If it is a drug that is not poison but *gennaion* (noble, bearing true, 414c), he must *know* it is one due to which those told it will begin to be trued, begin to see, perhaps all but blindly practice or believe something that is true and so begin coming out—even without knowledge (for they are, in fact, in the cave and so without knowledge). These terms—see, believe, practice, know—find their truing measure in the images Socrates gives here.

As in book 2, where he strangely required that poets tell something of the truth about the gods though no human being knows anything of their ancient days and deeds, he now must himself give Glaucon something like the Good, though “what the good is in itself . . . looks as though it is out of range of our present thrust;” something he is unable to pay and Glaucon unable to receive (506e, 507a). Nothing in this language requires us to believe that Socrates’ inability to pay is natural or permanent *to Socrates*—though the Good’s divine excessiveness indicates it will never be Socrates who pays, but the Good itself which pays through him; in fact, that he tells a story that will orient Glaucon (and us) in the right direction means he must *know* what the right direction is. Otherwise he is mixing his *pharmaka* ignorantly. A significant element of that truth about the good is revealed when Socrates’ image leads Glaucon to confess that it is an inconceivable (or, impossible, irresistible, unmanageable: *amêchanon*) beauty which the good must have (509a): it is not in anyone’s power to make useful machinery of the good; it has, then, made itself appear though the image of the sun Socrates has presented, which sun itself was produced by the good as its child (508bc). This is holy speech on Glaucon’s part (cf. *euphêmei*, 509a): it is spoken by him, though is not (genitively) of him—it is produced by the good itself, in which he is momentarily participating through the story Socrates is telling. It is the good’s own overflow which brings forth his exclamation.

As Socrates, we too were unable to repay the mad friend for reasons that did not bring into question either our virtue, knowledge, or ability to communicate the truth (nor freedom, honor, or wealth for that matter); just so, the fiction was justifiable only on the basis of *knowing* what the good for our mad friend really was: the lie is only just when the person lying has the truer measure of virtue, knowledge, freedom, honor, etc., than the one lied to. The lie allows the mad friend to participate in the truth of our life, through his own (non) action, though not yet (genitively) of himself. Thus the good mimetic. Still, if Glaucon (or we) are to grasp Socrates’ coming point we must know the Good well enough to be able to see how the things he tells of

are like it—whither they move us. We are required by Socrates' images to think that this three part *theory of pharmacological compounds* of Sun, Line, Cave is itself also a *pharmakon*: something that draws us in *to accomplish, to act, to say* something *we would* say or do under the influence of the good itself—as it does to Glaucon. We must “leave aside for the time being” the draft of the good itself. Plato's poem instigates this *gennaïos* mimesis in its readers.

The Sun

“We *say* and *imagine* and it *appears* that” we live in two realms, the visible and the intelligible; in the first, the sun both makes the visible things be and allows the power of sight activity; in the second, the good makes what is intelligible be and makes intellect able to know it. Whenever the sunlight is impure or “mixed with darkness” (508d) even an ordinarily visible thing and a healthy visual power are incapable of seeing the thing perfectly—if at all; and so, similarly, whenever the light of the good is adulterated or hindered, knowable things are not truly known. In what follows I mean to draw attention to the way Socrates and Glaucon speak in this section (506e–509); Socrates uses such phrases as I opened with quite often in the first image: let's talk about things this way, we say, I (don't) imagine (*oimai*); closing with “then *say* the knowable” (509b), and “I *imagine* I leave out much” (509c). The next image (the line) begins with a noetic command and claim (*noëson . . . noëton*, 509d) and an *order* for a geometric construction. Thus it is a mimesis of the top half of the divided line, no longer opening (what we say) or imagining. This difference in language marks an important change in what a *hearer must be doing*; Plato's mimesis incites the kind of activity Socrates describes or represents—and is requiring of Glaucon.⁶ First, imagination; then thought.

It is easy to see what the first image means in the visible realm, for we are made aware of it every day, and every evening; the intelligible realm (under the good) seems less clear. But take the case of a husband and wife who are carrying on some sort of marital battle. In order to understand the battle it is not enough for either side to know or be able to repeat as a history the events and he-said, she-said of their relationship with the exactness of a court reporter. That is merely the visible. To *understand* the other person (or even oneself), one must attempt to see what good (G_1) each act or saying aims at, and (since many goods are merely instrumental) what good (G_Ω) that act, or series—($G_1, G_2, G_3, . . .$) would, finally, achieve. Perhaps the pecking of each on each is merely mimetic and the question cannot be answered by either party; that would be exhibited by an inability to carry the series to any conclusion. No consciousness of the good is operative in such cases: the purely mimetic is the kingdom of darkness. Sometimes we really are in this

kingdom, even as adults. Less dark is the act or word that can be linked to some desire or other, but only if we see how the chain connects to a final end that is good for its own sake do we *understand* the other person (or ourselves), rather than merely *see* what they do. If we don't *know* that chain and its end, we do not really *know* what they (or we) are doing; we only *see* a fact, or series of them, linked to particular desires—mimetic or otherwise.⁷

Against Rosen, then, the Good has a clear epistemic function: we really only understand a person or a thing by seeing the good at which they aim, or within which they are functioning. This is something more (and more specific) than seeing things “clearly and distinctly.” In fact, this is Plato's definition of seeing clearly and distinctly. We understand “nonmoral” things similarly. Everyone remembers the explanation from high school chemistry of why the mixing of an acid and base will produce a salt and water: the atoms of the respective acid and base achieve a more stable energy level in the new molecular compounds. That is the good at which atoms aim; they want to fill their electron shells. Though we moderns may not wish to give existential import to the thesis that each thing in nature is teleologically defined, we still seem to think that way—teleology is regulative—and Plato would hardly deny Kant's point that we cannot *think* in any other way about anything than with reference to its good. Without it we have but the shadow play of sense perception:⁸ this; then that; then another. It is because the nature of each thing *is* intrinsically related to the good that the only way to understand anything is in that light. Final causality is not really an Aristotelian invention; attempting escape it is embracing ignorance.

Whether we both see and understand, or merely see (or neither), we do *say* of both realms that the things in them are as we say. Having seen, frequently we do not take the time, or order our efforts, to understanding: we accept the appearance as the reality. Even our not thinking it good to trouble ourselves to understand has a good at which *it* aims (if it is not mere mimetism)—and the truth about ourselves is there to be *known* by looking that way—under the light of the good we mean to accomplish by hurrying on, by not looking or, not listening. And this “fact” about us is a true knowable (not a *visible* fact), whether *we* ever come to know that truth about ourselves or not. We mean, if we are Polemarchus in the first scene, to work our will on Socrates; the working of our will is the good in itself; in order to do this most effectively we *must not* listen, for to listen is to be affected by the other person, exactly the opposite of working our will upon him. This fact about Polemarchus is knowable through the things we see and hear; but *seeing* what happens and *knowing* what's really going on are quite distinct operations. Polemarchus sees what is going on there as well as anyone, but whether he knows what he is doing seems an open question. Thrasymachus does *know* what he wants to do to Socrates (337d, 345b); he says so; perhaps he stays in the discussion in order to find another opportunity to work his will,

but staying reorients him into an investigation of whether or not that aim can err, or truly is good in itself. He is removed from personal stake by Glaucon's defense of his position as book 2 opens; this allows him to consider it an open question whether the real good is working one's own will. *His* own will is no longer at stake—something like it is. The truth about willing is now at stake, and Thrasymachus has mind enough to want to know what that is. He wants the real good, not what is considered so.

We watchers, in turn, know Polemarchus or Thrasymachus (or Socrates) only by orienting *ourselves* to the good, to seeing what each says in the light of *the* good and so seeing *that* good which each intends for its own sake; that good in which each dwells or wishes to dwell. Thus only do we see the truth about them; perhaps they are like us. One type of soul spends its days reading the entrails of Mammon—living and dying there; others have other gods—the true god would be good for his own sake as well as producing the good in *every* other nature. Just so does the idea of the good both “provide the truth to the things known and give the power to the one who knows” (508e).⁹ If we are seeing by the light of the good we can see whether what the person is choosing as good for its own sake really is so—as in book 1 Socrates shows each is not. The light of the good has revealed that truth to Cephalus and Polemarchus, which is why they abandon their definitions. This example also shows us that the good is “beyond the knowledge and truth that it provides” (509a), for the good itself is not that particular which we know Cephalus, Polemarchus or Thrasymachus to be aiming at, nor is the good itself the truth about any of their defenses. It is, however, by considering their activity and speech in the light of the good that we know, truly, what good each aims to achieve for itself. And if we think about being Polemarchus or Thrasymachus we may begin to feel how the most difficult part of the process may be the first—turning the soul around to look, in the light of the good, both at what one has done and what one fails to do. “Surely, you don't mean it is pleasure” (509a), Glaucon says. No, indeed; in fact, facing the good and seeing things in its light might very well be (at first) quite painful—as looking into a fire after staring for a long time into darkness. And perhaps we will not be able to endure it for long, as Aristotle suggests (*NE* 1158a25). But let us observe a holy silence (509a)¹⁰ about that and consider Socrates' next images. No; one more implication: if this story is true, then any dedicated attention to things under the light of the Good is itself an act of praise (and a confession of need and gratitude) for precisely that Good which is beyond our knowledge, but makes it all possible.¹¹ Thus philosophy would always be an act of piety, of reverence—or not well done, and to that degree not true.

The Line

“Then, take a line cut in two unequal segments” (509d). As noted above, Socrates’ language here takes an explicitly imperative noetic turn even as he begins to set out a figure that is more exacting about *noêsis* and its relatives. All of *Republic* is structured like a logarithmic spiral: the relations of the parts remain the same even as the parts expand.¹² The realm called visible in the first image is called opinable in the second. In the first image, Socrates’ word choices—“we say,” “I imagine”—were in line with an artistic image (and its cause): the sun;¹³ in this second, the image becomes mathematical and the language rises too. Discussing the first image, verbs (and other words) with a root in *phainô* (appear) are popular; they disappear from 509d to the end of book 6. Socrates begins the line image with the imperative (*noêson*, 509d); so as Socrates introduces his mathematical image, the language of Plato’s characters rises from that of private imagination and shared opinion to more exacting and clear gnosis—the mind under its own necessity. Even when Glaucon says he does not know (*emathon*, 510b) and Socrates has to help him up again, he does not say “I think we’ll say . . .” (cf. 509b), but “you will understand (*mathêsei*) more easily after this preamble” (510c); the preamble steps down to the more colloquial “you know . . .” (*oimai*) only once to bring Glaucon back up to recognize hypothesizing and how we work with it: *shaping images in order to understand* geometry; just so, we might invent songs to hear mathematics. Bach comes to mind; consider *The Art of the Fugue*.

The line divides the opinable into shadows and things (510a), foreshadowing the cave, in which the shadows on the wall are caused by the *eikones* carried before the fire. There are two things *knowable* about *all* the *opinables* already *through this geometric image*: (A) one kind has greater clarity than the other, and (B) the clearest kind of opinables have some kind of equality with the lower kind of knowables. That this is *knowable*—not merely visible, for it follows *necessarily* from the geometry of the line, is another indication that Socrates’ second image brings a different kind of power into play than the first—for it brings it to play even in us.¹⁴ The kind of mathematical image Socrates draws here is *defined in the image itself* as an example of the first level of *noêsis* and at the same time Plato’s verb choices mark the change in active powers he is bringing into use (and making us use through his construction) vis-à-vis the earlier sun image. Looking forward to the cave we should say of (A), that the lower opinables are the opinions of others, for all that defines the shadows in the cave is acclamation, while the higher opinables (the carried *eikones*) are things one sees or accepts for oneself (still, one is not yet thinking about them). Further, of (B), all the things one can “see” for oneself are things about which one *may* think, and in the first level of thought “one uses as images those very things” that have been seen

(511a)—not the mere shadows of them (i.e., the acclamations of others). Ordering Glaucon to *construct a diagram*, Socrates is reversing the direction of the visible climbing process (from visibles to noesis), making him *use geometry to produce an image* for all four stages of mind. Further, whereas geometry itself *uses visible images* for the unseen knowables of its investigation, here the science of the knowable *produces geometry itself as an image* within a geometric image of all knowables. Socrates thereby shows that the passage of equality between the middle two sections of the line (call them visibles and hypotheticals) can be worked in either direction. In geometry and the like thought *orders* the construction of the perceptibles it uses for knowing; in *pistis*, the perceptible things order thought, as if mirror neurons were all that worked in us, or as if we are following a great beast and “learning” a history from it (493a–d). The same *things*—drawn line or triangle—appear under both of these functions; nonetheless, the functions are quite distinct even if the things are, in a way, the same. Geometry and the other sciences Socrates will run through (526a–531d) all require that the mind participate through language in a realm above change and matter, while also able to (as Glaucon repeatedly does) apply such unchangeable truth to the changing things—many kinds of many of them. As Nalin Ranasinghe has put it, “the way out of all existent or possible caves leads to this common structure of archetypal ideas that human souls can apprehend and are bound to by the power of speech and the necessity of conversation.”¹⁵ Of course, one must speak, not merely repetitively mouth.

Glaucon closes this book not with the weaker verbs—“let’s say,” “I imagine,” or “it appears,” but with three strongly active verbs: *manthanô*, *sugchorô*, *tattô*: I understand, I concur, I order (513e). These verbs build in power and activity: we might use the first just as we are *coming to understand* a language, the second requires a kind of independence which *knowingly harmonizes* with another, the last is what a general does with his troops, or a geometer with his lines and figures. *Eikasia*, *pistis*, *dianoia/epistemê*. Glaucon is not just sitting there watching Socrates tell stories, he is climbing; he is not merely affirming, he is engaging distinct powers; he is, at last, ordering in accord with the universal truths *nous* apprehends. We (like the silent interlocutors) are *at least* being shaped to the truth about knowledge through reading Plato’s story. Thus mimesis of truth orients a person towards the truth, even if he does not yet own it himself as knowledge. Some readers may actually be sparked into thinking about what Socrates is saying (rather than just accepting and memorizing the names and relations of the parts of the line—which would at best be mere *pistis* that there are four powers). In the former case, a reader, like Glaucon, is operating in the realm of the knowable rather than merely taking it in and singing along (as those in parentheses).

In the divided line Socrates also assures us that we *know* there are two ways of knowing. This is necessarily true. We can distinguish a way that starts from a hypothesis, uses things as images, and goes down to a conclusion about that *intelligible thing* we sought to know about—we use both terms as it shares in both natures: *intelligible* and visible *things*. Geometry is Socrates' example of such a science, but there are other like sciences and they are necessary training in becoming fully dialectical—solid geometry, astronomy, music. Two more of these are what we might call psychology and political science—the kind Socrates will *illustrate* in books 8 and 9, not the empirical sort which moves from things (like the great beast) to intelligible hypotheses or history, but rather one that, as he has been doing, moves from hypotheses (about city, nature) to further intelligible things (tri-partition, e.g.). Having this science, choices will no longer merely be matters of historical *fact* about someone, but rationally explicable through what follows from the hypotheses. The “things above” will be geometries of soul; the geometry shows why and how it is that such a one sees whatever choice he makes as good, and *cannot see* another so. Chapter 5 will show how book 8 starts with the mathematical implications of tri-partition and reaches down to exhibit its work in visible historical, social, and interpersonal activities. There are, however, quite a number of other such dianoetic sciences clearly named by Socrates. He constructs a dianoetic ordering of them—expanding dimensionally from arithmetic to astronomy—for guardian education. Glaucon points out practical applications of each, but what counts for Socrates is how they come to be and develop: *not via attention to the empirical*, though they can explain, direct, and order (*tattô*), the empirical. Psychology and politics are exhibited precisely as such hypothesis based sciences in *Plato's construction of Republic* as well. All such *things* are possible matters of *thought*—not merely matters of experience or perception, and this operation Socrates calls *dianoia* (thinking) in the technical sense.¹⁶

Antistrophic to this first way of knowing, Socrates describes the second part and process of the intelligible (*noêsis* proper) which, while starting with hypotheses, is able to show by dialectic that these hypotheses are real beginnings, not merely helpful, more or less arbitrary assumptions (which would be *dianoia*), or untested accepted *doxa*—which would be the lower activity of trust (*pistis*), or imagination (*eikasia*). Even if, like Glaucon, we “understand (*manthanô*) but not fully” (511c), we do *know for certain* that *this distinction* between the two processes of the intelligible is true, and we know it *precisely by making it*, that is—through the *idea* of the distinction about these two ways of knowing we come to see that the distinction *must* be true and we can use the distinction henceforth to discriminate among all the things we know. In making the distinction, the distinction itself *certifies something unhypothetical*: namely, knowledge starting from something hypothetical and working from there to further conclusions is *absolutely*

distinct from knowledge starting with a hypothesis and working to prove that hypothesis must be true, and then going on from there. We see this (*nous*), rather than deduce it (*epistemê*, *dianoia*) through considering dialectically (511b). Thus the distinction Socrates makes between the two ways of knowing both exemplifies his point about, and proves the existence of the highest kind of knowledge, for there are only two possible ways to go from a hypothesis.

We also *know* that the knowledge which starts from the latter kind of *archê* (the one dialectically affirmed) is *safesteron* (more manifest, 511c). In “clinging to” the things that cling to this distinction one is not thinking like those who possess no *nous* (*noun ouk ischein*, 511d), but merely make or *accept* hypotheses. In making us make this distinction *we precisely exemplify* and imitate “using ideas themselves, and through ideas, ending in an idea” without (as you see) reference to anything sensed (511b–c). Though Plato’s mimesis charmed us to do it, we have no doubt about the truth of this fundamental hypothesis: the distinction between the two ways of working from hypothesis is self-authenticating. What we have come to know, by the above dialectic, we see *must* be true—absolutely unhypothetically. Furthermore, what we have come to know is certainly not any propositional knowledge of the good, though we have approached closer to this “limit of the intelligible” (532b). We hereby destroy mere dogmatic acceptance of the hypothesis the divided line instantiated, and replace that acceptance with *nous* of the scope and place of this hypothesis about the use of hypotheses, their limits and their dialectical others.¹⁷ Glaucon’s language echoes what we have done: we have achieved a limited certainty right in this discussion of knowledge. Not everything we know is merely hypothetical, or based upon a merely “accepted starting point.”¹⁸ The Good itself is not, then, the anhypothetical starting point of thought; it is still, as in the beginning, that which allows intelligibility and is beyond it. The particular anhypothetical starting point Socrates brings us up to is understanding’s vision of the scope, place and limits of its own hypotheses—if the understanding in question (ours) is actually doing this (not merely mouthing affirmations). Nothing (no other form) is deduced out of this beginning, nor is it, strictly speaking, a proposition; rather, we see that (e.g.) this twofold distinction of modes of thought (or, “the intelligible”) is both complete and certain; we see their real relation. A hypothesis or an image (about two forms of thought, for instance) might just be our invention (*pistis* or *eikasia*), but considering more exactly we see that the intelligible really *is* this way. It is not a distinction brought into being by us, but appears through our distinguishing. The “science of knowledge” is anhypothetically laid out here—not our invention, but given to be known by the Good, and we all see this same thing; we have achieved the good of intellect regarding this matter of knowing the ways of knowing. Similarly with other “sciences”; the geometer, for example, does not truly know (in the

sense of *noêsis*) when he merely accepts the definitions and axioms and uses them to prove his theorems, but only when he can show that those hypotheses are complete and certain and define a certain kind of knowable—plane figures, for example. Then he has gone up, and down. The fact that geometers sought for millennia to produce proofs for their originating axioms is one thing we should expect to follow from this distinction between the two ways of intelligibility: of course we want that which is clearest and *safesteron*! It takes much longer than Euclid however.

Again we see the logarithmic mimetic spiral of Plato's construction, for while Socrates is making these distinctions, not only does his *language echo* the distinctions in each part, but interlocutors and readers *must be doing* the distinct things that are being described in the Socratic image. If we aren't, then we aren't reading Plato; we only imagine we are. The four powers by which we say we grasp visible and intelligible things—imagination (*eikasias*), belief or trust (*pistis*), thought or understanding (*dianoia*), and reason (*noêsis*), ordered from least clear and precise to most—are next presented as an e/ducation (leading out) in Socrates' third imaginative picture (*eikôn*). *Insofar as we have already engaged in all of these acts, we have been outside of the cave.* It is also possible that we have only been watching Socrates' picture show. It is plausible to argue that every "transition from belief to knowledge," every act of "philosophical wisdom, for Plato, is impossible without both [*dianoia* and *noêsis*] . . . and genuine inquiry requires their joint progress."¹⁹ Otherwise a hypothesis seems to be just another guess—a case of *eikasias*, accepting what is said, or a representation believed (*pistis*)—which as Schindler says, is a representation of something's "'for me' significance."²⁰

The Cave

"After that make an image" (*apeikason*, 514) echoes two things discussed in the previous image: Socrates could be ordering Glaucon to engage either the lowest cognitive power (*eikasias*), or (being an imperative) the second highest, which, as we have seen, *orders* its images to illustrate the knowable issue. This double echo allows that two things can be going on among the interlocutors, and among readers: they (we) might just be allowing the images Socrates presents to play across the wall of our minds in the way we watch television. But Socrates *orders* Glaucon *to construct* an image, and though Socrates keeps speaking, it seems that Glaucon is doing precisely that; we construct an image in coming to understand (*dianoia*) something in such a way that we *question the image about the (intelligible) thing* of which we intend it to be the image. The constructed image is the object of our questioning, but not merely as the *thing* that appears; we are thinking about the thing we have hypothesized, not merely playing with appearances. Glau-

con does, at least, answer the questions, as we see him questioning or answering about the image: how are the cave dwellers like us? do they know anything of themselves? what do they think of objects? would their naming and “knowing” be of anything but shadows (515a–c)? Some of the listeners may be just watching the images roll by (Glaucou’s answers as well), not constructing or questioning themselves. Cleitophon comes to mind as one who is following in this less exact way as at 340a, but others say nothing all night. *Doxomimêtikê?*

So, some readers will repeat the images in their proper order (including the image of Glaucou answering Socrates presented by Plato), but some others will be able to see how the image means something not seen, but intelligible. Not only will they *see how*, but they will be practicing those intellectual *activities which are* the way out, rather than just mimetically imagining a cave and a way out: their questions and answers are that practice. The image Socrates makes here (or orders Glaucou to make) is one that, through its strangeness, clearly sparks Glaucou’s attention and so makes him use the image as a model in considering his answers; Socrates’ image and Plato’s constructed discussion incite us to do likewise. Both images (Socrates’ image and Plato’s, which includes Socrates questioning Glaucou and Glaucou’s answering) are illusions, fictions, poems, but fictions which lead (Glaucou at least) into more certain knowledge. Each may be an image others (in both worlds) are merely entranced by—until the next image comes along to entrance further or differently. Such are cave dwellers, for whom one thing follows another *ad mortuum*. As we said earlier, a *pharmakon* is always a danger; but we have been noting with what measure Plato mixes his terms. That exact mixing—for example, changing to the imperative as he rises up the line—shows his care as a pharmacist.

The one who is asking or answering questions about the image (Plato’s or Socrates’) is necessarily using a higher power than the one who is merely watching the images (and answers) go by. Plato’s *pharmakon* raises us into asking and answering by all its rational and mimetic structure. One who watches and remembers might think he knows many things, for he has experienced many things, but this use of the word knowledge is delusional—exactly as delusional as Socrates’ image pictures. Having come clear about what *knowledge* really is (in contrast to what *we say* or *imagine*), we now know: cave dwelling image repeaters don’t have it. Experience is not knowledge, no matter how frequently repeated or even if the cave-dwellers “are divining” (*apomanteuomenôî*, 516d), what things come next; such experience merely lights up mirror neurons, repeats what has been repeated. We might say, even though they “know” their history, they are condemned to repeat it, condemned to remain within the shadows of mere experience and memory. None of this implies that experience and memory are useless or unnecessary, only that to stop there is not human—even if humans stop there.

Cave dwellers imagine experience is knowledge; in this delusion they do not *come to know* the things that are as they are in themselves. And among the things they do not know is their *own* being—what and how they are meant to know. Such a life is to the human being as dreaming and sleeping are to waking (534c–d). This position is hated by all the gods and men, but these do not even know they are in it; therefore they do not hate it, but in fact would seek to kill someone who tried to pull them out of this world they “know” That death, we see, will not change the knowable facts: the soul of human beings has the knowledge to which Socrates is orienting us as its natural *telos*; this *telos* is distinct from repetition and experience; not to achieve this *telos* is not to become fully human. This will not be on the test; this is the test.

There are, we see, two different sorts of delusion among the cave dwellers, and different degrees, at least among the first sort. That is, there are two distinct operations in the opinable realm, for there are men in two different places in the cave. Some are carrying things on their heads as they travel on the road below the fire and next to the wall bordering the road; then there are men in chains facing the back wall, watching the shadows pass by. This pictures two sorts of delusion. Those carrying things on their heads each have their own delusion, or as a modern Protagoras would have it: each carries his and her own truth. Truly, they each carry it, and true, each considers what he carries true; but whether what they carry is worth carrying as well as how they came to carry it, and what it truly is, all those questions are unanswered in the image, which means their answers may well be invisible to those who carry the *eikones*. They believe or have trust (*pistis*) about what they carry; but these beliefs are (though theirs in a way) unexamined.

The men (and women!) in chains are deluded also, but they do not carry the delusions and the delusions are not “theirs” in any individual way; rather these are, in a sense, carried. What each shadow is called is entirely a social construction. Acclamation labels one shadow an ass and another a horse (cf. *Phaedrus*), or this a rabbit and that a duck (cf. Wittgenstein). These prisoners, then, are carried by the acclamations of the other cave dwellers to accept whatever “it is said” or “we say” is going on. Like names for things, the “knowledge” here is the arbitrariness not of any one, but of acclamation; one can not argue here, but only remember names and shapes, at best sequences, precedences, and coexistences (516d), but first of all one must remember the coexistence of certain shadows with the sounds shouted by the prisoners around one. This is learning the language of the cave; it is where we all start. Though this description makes the prisoners seem totally deluded, Socrates’ construction tells us that the shadows are shadows caused by statues, which are of real things, which exist outside the cave, so the image is telling us that there is some connection to the truth of things even here, though none of the cave dwellers even know there is a question.

Imagine many such caves; each culture cave has its own language—in one they speak Greek, in another English, and the sounds associated with what is seen are entirely arbitrary with regard to the things seen. Nonetheless we *must* learn “how things are called” in our cave; thus begins all education, and there may be awards given to those who learn such coincidences of name and appearance fastest and best (516c). This “learning” begins in mimesis and is entirely mimetic: we echo what we hear. Cave speech allows some distant connection to the truth of things, though the cave dwellers do not know anything about it. They are, if we consider the truth, just babbling, and we can say this insofar as every word of our language is arbitrary. So is every other tongue; there is no language speaking nature itself as *Cratylus* purports (425d–428e). The image shows that it is delusory to think that in learning the language one is learning about those things language is about. Some of us babble in English, some in Greek.

Though one can only speak as one’s cave speaks, to go on merely repeating acclamation, is, as an earlier image had it, to follow around a great strong beast, discovering its likes and dislikes (493a–c); it is to be carried (or pulled) in accord with the perceptions of others, of *das Man*, of the majority, of those who shout loudest. It is the world of the mimetic, from which an individual *may* come, and out of which only—if ever—he *must* come; but in this world the individual *is* not. If one is quick one may avoid being eaten by the beast—because one is already a part of it and moves only as it moves. There may be further rewards for those who can suggest something provoking acclamation (516c), but these too are arbitrary, having merely the value *das Man* gives. One is in any case not living one’s own life, but the life of the great beast. To use an image from Aristophanes or contemporary computer geekdom, it is to take direction from the cloud while in and of the cloud. In a world of mass media such clouds are much larger, more constant, and more loudly rumbling than ever Aristophanes imagined. Maybe not; maybe now people are just enabled to (disabled by?) carry(ing) their cloud of unknowing everywhere.

No one wishes to be in the position of not living their own life, but that of some other unknown thing: the cloud of whatever is said today. Of course, the helpful thing about this ignorance is that no one in it recognizes he is in it. We cannot say this life is not pleasant, for it may be; in fact, Socrates says pleasure is what keeps us in this cave life (519b). Ignorance of our position aids this bliss. One eats better and is not trampled when one is a part of *das Man*—or even better, when one can win acclamation, divining something the many will tongue. Even then, this life is not one’s own, and to think one is living one’s own life is a totalizing delusion, even if “pleasant.” This is the world of mimesis: each does what all do. There is no self to know; no wonder we don’t know who our friends are either. Socrates’ claim that “they are like

us” is to wake Glaucon and the others—it is not merely a fiction he tells, but a truth: *de te fabula narratur*.

The whole of *Republic* is structured like (a very complicated) parabasis of an ancient comedy: the actors have left the stage, and the leader of the chorus, as it were, speaks directly out to us: “I went down.” One action is over (last night’s party) and another is to commence shortly (our real daily life). This second action will echo elements of the earlier action (precisely in choices about what is thought to be good and the value of justice). Between these two actions a character stands forth and speaks to us as something more than just the character he has been in the fiction. Socrates’ frequent “he says” and “I says” have been more or less constant reminders of this dramatic but undialogical framework of the dialogue, but his remark—“they are like us, I said” (515a)—reminds us anew of both the “us” Socrates is, and that the “us” he is speaking to includes the readers of the dialogue. If the dialogue has a poetic center, this remark is it: A parabasis, within the parabasis that is the dialogue, faces out at us. We are to recollect anew that Socrates is breaking the plane of representation: “us” has two distinct vectors. Socrates, like the leader of an Aristophanic chorus, builds a community in two worlds: in the *opseôs kosmos* of the work of art, and, crossing that, in the world of Plato’s readers/auditors/audience—parabatically. It is because we are reading *Republic* that “the tale is saved and may save us” (621c); otherwise it is a dead letter. The story requires living blood in order to rehearse itself. The parabasis raises a comedy from merely (crooked) image of our world, to something into which we are woven, and which is woven into our world; so too *Republic*, and particularly, this central image. Of the whole *Republic* we begin to think (as at the parabasis of a play): they are like us; and that we think they are like us is a mimesis of Socrates, who contains all of these other interlocutors, as if in his own soul—a many headed beast indeed.

Farther up than the prisoners, the carriers seem to each have their own truth. How they have come to carry what they carry, what they carry, why they carry it, whence and whither are not even intimated by the image. Though we see that the statues they carry cause the delusive shadows the lower prisoners take as real, there is no indication that these carriers even know there are prisoners below them (just as the prisoners do not know anything causes their shadows), nor is there evidence they know what they carry; perhaps they are even ignorant that they carry anything. One can, of course, be more cynical: The image carriers are the ad men, radio hosts, and other image makers—including the unphilosophical lawmakers:²¹ they know what they carry causes delusion, or at least unreflective mimetic behavior, but it is warmer here than down lower, and a little carrying goes a long way. Perhaps they are the poets—or at least their rhapsodes.²² So they carry; they may not care what, if they even know what they carry, or (under this more

cynical view) that it is not importantly truer than the delusions they cause. There could be people like this; but even knowing what they carry and why, they would still be deluded about something—namely that the creature comforts they gain by carrying (warmth, a bit more light, perhaps even a feeling of power over those they delude) are a true and worthwhile life; that notion of the good they accept as *das Man* accepts it, so their carrying is still blind. Though in a sense they are not carried away (for they perhaps have even decided to carry what they carry), they are still in the dark as to what is truly good. In this understanding of the image, they carry for the rewards accruing, not for the *eikôn*'s own sake. These rewards are not significantly different from those given out below, perhaps only larger, greater in quantity.²³ Clearly, one would not carry such for their own sake, for (perhaps) they know them to be untrue; in any case, their worth is not in themselves, but like surgery (357c), what comes of it we hold—or more accurately, *is held*—to be good. The creature comforts for which these subjects carry are their real masters, and they do not question whether or not such a master is mad. Indeed, how could that be asked or imagined? For this is what there is, they say: carry or live down there. As with the seated prisoners, some form of leaden weight, “which eating and such pleasures and their refinements naturally attach to [their] soul, . . . turn its vision downward” (519b).

A less cynical understanding of the carriers would consider these men to be ignorant that they are carrying statues, as well as why, whence, and whither; nor do they know of the prisoners below. We can imagine many parents and teachers who merely repeat the things that were told to them; these sayings have been so constantly with them that they wear the carvings of their upbringing as if they were their own hair. Mimesis and mere memory have made them into whatever they have been imitating, or “learned.” Meno seems to have this sort of idea of education: you hear what the best teachers say (if you can afford them, as he can) and remember it and so become more learned (e.g., 71c). Anytus concurs—any good man can tell his son what virtue is (92e). Meno is mnemonic; he can afford the most stylish hair. He easily carries things on his head—almost as easily as an Ion. What these *eikones* mean might well be a blank, but they never fall off! He believes them; that is, he believes they are true; he has, after all, learned from the *sophistai*. Hippias' speeches are the same sort of performance—and he is paid extremely well!

We can argue, from the divided line (to which this image must be attached, 517b), that trust or faith (*pistis*) ranges over the same quantity, or things, as thought (*dianoia*), since their portions are equal, though they are not equal in truth or clarity.²⁴ So someone like Meno might have all kinds of true beliefs, in fact a memorizer who was religious about it might have as many true beliefs as the one who knows all things (*Meno* 381b). And each could tell us lots of things. Those with imagination can tell us many more, for

its flickering fire makes all kinds of strange things leap out from even true beliefs. But neither of those is knowledge, and while we should admit that each is a step in the process of education—for we might have to start learning some things just by believing our teachers, as we all *do* start by learning and accepting the arbitrary sounds of our language, and we do first begin to be just by imitating the laws—each of these lower steps can also be a soporific drug, keeping us (comfortably) sleepyheaded.

Most of the image at the start of book 7 is taken up by possible and necessary happenings within the cave itself; little is said of the world outside. We hear only that it is distressing and painful to be pulled out of the cave (515c, e), but that, when out, one sees how things truly are. We hear that anyone who had taken the journey would rather be “‘a slave to a portionless man on the earth’ and to undergo anything whatsoever rather than to opine” the things of the cave and live that way (516d). Besides the echo of Homer, we should hear also the echo of book 2—the thing hated by all the gods and men, that no one would want, is to be in the true lie, the life of delusion. The cave (whether of culture or the body) and everything about it is not condemned, but *living according to it* and *opining it is the whole truth* is condemned as the worst of all possible situations: for worse than death is living death. This is living death precisely because it is not one’s own life and it is not fully human. There are zombies among us.

The cave life in which we are from childhood, and which for our good should suffer some trimming of feasting and other such pleasures from early on (519a–b), is—in the Platonic traditions most closely associated with the mystery religions, and later Manichaeism—interpreted as the body, the prison of the soul. While we need not believe that this is Plato’s opinion, we do need to examine what distinguishes the light of the one (visible) world from the light of the other (intelligible)—which also must be like the first, as the sun is like the good *and the offspring of it*. This means that we cannot regard the light in the cave as merely “a counterfeit light,” much less that “those few who know how to use it only abuse it by allowing it to project deceptions.”²⁵ We must and do begin in this cave; its light is a child of the Good; it is a good thing to use—to begin with. It is also a good thing to use—with beginners; in fact, we must, and Socrates does (as does Plato in constructing mimeses). There is an orderly affection in infancy and an order that is natural and good in learning. Some states of mind and soul being better than others does not require the earlier to be condemned, nor does it imply that they are eliminable or counterfeit.

The good, as that at which all things aim, is most desirable of itself, and allows us to see the truth (and so true worth) of all else. But there are more particular (and earlier active) desires among mortal beings—Socrates calls them the pleasures of becoming, including therein many refinements of the social realm (519b—recall Glaucon’s demand for “the conventional,” 372d).

Rather than the bonfire of the vanities, consider the fire in the cave as the fire of the finite mimetic being's (seemingly) boundless natural desires. Such a fire is kindled in each living being *by the good itself* (down to the cellular level), but the good itself is not something of which we can have *aesthesis*; sight is insufficient, *nous* is required. An animal reaches its perfection by following its natural desires (all of which are sensitive and bodily); animals live thereby as children of the good, accomplishing their *teloi*; their desires have natural limits—they are never boundless. A human being reaches its perfection by following its natural desires too. Its nature is different, however; first, some of what it desires is knowable only,²⁶ and all of its desires are *able to be ordered* according to knowledge. Ordering our nature and desires according to knowledge is our kind of perfection.

Secondly, in naturally mimetic beings desire (including spirit) is naturally mimetic as well; this is not to order desires, but to have them be engendered and ordered.²⁷ Mimetic desire, however, *is* really limitless; the competition between mimetic rivals is not like natural appetite, but rather as is exhibited in the true oligarch's love for money.²⁸ Desire operating in finite rational mimetic beings does not see or feel the truth about things or the good of things or their order very clearly at all; an animal is *more successful* at achieving the limit of its good. For our kind, clear seeing is only possible for *nous*, not perception, imagination, or *pistis*; these latter can get to good things, but they do not allow for accurate measure of their goodness. Naturally mimetic beings will copy the desires of others until the destruction of the world. Comparisons among goods offered by these powers are more wildly various than interest group politics in the most thinly bound democracy. The soul sees, here, only what desire/spirit show us of those things; and this is why the cave image teaches us that such a light only shows us what we *imagine* or *believe* to be the truth about them; and this in turn is not our own, but mimetically engendered and accepted. Among the shadows, what things are is what they are acclaimed to be. Even though imagination and belief may have something true in them, *pistis/eikasia* do not understand the truth about things as they are themselves.²⁹

If the image we believe in has been made by a poet with *dianoia*, we will be better off than under our own imagination or the ordinary reception of social acclamation, but even in this best case, desire does not allow us to see things as they are in themselves. Such is the realm and work of the noble lie. Our achievement of the good at this level will not be a function of knowledge, but due to mimesis charmed forth by a divinely inspired poet or lawmaker. Insofar as we ourselves lack (or fail to actuate) *noesis* such achievement of the good *must* seem a divine gift, and the philosopher king will agree to such a story too, for he, more than any, knows that his own hard won knowledge comes to him only because of a power beyond himself—the power of the good which enlightens him to make the laws/poems that the

citizens call inspired. In the realm of *pistis/eikasia* each thing seen by the light of desire can only be seen as (at best) “useful for x,” not as what it is in itself. And the worship of X rather than Y or Z is merely an expression of what mimetic habits have been set up in the soul/society that is “speaking.” That is precisely what is false about the *world* of opinion even where the opinions are accurate so far as they go—and they go far in that world! In the world of the opinable the things are *never* known as they are in themselves. To govern ourselves or our city in such a state is to govern in a dream (520c), it is to govern in a “what we call it” of mimeticism that can only stoke the bonfire, not get us past it. Even the liberal democratic “ideal communicative situation” of consensus might well be an effect of the mimetic, not vision in the light of the good.³⁰ We cannot be truly governing if we do not know what it is we are governing over, and how it truly is, so what its good is; not knowing those things, we cannot possibly be adequate masters—ruling for the good of that over which we rule.

Cave moralists will deny the existence of a good in itself or for its own sake—or deny that we can know it; but once they begin speaking and thinking (rather than mimetically mouthing) they will have to admit Aristotle’s argument (*NE* 1094a20) that an interminable instrumental operation is pointless; hence they generally admit pleasure to be the good (Freud, Mill, Hume, Hobbes, et al.) and fall into utilitarianism, as regularly as entrancement by Circe. About Circe’s dinner there was all but universal consensus among Odysseus’ sailors, and Odysseus himself was only saved by divine inspiration (*Od.* 10: 275–300). Such useful pleasant feastings keep us in the cave (519b). Thrasy-machus, and modern political theory, which begin with a thesis about the individual in which each one lacks any intrinsic relation to the whole, “*has no choice* but to relate to everything outside [himself] in the mode of manipulation,” for the good in the absolute sense is merely himself. Even this has something true in it, for only a being that has “a goodness of its own cannot finally be reduced to anything else.”³¹ This last Thrasy-machus not only admits, but insists upon—for himself. This is a divine solipsism; perhaps he *is* the only god. If he is such a fully independent autarchic being, then Thrasy-machus’ political theory (and the weaker versions of it held by our contemporaries) is true. If not, not. Appearances do not require a good in themselves; real things never exist without it.³² For, that good which the real thing embodies is not of our making—only how it appears is so. Thus modern political theory is at one with the destruction of nature, for the divine solipsist decides what each thing’s good is—for him.

THE CURING PROCESS EXHIBITED

That the central images of *Republic* are central in much more than a numerical way, and that Socrates' opening "I went down to Piraeus" is an image of his descent into the cave to turn its prisoners—his interlocutors within and without the dialogue—around and begin their march up from *eikasia* through *pistis* and *dianoia/epistemê* to *nous*, and through this (he hopes) to an awareness of the Good, has been so overwritten that no one can have read everything about it.³³ For the purpose of understanding *Republic* as a cure for delusion it is useful to show how differing degrees of delusion and knowledge explicitly outlined in the story of the cave have already been active at different points in both the narrative of the cave and the course of the dialogue. So, what follows maps distinct parts of the dialogue into the picture of the cave and its outline of the road from ignorance to knowledge.

To the prisoners, the shadows are the real things. They not only do not have any way to test what the images are of—for the one who wins the award is the one who can call it as most of the others see it, having remembered, perhaps, what they called it before (516d)—but these also do not even know that what they look at is an image. A person at this depth of delusion is completely submerged in the great beast of his society (492b–494a), he is the expression of *its* whim: things appear and are taken to be as they are acclaimed to be. He is not consciously imitating the voices he heard, but the mimetic breathes through his vocal cords.³⁴ The most "delusion" can mean *to these* is believing what contradicts the seeming spoken by the many. If they could be heard (and reached—but the prisoners are enchained), those contradicting would be laughed at (517a), brutalized (327c), or killed (517a). Correction here means accommodation to the voice, and "even the attempt [to persuade otherwise] is a great folly" (492e). This position on the line is exactly illustrated in the first scene of *Republic*.

Scene 1: Going Down to Eikasia

We all have been in the cave of our bodies' desires and of cultural mimesis (if not in front of a tv screen or web browsing computer) since childhood, living what's customary (*aper nomizetai* 372d).³⁵ By contrast, in reading *Republic* we are following the line out of the cave from the beginning of the dialogue. Plato is exhibiting (and gadflying us into mimesis of) the cathartic process today, even as Socrates was practicing his purifying of the various regimes of soul he was surrounded by in the dialogue through the pharmacopoeia of his speeches yesterday. Socrates was on his way out of Piraeus; escaping from the mimetic sea with a Glaucus soul, beginning to knock off the encrustations of its habitual and unnoticed activities—or behaviors?—and trains of . . . thought? Or *eikasia*, likeness, imagination? Or *pistis*?

culturally carved carryings he may not even be aware of? “The Athenian procession was fine, but no better than that of the Thracians” (327a). A first hammer blow to the Glaucus’ cultural encrustations. But suddenly Socrates is ordered to stop; he is brought back down to the port where everything comes in.

The first scene of *Republic* takes place both outside the city and outside Piraeus. At the suggestion of Eva Brann, let us agree that Piraeus is here symbolic of the land of the dead,³⁶ as well as the ocean of mimetic indifferenciation whence—if it ever comes to be in a naturally mimetic creature—individuality must arise.³⁷ The difference between these two (the land of the dead, the mimetic sea) is merely literal. Athens with its hilltop temples is the city of all those present in the discussion, but they are not there either. The first scene discovers our characters not among the dead, nor (it seems) entirely lost—as an infant—in the mimetic sea, but in no human city either: they are between these two; outside the walls: somewhat above the dead, not yet in the city. Like Plato’s Academy, the first scene of *Republic* is physically, morally, and mimetically, separated from agora, Pnyx and their own houses. Though for the Greeks there are no men without cities, these men seem to be in the modern political theorist’s mythic state of nature; literally understood, they are alive, and human (for they speak), and yet not under the rule of any law. Hobbes will later say of this life outside the *civitas* that it is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short; and it threatens to be so for Socrates (“do you think you can prove stronger?” 327c). Plato presents the imaginary origin of modern politics in the simplest of pictures: a small group, thrown together in one place, with limited common resources—each other and the festival night. It is somewhat less adequate an imaginary origin than Socrates’ story of the healthy city, for there is in the small group only one boy, Polemarchus’ *pais*. They need to decide even how to decide; how shall their small polis be set up?

A few men, common resources, thrown together. It is the first festival of Bendis, so our political question is also a religious question: “how should we spend our leisure time?” here means also “how do we best honor the goddess?” Perhaps the divinities and the political are the same—as some contemporaries who say politics is everything apparently believe. Or, perhaps every answer to the political question is a religious confession of faith—as the opening lines of *Laws* might indicate. This, at least, is true: every politics shapes a mimetic structure, which reproduces itself, religiously. A methodologically atheist democracy rehearses atheism—there is no all-enlightening, *sine qua non* good; a polytheistic one rehearses either relativism—that is, infinite divisibility—or war. (Do these differ?) In any case, the beginning of the dialogue allows the political and the religious to be distinguishable questions, even as it requires both to be answered at once, whether or not the answer to each question turns out to be the same. Plato does not begin his

dialogue *Politeia* by abrogating the question of religion, or by excommunicating it; he constructs his regimes upon a scene which exhibits the intimate relation of politics and religion. *Laws* likewise. Perhaps this is not merely an effect of Greek understanding; no pious man could think that the life of a human city and religious life are separable. For what else can tie together (*re/ligare*) beings that are not merely body, but spirit? not merely subjects of *aisthesis*, but of *nous*? *Something* is held holy among such beings—is it an *eikôn*, or is it a true thing? Perhaps it is only the shadow of an *eikôn*? The first question of politics. Each regime in book 8 answers differently.

Socrates, discussing the variety of the processions held to honor the goddess, says that each city has done equally well (327a). He is at the same time *leading* his own smaller procession; at first just two (himself and Glaucon) but then swelling like a wave and crashing back down into Piraeus under the weight of Polemarchus and his mimetic crowd. If Socrates' way of honoring the goddess is already significantly different from both the processions of Athens and of Thrace, and different again from the night games and parties on offer in Piraeus (and tempting to Polemarchus *et al.*), we should understand him as one who has been outside the mimetic culture caves defining both cities—without ever leaving the first. He does not merely echo his culture's acclamations (*eikasias*), or carry its favored pomps (*pistis*). Perhaps he even knows something outside subjection to the realm of death; he is certainly discussing in a way not directed by appetite, which does die. The temples his path aims at only look like the Acropolis of Athens, for these last—brand new under the sun at the time of the dialogue—are like the shadow of the real divine temple, seen only in the light of the good by thought: and *that* is where *his intercourse* with Glaucon is heading: what best honors the goddess? He has been out of the caves, gone down, and is processing out again with a prisoner, making his judgments, and asking for them, but not in accord with the acclamations of any particular cave; he is turning Glaucon to a different way of judging all along—from the opening report.

Without the city a decision must be made about how this not-yet-a-polity thrown into the same place is to actualize its resources. Socrates interprets their behavior as democratic;³⁸ he knows the statue behind their shadowy behavior: he's been there, and he's been subject to that (and will be again, for he intends to continue going into the cave he was born in). The crowd acts in the way that the acclamations they are used to would call just: as if taking a vote, thereby resolving the question in the way to which they have been accustomed since childhood.³⁹ They do not even listen to hear if there is another way, nor allow too much discussion (which might change the vote), since desire—personified by Polemarchus—already has all the votes it needs for its program to be put into place. If all desires are interests and all interests have rights, it is not in the interest of the majority interest to allow reason to

work any further—unless reason has a right *and* an interest intending a good, and therefore a right *that exceeds every other interest or combination thereof*. Such is the elitism of truth. But that posits a telic perfection to human nature, a purpose for polity, and (truly) no merely democratically procedural rights and justice or postmodern denial of reason's capacity for achieving or deciding about truth claims can bear to listen to that. Either mere mimetic construction of communities of desire, or a transcendent good under which only fully rational discussion takes place. Any mixtures are *pharmaka*—illusory. *Republic* does not open with any such discussion of conditions for polity or for political justice, or differing views thereof; it rather *exhibits* that polities (of soul and city) go the way of the most forceful interest or the way each has been raised (third person, middle passive). Polemarchus may think each has got what is owed—one vote. That's justice. Operating as we have (been) operated (on): that's the good.

The ancient teaching that there are no men without cities can still be seen hidden here under what I have taken as happening in the (modernlike) state of nature. For one thing, they are all speaking Greek; for another, all (as in *Laws*) clearly fall into acting according to the mimetic models they grew up in: the modern idea of a state of nature is still merely imaginary to Plato; the reality of the human is ancient Greek—we become, and have become, human together, through mimesis; perhaps we become inhuman that way too—if we see inhumanity (or a comic version of it) here in the first scene. Writing this poem in a democracy, quoting the forms of democracy, in an original position where any polity is possible—this scene might make a thoughtful democratic audience member raise the question: is democracy a just form of government? That question is here identical with a personal question: Is what happens to Socrates just? Is any injustice done here? And a religious question also, is this the best way to worship the goddess? But if we can ask such questions (as no one in the dialogue does) we are already beyond *eikasía*, beyond imagining that justice is the simple result of a democratic process where everyone gets to speak and be heard—even if not listened to, because *we* are not interested in that, and we have to decide now and most of us are already decided (note the passive voice): time is of the essence as many legal contracts say. Clearly *eikasía*—the unthinking falling into line with the acclamations one has grown up with—is what is operating in this first wave, crashing over Socrates to carry him back down. What operates here is a natural human force, the natural force of a mimetic desire as its shadow *entrances*⁴⁰ a group and they sing and dance its tune. It would be foolish to resist, or attempt to reason. Scene one represents the thoughtless mimesis of what surrounds one, doing like things are done; it is the way all of us grow up: there are no human beings outside of society.

One of the sons of Ariston, literally sons of the best, suggests something else—a different desire, one that has to do with honor and victory; while the

horse race gets some notice from Socrates and Polemarchus (328a), it is insufficient to enchant either of them, though Glaucon—the other son of Ariston—seems to abandon the Socratic faction thereafter. The son of the best in book 8’s devolution of regimes will also be a lover of victory. This second desire, instigated by the mimetic competition for honor, achieves notice among the mimetic crowd—and a flicker of interest from Socrates. But honor (the desire of the spirited part) works *against reason* in returning to Piraeus; honor sides with the party of desire in the final vote to go back down.⁴¹ Honor itself is just another desire, even more clearly born in mimesis than appetitive desires; it is appropriated by Polemarchus to his party. Glaucon will later think it is unjust to force the wise to become political, and share labors, honors, and life with those who are worse (519d–e). Insofar as that is true, he must consider his own act on the road unjust, and Socrates a coward for giving up the better for the worse. But just as democratic form is no surety of justice, neither is Socratic acquiescence to the polemarch and his mimetic crowd necessarily imputable to cowardice. It only appears that way to those who are not seeing by the light of the good, but by the light of desire, including the desire for honor and respect. On the contrary, we should say that what the crowd does here is unjust, though they do not knowingly do injustice. We will argue later that Socrates’ going down is not cowardly acquiescence to force, but an act of love and of knowledge. He knows that the human city requires his presence; not only that, it requires his leadership. But why do these men want Socrates to come along? Is there a desire for wisdom even in the would-be tyrant, the one who wants to take wisdom down as his slave? Or is it merely the mimetically infected noticing something different from what all are and do, growling as they gather round? Polemarchus’ demand is the expression of the merman’s desire to become human, though he knows not what that is.

Scene 2: The Comfortable Home of *Pistis*

The setting for the rest of the dialogue is the “home of Polemarchus” (328b), and perhaps Plato has Socrates call it this while Cephalus is also at home because Plato knows that these people could not all have met here under the conditions the dialogue weaves; either the sons of Ariston are too young for military service or Cephalus is dead. So it *is* Polemarchus’ house, but the opinions of Cephalus, like the household gods, still hold sway, present as statues in the cave, or opinions held in the realm of the dead, casting their long shadows. Be that as it may, precisely those opinions are what begin the discussion. Cephalus was a resident foreigner; he has been in several culture caves, and seems to have sorted the varieties of acclamation he has heard through his life, and now ventures that some are worth his carrying. First, he tells us of three different beliefs about old age, exhibiting the three “desires”

of the soul: most bewail its lamentable incapacity to party (329a), some complain of the dishonor it suffers (329b), but a few—himself and Sophocles—consider it a time of peace and freedom from mad masters (329c), allowing conversation. This last is the *eikôn* of age he says he carries. He admits others have their own image and don't accept his (329e). Socrates suggests that since he has money he is unlikely to be disregarded (by any son who wishes to inherit) and wealth can buy many other consolations (329e)—even more nowadays, given the enabling powers of a modern pharmacopeia. The *eikones* of age Cephalus lays out are fairly well formed images of what drove the political shadow play of the first scene: *most* of the younger men arrived with Polemarchus and are versions of the party-pooped aged; *some* few are interested in victory and honor, maybe they have horses in the race; and *one* travels with Socrates for the purpose of discussion . . . for a while. Cephalus' *eikones* have some truth to them, across the generations they are the visible images of soul-types. They repeat themselves (or are repeated, entirely mimetically) in the next generation (and the next . . .).

Some have considered that in book 1 “Cephalus is reason, Polemarchus the spirit and Thrasymachus the appetites.”⁴² This does not clearly see the important parallelism Plato sets up between the characters of scene one and scene two. Cephalus presents himself as the image of reason, joining himself to Sophocles and Socrates as one who desires conversation; but, as shown earlier, Cephalus is merely a dead image—and not of reason; he achieves conversation by default, thus it is not dialectic, but mimetic chatter. Plato is clearly setting up two distinct scenes, each with a different action: first, a road between Piraeus and Athens (or death and the city) where a real action occurs; second, a house, where the couches are arranged like seats at the theatre of Dionysus, where all that happens is talk. The real action in scene one is a result of the *eikones* of justice Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus display around the table in scene two, as shadows are produced by cave puppets, or the behavior of citizens by the laws and poets.

If the decision of the first scene's incipient polity was not their own, but an acclamation of some wonder they were all accustomed to acknowledge and be carried by, namely, voting—seen as the free marriage of individual desire and political decisiveness, in the second scene we are shown a person who has changed his position in the cave from being carried by the acknowledgments of the group imaginary to one who has become a carrier of some particular part of an imaginary. Cephalus imagines he has come to carry his *eikôn* through thinking, but Socrates points out how comfort might still have put this figure on his head: “they say wealth has many consolations” (*paramythia*, 329e); such *paramythia* support the carrying of the myth he speaks. Cephalus defends himself with another saying he has heard (of Themistocles, 330a–b) which he trusts applies to his case, but when Socrates asks him about the best use of wealth, he responds that “it contributes a great deal to

not having to lie or cheat any man against one's will" (321b). This remark lets us think it quite likely that wealth makes him so good-tempered, rather than his good temper helping him bear things, as he imagines in joining himself to Themistocles.

That Cephalus has some fine sounding things in his head, things he trusts without having brought them into the light of the good and questioned them in order to begin to understand, becomes more obvious when Socrates segues into what the discussion will turn on for the rest of the night: justice. Cephalus presents the puppet he has been carrying most of his life (at least since he has made his bank)—justice is to tell the truth and pay debts—and Socrates cuts its strings, or, as Nietzsche would have it, puts his tuning hammer to its body and sounds its hollowness. The statue cracks apart, showing it is not the real thing—justice—but a mere puppet, a statue, a dead image. Having debts to pay, Cephalus runs off to the sacrifices, falling back into what his long carried *eikôn* calls piety—deeper into the cave, in Piraeus: he disappears, he becomes his furnishings. (Is it really only rock the cave dwellers sit upon, or have the previous generations been slowly stalagmited?)

The rest of book 1 repeats this process with each interlocutor serially. Each exhibits his *pistis*: what he trusts in—his image of justice. Many have not yet come to the point of having such, they just listen to the variety of acclamations—that voice cannot be brought before the bar of Socratic questioning; there is no one there.⁴³ Each individual speaker has his wonder-puppet examined by Socrates, and the puppet is discovered to be not such a wonder after all. These discoveries don't merely replace one wonder with another, for each agrees that his statue is not operating in the way expected; in fact no puppet is capable of standing. Polemarchus, having offered several, is at a loss (334b). As book 1 ends Socrates sets up yet another opinion they have heard, "that the just man is happy and the unjust wretched" (354a), and Thrasymachus, speaking for all of them it seems, allows that it does stand; he lets it be and be true (*estōsan*, 354a). But Socrates is dissatisfied; he admits that this discussion *has not brought him to knowledge* (354c). Everyone in the house is still in the cave, surrounded by shattered statues—though there is one *eikôn* that no one has put their tuning hammer to—yet.

Ek Hypotheseôn: Climbing out of the Opinable

Glaucon, too, is dissatisfied as book 2 begins; perhaps his dissatisfaction is mimetically engendered by what has just gone on and Socrates' admission of his own spendthrift dissatisfaction. Or, perhaps a mimetically intensified, rationally oriented disgust breaks him out of his chains, turns him further, or makes him want and demand something other than this flickering light to see by. In any case, he begins book 2 by making some distinctions about the good. He does not prove that there are three kinds of good; nor merely mouth

acclamations of particular goods. Rather he asks, “using as images those things that are seen” or experienced—like surgery and health—to illustrate three distinct ideas of good, “which can be seen in no other way than with thought” (510e). He *presumes* these three kinds, as one might presume three kinds of angle (510c). Though we could dialecticize our way to seeing that this division is exhaustive, therefore *necessarily* more than just a set of hypotheses, he does not do so, and Socrates accepts this tri-partite hypothesis. Given Socrates’ agreement to these hypotheses, Glaucon sorts the opinions just envisioned concerning justice and points out that “while it is not my own opinion, I am at a loss: I’ve been talked deaf by Thrasymachus and countless others” (358c); reconstructing the shattered statue of *pistis* in the mere utility of justice, he demands an argument showing that the opposing statue (an opposition clearly seen, given the opening hypotheses about the kinds of good) presents the truth about justice: it is good for its own sake and as a means. Glaucon understands that something else *necessarily follows* from his division: in order to prove the truth about justice to a utilitarian, Socrates has to prove justice is good for its own sake alone; if he proves utility plus for-itselfness, the utilitarian (who cannot see the “for itself”) will remain unconvinced. Perhaps this is also a confession on Glaucon’s part; in any case, he wishes to know “what each is and what power it has by itself alone” (358b).

Socrates praises Glaucon’s rebuilding and burnishing of the statues the arguments require: *from each hypothesis* (justice is good as a means only, justice is good for its own sake), he has set out his *two images* and the exacting demands and *consequences which must follow* (360e–361d); his brother shows how one produces the model cloak (reputation, 363a) which belongs to the statue of Thrasymachan *pistis*. To convince such a one as Thrasymachus, however, justice must be seen without its cloak of reputation; it must be shown to be good for its own sake, without regard for the rewards accruing; rather, give him the cloak of the other: what is to be proven requires *this* image. Socrates is amazed: he would have no *pistis* in their justice from their words (368b) and is at a loss what to say. We should believe something of Socrates’ claim: *pistis* can no longer be replaced with *pistis*; the sons of Ariston will not settle for this from Socrates. They want a different way of seeing.⁴⁴ What people say is no longer enough; a desire *to know* the truth has spoken among the cave dwellers. What if this desire caught on? What if we were mimetically drawn into a competition for this good—one that can belong to all?⁴⁵

If all we can ever say is merely conducive to belief, Socrates could, in reality, say nothing. But if it is impious and cowardly to remain silent here (as Socrates says, 368c), then it is impious and cowardly to think that our only operations replace *pistis* with *pistis*, *eikôn* with *eikôn*. To consider this true would be to say justice is indefensible. It is impious and cowardly to

believe so. We should also believe that something divine has happened to Glaucon (as Socrates says): he has exhibited the operation of *dianoia*—more divine than sense, memory or mimesis—in beginning this way: hypothesizing three kinds of good; setting out a demonstration of what follows if justice is one and then the other. And precisely by *beginning* book 2 Glaucon exhibits also *his desire* for understanding: this desire originates, it is of a different sort than that for the usual creature comforts—many kinds of many of them, and different too from the mimetically powerful desire for honor and victory. Whence this more divine desire? It seems this *desire*, too, can be infectious, mimetically transmitted—first to his brother, and—given time—eventually to all of them (Polemarchus and Thrasymachus rejoin, demanding more argument at the start of Five). Watching and listening transmits this desire outside of the poem as well; this mimetic transmission can, of course, only occur in those who take up and read—but what could lead a person to do that? Why this book? It would be exceptionally difficult to pick up for those who have heard that it is long and difficult. The desire is not yet the activity. These would have to fight against all the reechoing cave just to pick it up.⁴⁶ So it is that philosophers come to be as if by accident, and against the will of their city (520b).

Socrates takes up the challenge to show the worth of the other statue—that statue belief in which will prove to be well born (*gennaion*, if not *eugenês*). He begins with a hypothesis of his own, or rather three: H1) The city is like the soul; so finding the justice of a city should enable us to find justice in the soul (368e). H2) No one suffices for himself, but each needs the others (*ouk autarkês*, 369b); there are no men without society (nor women neither). H3) Each person in the city (and so each part of the soul) has a task distinctly fit for its nature (370a). From these hypotheses Socrates builds his argument to prove that justice is worthwhile in the soul for its own sake as well as for its consequences. These hypotheses are (at least) accepted as legitimate for the sake of the argument Socrates is aiming to make and the conclusion he means to defend. They are not yet defended as “real hypotheses, *onti hypotheseis*” (511b), true beginnings to an unhypothetical knowledge, but place us rather on precisely the dianoetic level at which Glaucon began book 2.⁴⁷ They are hypotheses from which we work to our assigned conclusion. Therefore, the images that Socrates gives in what follows (of the city and citizens) are no longer merely things that may be seen, but visibles oriented to the task of understanding; he is *ordering them* to bring out what is latent in our hypotheses in order to prove the conclusion demanded by the brothers. This dianoetic process continues until 435c.

Before we turn to the last stage in our e/ducation, or leading forth from delusion that is *Republic*, let us recall one further connection Plato’s drama allows us to see between the realm of opinion and that of *dianoia*. When Socrates hypothesizes that no human being can live without society and

begins building his city, his hypothesis explicitly denies the political founding implied by Thrasymachus and explicitly laid out by Glaucon. The Thrasymachan view had held that “a real man, a true man (*alêthôs andra*) would never make an agreement with anyone; he would be mad (*mainesthai*) to do so” (359b). In chapter 1 we allowed each hypothesis to lay out its determinate logical consequences, for the sake of developing precisely each full bodied conception. There we saw that no one objected to Socrates’ hypothesis (H2) and we argued against the Thrasymachan hypothesis and its modern repetitions; perhaps that is the best that can be done—argue against the opposing opinions via *reductio*. Certainly, an argument against a *pistis* can not carry a believer who starts from different *pistis*. But after the *reductio* accomplished on each wonder-puppet in book 1, the better way would be to show how one such construct finds a ground beyond hypothesis, for otherwise we may have not achieved much superiority to the cave of opinion. If our knowledge can go no further than hypothesis based *dianoia*, then the choice of one hypothesis over another seems merely the choice of a different cave and a distinctive *archê*-ic *pistis*, whose carrying produces different acclamations among *hoi polloi*. Of course, if all but one are reduced to absurdity, that would count as good reason to accept the one still standing even without a more positive demonstration.

If we can go further than hypothesis-based *dianoia*, then to make our decision about life, polity and happiness on something less than that higher *noêsis* is still a kind of incompleteness though, insofar as it stands through every attempted *reductio*, not madness. Democracy must either be skeptical about human knowledge of (if not the existence of) the good (called agnosticism about the good among postmodern democrats), or be able to demonstrate that the majority achieves such knowledge on a regular basis, *or else* democracy is an open choice for delusion: people in a hurry to smelt their fool’s gold down to its noble purity (cf. 450b). Of course another option would be, perhaps, that the democracy be set up in such a way that the majority of the citizens do achieve *noêsis*, and practice it (and every soul becomes as “wise and strong and as fit to rule / As Plato’s lofty guardians”). In order to accomplish that, Socrates argues that we must have considerable required upbringing and education in music, gymnastic and mathematics; barring that—and limiting laws and poetry to the kind made for such citizens (so that all the statues in the cave produce nobly, *gennaïos*)—“there is no rest from ills for cities, nor I think, for human kind” (473d). Only in that democracy limited by *noêsis* under the good is freedom truly freedom rather than an *eidolon*—a seeming. But in order to become that last (limiting) kind of reasonable democracy, a democracy, like Athens, would already have to be that way—for its children learn first by mimesis, and mimesis is always active in us. Either that, or some divine gift or gadfly must move them in a direction they do not yet know or practice. *Republic* is for all time what Socrates was

for Athens. It is the poem John Cabanis requires for his political reform; political reform is delusory without the appropriate mimetic preludes and practices, without the appropriate upbringing and education.

Since Socrates' H2 directly opposes Thrasymachus' founding hypothesis, *Plato* means us to see, as chapter 1 argued, that the dialectical structure of his poem is logically demonstrative: It is anhypothetically true that, being contradictory, one and only one of these two hypotheses can be true; one of these men is living a true lie; one is the madman inside Polemarchus' house. This itself is a metaphor for the fact that among the images and opinions of the culture cave are those which, taken onto one's own head, induce mania. Insofar as Thrasymachus' ideas are alive and well in either democracy, the madman is in our house and we grow up with him from childhood. The language Plato has given Glaucon in beginning book 2 is unequivocal, its logic exact: find true justice or live in madness. Are we interested yet?

Noêsis: To an Unhypothetical Beginning

Socrates' dianoetic argument using the image of the city is turned by his interlocutors' desires to tell of more than one city, implying more than one regime of soul, each with its own *eikôn* of the good, and the just, healthy and free; let us not speak of the holy. If souls are like cities, and there are many kinds of many of them, we should expect such interruptions. Even so, what the interlocutors come to understand through the discussion is only a very elaborate and most thaumastic puppet show unless Socrates can both *turn their desire* from the good each soul has elected and *lead each to see that the Socratic hypotheses are either unhypothetical themselves, or are clinging to something unhypothetical*. Without the first (the turning of desire) as prelude or accompaniment we should "bear in mind" that they will not hear any discussion of the second (328a). Unless he can do the second, we are left with, however wonderful, a *pistis*-puppet; though one that seems to stand better than those we saw reduced.

Just after he finishes pointing out the virtues of the city which follow from his dianoetic construction, and before he turns to see what the image of that city teaches about the soul, Socrates admits that "we will never get an accurate grasp" of the soul by following the procedures so far in use (435d).⁴⁸ Our analysis of the divided line has shown us why: we would only be grasping (or gasping at) a more elaborate puppet. He says there is both a short way and a long way to achieve what we really desire—the unhypothetical *archê* of the principles of soul: so, seeing the truth about the soul. The short way starts from the idea of the dispositions of groups within the city, which made its appearance as the conclusion of the argument Socrates has been building. Socrates then refers to the things themselves—the real cities of men—and points out that they "are said" to have dispositions as well. But

these dispositions can come from no other place than the dispositions of the citizens, so it is “*necessary to agree* that the very same forms and dispositions as are in the city [the one they have built] are in each of us” (435e). If we see that things really are this way (i.e., there really are such differing dispositions among cities), and we have no other way of explaining such civic dispositions than the souls of the citizens (for surely dispositions could not arise from rocks and stones), then the souls *must* have the power to cause such dispositions to appear in cities (and vice versa, as is to be expected in mimetic beings).⁴⁹ Thus our H2 is no longer merely hypothetical, but we have *a further account*, which *dianoia* alone never attempts to give (510c) of its hypotheses.⁵⁰ My reading of the change *noêsis* entails is, then, more in line with Robinson against Ferber and Gonzalez, that Socrates’ sense of “destruction of the hypothesis” (533c) means destroying their hypothetical nature. For those entering geometry, the axioms and definitions are merely “accepted” as first principles. Proving them (destroying their hypothetical nature) is a considerably more advanced project.⁵¹

“Must” here can be given a few more words that accord with the three images which outline the relation of delusion and truth we are tracing: having no different account, no other way of explaining civic dispositions than the souls of the citizens, means that *reason has nothing else visible to it*. Thus, the mimetic union of the people in the society, out of which individuals (sometimes) are born, is the *archê* of dispositions in souls; the process can be understood in reverse as well: the dispositions of souls in the city (particularly the ruling souls, since they shape the laws which all follow) express themselves as the disposition of the city. *Imagination* may offer any number of alternatives to this mutual mimetic relation of dispositions: an extraterrestrial virus carried by different meteorites landing in diverse places as Thrace or Sparta, or something different in the water of each city, for example, causes the diversity of civic character. But there is nothing new or different *for thought* in such a case—the X still effects the citizens’ souls, bending their aims and activities in one way rather than another—and it is *because the groups of souls have diverse aims* and activities that “*we call*” *the city in question according to the temperament* we do. The city really *is* that way; that is the connection thought sees; it is a connection seen in the light of the good, for it is a seeing of precisely the good the city acts upon and for. If the water were the way it is (in our imagination) yet made no difference in the acts or aims (or souls) of the citizens, we would not call the city a different sort of city because of it; it would not *be* a different city because of that. Nor would a difference in building materials matter unless this affected the dispositions or was an expression of them; those dispositions are what thought considers in naming each type of city.

The ideal *telos* of each city is exhibited in its real activities: thus the *visible* world is the same world we *think* about when we consider the good

which each thing is aiming to achieve. That “good aimed at” both is (the timocrat *really does* aim at the good of honor) and is not (honor is not *the real* good, nor is what *we honor* necessarily honorable) the same as the world we (timocrats, e.g.) *imagine*. The visible world is that which the fire of desire lights up, but that fire does not light up *the real* exactly *as it is*; it lights the world up in such a way that we are seeing both something that is and something that is not mixed together (cf. 479d). The timocrat really does seek out honor as the prime good, but honor really is not the good *tout court*. That the sun, which was symbol and offspring of the good in the first image, is that which *enlightens the mind* in the third image is indicative of the human situation: we (can) *think* about the world of things—the world we see in the sunlight.⁵² Neither the world nor its apparent goods are mere appearance, nor are shadows merely shadows—they are shadows of *eikones* of real things.

In the cave, where the fire defines the realm originally called the visible, we are doing something else with the world than what the world really is—we are imagining, believing, or calling something of it the prime good; we are not yet thinking—and we can continue this way for a very long time. That the sun appears below the Good in the first image and above the fire in the cave image is to indicate (reading across the images, not merely down each) that we can *know the world* the sun is in, not merely see it, because we, who are in that world, have a power that is superior to sight (and imagination and belief). The power of reason is enlightened by the good (in the first image), and this same power is what can know the world of real things (in the third). Reason does not merely imagine or believe *things*, nor can we only *see* the physical. Just so, as the real sun shows us every thing in the world, but does not show us everything (not justice, for instance), still, everything in the world, including justice and the sun and every thing under it, can be *known* in the light of the good. If we knew everything that way, rather than as it appears in the flickering light of our desires, fed by need and variously gassed by fears and the wind of many voices, we would know the world as the god does and we would also love every thing in it appropriately. For to know the world truly is to know everything as it is under the light of the good and in relation to that good (and thus to everything else and its good); that is quite distinct from knowing each thing as it is in relation to what we posit as our good and so see by the light of our desire’s fire: such merely instrumental reason is delusive—but not absolutely disconnected from the truth, for desire and things are both realities.

There are not two separate worlds, rather one divided line: we can use either of two sorts of power to come to terms with the one real world (the world where the sun shines and we can become just or not): the more divine powers of reason—*noësis* and *dianoia*, or the more human/animal powers of belief/imagination. The first are more divine because they see the way things are; they allow us to see the good of each thing itself. The lower shows each

thing's good for us—edible, mountable, to be fled from; we are then working under a smaller understanding of ourselves—as eaters, mounters, death fearing. Many real things are invisible under the light of desire—virtues and numbers, for example; many are seen unclearly, though not everything is seen entirely mistakenly. That is how the world looks to a bat: there are not walls and buildings and trees, much less virtues or numbers, but there are solids that must not be flown into—the bat is not entirely mistaken about that. A tiger does not notice what we call flowers, a bee does. Different fires (bat, bee, tiger desires/natural *teloi*) make the same thing cast distinct shadows, or perhaps it does not allow one or another thing to be seen at all. Reason does not show us an ontologically separated realm; it allows us to understand this one: the one where the sun shines and we understand things by the light of the good and the power of the mind.⁵³ Until we begin to hypothesize (as Glaucon does to start book 2) we are operating under the fire of desire; to hypothesize is the expression of the will to know. Science is this project. To know is to see things as *they are* for the first time; it is not an animal possibility.

Socrates is not merely hypothesizing, then, when his further account in book 4 shows that we find our soul disagreeing with itself in ways mirroring the corresponding divisions in the city (436b–440b). It is true that he is still “using” images—a man who is thirsty and unwilling to drink, Leontius, Odysseus, et al. (439a–441c)—but these realities are *being given an explanation* by the idea more than they are *being used as illustrations* of what follows from a hypothesis. Having moved from *dianoia* to *nous* in the discussion with Glaucon in book 4, and then later (book 6) having defined the difference between these two activities, Socrates follows the cave story with a discussion of other sorts of studies that will similarly move the soul into *dianoia* and then *nous*. In the course of *Republic*, then, we see Glaucon go from being moved by acclamation in scene one, where he falls back into Piraeus with Socrates at the instigation of the party party, through hypotheses about soul and city, to anhypothetical *knowledge* about the soul in book 4; then to seeing what is distinctive about such knowledge in Six; he has gone all the way up the line. He does not remain there (thought is a hard thing to break into, and hard—without practice—to do for long), but there are other studies which lead to similar actuations: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy. Though Glaucon wants to make each useful for some desire, the point is that studying any of them requires, first of all, our removal from all desires, and knowledge of them has no necessary reference to things desire can use. I mean, desire cannot use the one, the two and the three as such—what arithmetic is about; number itself has no reference to what desire seeks. So the very practice of learning these paralyzes for a time the increase of appetite or its feeding (just as this discussion has put off dinner); some other good has space to be actuated.

Plato illustrates in other characters (Hippias of *Hippias Major*, e.g.) that any of the similarly dianoetic elements of book 6's "higher learning" *can be popularly used* further down on the divided line: they give awards for it in some caves. Presented with entertaining images of astronomy, geometry or arithmetic, whole theatres of students will cheer (and pay). Thus, even the higher sciences *may not be science* in the one who "has" them: Hippias gave lectures on all the subjects Socrates recommends in *Republic Seven* (*Hippias Major* 285b–d) just as Ion rhapsodized whole books of Homer. Their audiences received them, and some could no doubt repeat the performance (Phaedrus wants to learn thus). This 'is called' learning; and in the cave it is so. These are, and so the *content* of the higher sciences could be, merely memorizing: putting the results of such science—or whatever—(carved by others) on one's own head, or allowing them to put it there. One carries them to entrance the many. Such a one, to be exact, only imagines or believes that he knows.⁵⁴ If this is so, then it seems no use of words can be that pure kind of *pharmakon* which never can do harm; even scientific speech can be used to make wonder-puppets, and entrance into delusions—among them the delusion of knowing. It should be no surprise that Honor, Wealth and Freedom have similar ambivalences.

On the other hand, by constructing a mimesis of escape from the cave, Plato has (perhaps) entranced his readers into following the movements of thought—its questions and proofs, and he has been creating spaces where, if we do not make the movements ourselves, we will end up in confusion. Perhaps stumbling will wake us up. Socrates likewise has gadflied his interlocutors into the argument by, first of all, exhibiting the fractures and broken strings in the puppets of justice several have been carrying about on their heads. Perhaps one or another of these puppets belongs to us? The interlocutors' own desires fire further objections—if we aren't going to be miserable we need cakes and courtesans (373a), and how are we going to share the women (449d)? And because desire turns the mind to see things its way, Socrates is morally required to invent drugs which will turn these souls correctly: the father of the house has prayed for it (and perhaps he is out in the courtyard even now). It would be impious not to follow the dead father's last good request. We certainly see that Glaucon is led by both argument and fiction to an entirely different understanding of honor, wealth and freedom than he had at first. And he has been charmed into loving that kind of freedom and honor that belongs only to the golden citizen of the city Socrates has built in order to purify him (and the others). "Many kinds of many of them" is no longer Glaucon's answer to what his city needs. Through the long course of the dialogue, imagination's popular accretions to some iconic words have begun to be washed off—a catharsis is occurring in the interlocutors (even Thrasymachus). Perhaps Plato has bitten us into thought too: our acclamation of his poem *may be* the result of its difficulties and shining

images sparking us into question, hypothesis, and thought, as well as showing us some rather sordid or laughable results of following other desires (as some characters do). To feel that sordidness, or laugh at it, loosens those bonds in us, which we see binding the character we laugh at, or which we—like David after Nathan’s story—wholeheartedly condemn. Thus does *Republic* work on us; that is why it is so important: it is a *pharmakon* for the delusions we cling to.

NOTES

1. On the devolution of these terms, see Ausland, “The Decline.”
2. Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy*, 272.
3. The previous chapter indicated that Socrates is not literally serious about the manner of “shared families” of the gold and silver; he is serious about the city’s responsibility for bringing up all the children, who learn first of all through mimesis.
4. Perhaps this is not so far from Schofield’s thought; he concludes the above quoted chapter by saying that the law, through its deterrent and habituating effects, can bring every soul to “individual restraint of a kind” (*Plato: Political Philosophy*, 275) over the pleasures of the desiring part. Perhaps the right music (in the Greek sense) can bring all to a certain enthusiasm for the beautiful and the divine, too. Glaucon, at any rate, feels Socrates’ enthusiasm (498c) and agrees that it is impossible for anyone not to imitate what fills him with admiration (500c).
5. D. C. Schindler rightly points out—in discussing this passage and verb—that, given the overflowing nature of the good, “it always remains in some decisive respect *beyond* knowledge even while it is immanent to the soul.” See *Plato’s Critique of Impure Reason: On goodness and truth in the Republic* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 136n. The journey up, then, is an effort to allow our divining soul to become more thoroughly *grasped by* the divine. As if, through the practices of philosophy, we might become more open to mimesis of the divine which makes all rational processes possible—a mimesis of what supervenes on reason. Rather than a subverting *diabolê*—slander, call this infection *charis*—grace.
6. What follows is more in agreement with Mitchell’s and Lucas’ “The Search for the Good” in their *An Engagement with Plato’s Republic* than with Richard Robinson’s *Earlier Dialectic*, or with Julia Annas’ directive not to try to “harmonize [the three images] in a consistent philosophical interpretation” in “Understanding the Good: Sun, Line and Cave” in Richard Kraut, ed. *Plato’s Republic: Critical Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 149.
7. As Schindler puts it, “knowing something is good is one thing . . . [but] knowing the goodness of something *in itself* is something else, and this knowledge requires . . . an intimacy, an ‘entry into’ its goodness” (*Plato’s Critique*, 119, italics original). “To know something in the most fundamental sense is to attain to the in-itself reality of it, which is not only to see its goodness but in fact to enter into its goodness. But to do so is to grasp it in its difference from me, that is, to grasp it in its difference from appearance, which is the thing taken in relation to me” (135). This analysis improves upon that of Penner, who rightly says that, “contrary to modern logic and ‘the linguistic turn,’ Plato takes it that to know what someone is saying, it is not enough to know what ‘proposition’ the person’s sentence expresses. One must know what the things are that the person intends to refer to.” See “The Forms in the *Republic*” in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic*, edited by Gerasimos Santas (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 256. To know a person (ourselves or another), we need to know the good in itself s/he aims to achieve or dwell within.
8. Rosen says, “the (Idea of the) Good seems to be of little help to the philosopher-king, but its epistemic function is perhaps equally obscure.” He allows that, “rulers of the city must see things clearly and distinctly (to borrow two key terms from the Cartesian version of

Platonism). But there is an enormous difference between epistemic sharp-sightedness and justice" (*Plato's Republic*, 268). Our marital example shows how both these complaints fail: there is no epistemic sight under any other light.

9. Shorey's note, that while the Greek may be somewhat problematic, the "meaning is clear—we really understand and know anything only when we apprehend its purpose, the aspect of the good that it reveals" (*Republic*, vol 2, 104), is undoubtedly correct. That the good is that at which all things aim implies that the truth of a thing or deed—what makes it what it is—is its *telos*; the good of the being teaches what the being truly is. So, the epistemological parallels the ontological; the ontological enfolds the moral as the epistemological unfolds in the moral, just as for the mind to achieve the truth it must unfold *itself* in the good. There's the rub. Virtue may be knowledge, but we need to have a certain virtue, or perhaps *charis*, before we can have the knowledge.

10. As Allan Bloom notes in his translation, *Republic*, 464n33, the command Socrates gives here, *euphēmei*, is appropriate for religious contexts; its opposite is "blasphemy."

11. Gonzalez has a perspicuous review of the problems, and the solution, to the question how Plato's idea of the good is active in all knowledge, including the truths of geometry. See *Dialogue and Dialectic*, chapter 8, especially 213–217.

12. Eva Brann (and others) have pointed out that in the divided line Socrates shows "how sameness of relation runs through the Whole" (*Music*, 113, 188–192); my point is that Plato builds *Republic* on this principle down to his word choices and grammar in the dialogue's parts. The looseness of "thinking" in the lower part of the line is mimicked even in the words of encouragement Socrates gives to his fellow thinker; when things become more mathematical, necessity and the imperative mood appear.

13. It will be of interest to poets that in Greek the here frequent *oimai* (507d–509d), which is sometimes translated think, presume, imagine, suppose, sounds exactly the same as *oimai*—songs. Other verb choices are available to Plato, but he seems to prefer to echo song down here.

14. The geometry and proportions of the line have led to a wide variety of insights (and disagreements) among numerous scholars. See, for example, Brann (*Music*), 177–191; Nicholas Denyer, "Sun and Line: The Role of the Good," in Ferrari, ed., *The Cambridge Companion*, 284–309; Annas, "Understanding the Good," in Kraut, ed., *Critical Essays*.

15. Nalin Ranasinghe, *Socrates and the Gods: How to read Plato's Euthyphro, Apology and Crito* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2012), 226.

16. That Plato's point here is to have Socrates present "an illustrative example of a way the mind relates to its object and not primarily to articulate the nature of mathematical objects" is also defended by others; for example, quoted here, Schindler (*Plato's Critique*, 152–153, italics original); see also Kenneth Dorter, *The Transformation of Plato's Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 152; Brann (*Music*), 178–180.

17. The difficulties of the distinction between the noetic and dianoetic are the *archê* of uncountable articles and at least one very detailed book. See Yvon LaFrance, *Pour interpreter Platon: la ligne République VI: 509d–511e* (Montreal: Editions Bellarmine, 1986). The best short summary of the issues, positions and criticism thereof (with most of which I agree) is Gonzalez, *Dialectic and Dialogue*, ch. 8.

18. So, I deny that *Republic* "constitutes an image, but only an image of a truly philosophical discourse," as many scholars hold, including Zuckert (*Plato's Philosophers*, 365). It is *eikastic* and *mimetic* (*Laws* 668a): Plato makes us practice, his mimetic incites, just as Socrates makes his interlocutors begin, philosophizing—unless we are just watching the images blow by. Then it *would be* a merely "political education"—in a sense still perfectly applicable today (Ibid. 364). To lecture on *Plato's position* in a course on *Republic* is not only necessarily falsifying (for the poet, *Plato*, nowhere appears), it also produces an abortion of the poet's precise purpose in constructing a *mimetic* work. Thus has midwifery fallen into immorality.

19. Such an argument is given by Waller R. Newell, *Ruling Passion: Erotics of Statecraft in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 129.

20. Schindler, *Plato's Critique*, 126.

21. Among others, Bloom holds this view; artists and legislators shape their images "to serve the special interests of the artists" (*Plato's Republic*, 404).

22. Ion, for example. Thus I disagree with Zuckert that the divided line leaves out “the possibility of the intentional fabrication of ‘idols’ or false opinions” and agree with Dorter that the images here include verbal images. See *Plato’s Philosophers*, 359–360, the quotation is from 359 (cf. Kenneth Dorter, *Transformation*, 191–92). If the poets and lawgivers are the makers of statues, the shadows are how the audience and citizens (largely) acclaim and interpret them. It is the difference between a teacher’s lecture, and the notes of the students. All these may be a far piece from the truth of things, but they have their power from a presumptive connection to that truth.

23. Given that way of measuring, they would be oligarchs, as chapters 5 and 6 will show.

24. At 511e Socrates remarks about the distinctions in truth and clarity between levels. That the portion of the line measuring (a) *pistis* and (b) *dianoia* must be the same size under any correct drawing of the line has been much commented on by others—that remark (“much commented on by others”) is an example of (a), but the point can be proven geometrically also—a case of (b) *dianoia*. I prefer not to; I encourage you to take it on faith; many have said so.

25. Brann, *Music*, 156.

26. It will not be until book 9 (580d) that Socrates will explicitly introduce desire into each “part” of the soul, but these desires (or, the varieties of eros) are operating in the characters from the beginning, since they are human and eros really is “in” all three parts.

27. As Girard says, “If our desires were not mimetic, they would be forever fixed on predetermined objects; they would be a particular form of instinct.” But human beings aren’t like this; rather, once “their natural needs are satisfied, humans desire intensely, but they don’t know exactly what they desire. . . . We do not each have our own desire, . . . to desire we must have recourse to people about us; we have to borrow their desires.” See Rene Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, James G. Williams, trans. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 15. So Glaucon begins his shopping list after his complaint about the healthy natural city “according to convention” (*aper nomizetai*, 372d).

28. Compare Schofield’s discussion of love of money as “distinctive among the appetites in its insatiability” (*Political Philosophy*, 259). This indicates its distinction from *bodily* appetites, which do not need to begin by mimesis, as those for food or drink do not; they can begin so—and certainly continue mimetically much further than their natural limits. The desire for money, like the desire for a *certain* erotic object, is best explained by Girard’s mimetic considerations.

29. In this I agree with Terry Penner that there are not “different degrees of *reality* in different *objects*, but different degrees of *truth* in different *conceptions* of one object” (“The Forms in *Republic*,” 257); this implies that there are different *degrees of real good* as one climbs the line.

30. That is, the fact of our mimetic nature implies not only that “the weak type of consensus . . . carries with it a serious danger of self-delusion and intellectual stagnation” as Christina argues against Cohen (“Must Democracy be Reasonable,” 4), but even a very strong consensus might have its source in delusion; in fact, the mimetic disaster is the source of a near unanimity: “the entire community on one side, and on the other, the victim” (Girard, *Things Hidden*, 24).

31. My argument agrees with Schindler’s much longer one; quotations from his *Plato’s Critique*, 80 and 113. He holds that a wide range of views on Plato’s position on the relation of goodness and intelligibility are variations on a theme of which this is the home chord; see 107–122.

32. Annas seems to be on this track when she says, “if goodness is fundamental for our understanding of the nature of things, then it must be fundamental in the nature of things.” However, she closes her paragraph with “Plato’s enthusiasm for what is absolutely good . . . coexists with extreme pessimism about the amount of goodness to be found in the actual world” (“Sun, Line, Cave,” 147). The first statement is true, the second false; for the world is not a world of mere appearance (which *would* allow such pessimism), but a world of things, each of which has a real good of its own—as do beings with *nous*. Of course, if you think the actual world just is a world of appearances, then Annas’ second statement is true as well—to you.

33. A very good great deal about these relations is laid out in Brann’s *Music*.

34. Socrates calls this the *diabolê* that has arisen against him; it speaks (and writes) through Meletus (*Ap* 18d–19c).

35. That is, living in the third person, in a middle passive sort of way.

36. Brann, *Music*, 117–120.

37. Compare Rene Girard, *Things Hidden*, 199: “the real human *subject* can only come out of the rule of the Kingdom; apart from this rule, there is never anything but mimetism and the ‘inter-individual.’ Until this happens, the only subject is the mimetic structure.” Girard’s difference from Plato is his limitation of exit strategies from the mimetic cave to acceptance of the Gospel revelation. Either that, or Plato’s pharmacy.

38. Compare Allan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, on this line (328b, 441n6).

39. Thus I would adjust Terry Penner’s statement that, “the shadows of justice at the bottom of the Cave are the actual laws of the city and the things insisted on by the citizens” to say rather that the actual statutes are the statues the carriers believe in; the shadows are the behaviors and acclamations more or less hazily *produced* in the citizens through the action of such *eikones*. See “The Forms in the *Republic*,” 261n39. That last seems to be pictured here in *Republic*’s first scene: not the principles of democracy or the laws of Athens, but the common understanding and implementation of them: voting = being just.

40. The causes of the shadows in the cave are called *thaumata*, and the one who carries is called *thaumatopoiros*, and while such words do refer to puppets and puppet-show makers, the root word is a powerful amazement, wonder making, entrancement; all rather closer to the surface in Greek than “puppet” allows for, and more like how our word magic is related to magi and connotes an esoteric knowledge or suprahuman power. In the cave that power is not knowledge.

41. We can *know* this is so even though Glaucon swears he has “never perceived (*aisthesthai*) anything of the kind occurring in himself or others” (440b) later.

42. See, for example, John Holbo, *Reason and Persuasion: Three Dialogues by Plato: Euthyphro, Meno, Republic Book I* (Singapore: Prentice-Hall, 2009), 298.

43. Compare chapter 1, 27–28 and 51n20, and the introduction, 6–9 on the *diabolê*.

44. Thus, they are demanding something more than a merely political education. Zuckert claims that this is all “the conversation depicted in *Republic*” provides, that it is “only an image of a truly philosophical discourse” (*Plato’s Philosophers*, 364–365). I am arguing this is false, at least in the case of Glaucon. Of course, neither Socrates nor Plato can *give* any interlocutor a philosophical education, for while the results of some *noêsis* and *dianoia* can be merely accepted, to do so is not to actually have entered upon *noêsis* or *dianoia* oneself.

45. How the first cave dweller leaves “by nature,” is something quite mysterious according to Diskin Clay, *Platonic Questions*, 238; perhaps some divine element of our own inner resources, turns us out of it? Can this element be raised, or sparked to begin by mimesis? Could a divine mimesis be strengthened by an appropriately constructed human one? Plato’s poetry perhaps? Aztec sacrifice maybe? Should we eschew the presumption of deciding about such things?

46. Compare 492b. There is a reason why universities ought to have required courses and required texts and why teachers ought not lecture much. To educate via election by the ones who do not yet know, but are moved by acclamation and practiced desire thereto appertaining, seems an altogether unlikely method—though it will *without any question* win popular acclamation. Far better to instigate a distinctly different practice; let *that* begin by mimesis. Otherwise, Socrates would say, you may as well kill me. Plato’s making of Socratic mimeses seconds this demand.

47. H2 I have already defended as true absolutely (chapter 1, 39–45); H1 will be dialectically certified immediately below (155–161). H3 I leave as a task for the reader; the varying opinions Socrates, Thrasymachus and Hobbes et al. hold regarding it were set out in chapter 1.

48. An accurate (*akribos*) view seems to be a view from the highest (*akros*) point; from that of the sun at noon, for instance; from the point of view of the good—or perhaps from the top of the highest wave our ship must sail over. The highest view will be that available after climbing through the philosopher’s education in the sciences. It will allow us to be not only more accurate (*akribesteron*, 436c), but to have the most precise (*akribestata*, 484d) contemplation of the truth.

49. Again, Plato's word choices are significant: versions of necessity (*anangkê, dêta*) and causality (*aitia, aittasaito*) underpin the argument (435e–436a), into which probable empirical analogues (Thrace, Egypt, Athens) are placed as examples. It would be ridiculous otherwise.

50. I agree with Ferrari (*City and Soul*, 42–50) that we need not consent to either of Bernard Williams' first two rules for what the analogy of city and soul mean; Compare "The analogy of city and soul in Plato's *Republic*," in Kraut, ed. *Republic: Critical Essays*: 49–60. The third rule, "a city is F if and only if its leading, most influential, or predominant citizens are F" (53) seems plausible. I deny that it leads to the paradox both he and Ferrari say; it is plausible to maintain this rule is true of democracy, and still allow (as Socrates says) that democracy has all manner of characters. It will have timocrats, oligarchs and tyrants running around in it—perhaps even a philosopher who should be king; but the majority of people are the "labile" democratic sort, who find each of the others entertaining at different times, and may well follow one and the other of them—briefly. So they change leaders regularly, or are so divided as to be unable to govern if governors are elected: they are postwar Italy. It is very unlikely that most will agree, on election day, about which of the many sorts available should be followed, and so the winning candidate will generally be the most labile (cf. Ferrari, 49).

51. See Gonzalez' enlightening discussion of this question in *Dialectic and Dialogue*, particularly 237–244; and the accompanying notes to Ferber and Robinson. He notes also (375, n80) that Boyle suggested the slightest emendation—*anairousa* for *anairoûsa*—in defense of Robinson. Gonzalez admits that Robinson's view is widely accepted.

52. To say this is not to say anything at all controversial, though many will think that to say it of Plato is controversial; these hold that Plato separates the world of thought (the forms) and the world we see in a way that is extreme. For an argument on the contrary see Eric Perl, "The presence of the paradigm: immanence and transcendence in Plato's theory of forms," *Review of Metaphysics* LIII, 2 (December 1999): 339–362.

53. The separate realm of forms is a noble lie; it is noble because it has *gennaios* heuristic value; it is a lie because such a realm does not exist separately—though the things spoken of do exist. It is a sort of thinking man's fairy tale; or "a dream for waking eyes" (*Soph* 266c). See David Rozema, "Have we been nobly lied to by Plato?" in *Platonic Errors*, chapter 3. See also Eric Perl, above, which defends a view of Plato agreeing with our reading of the dialogue.

54. That it is the how of education, not its what, that Socrates aims at is the argument in my "*Hippias Major, Version 1.0*: software for post-colonial, multicultural information technology systems," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37, 1 (2003): 89–99.

Interlude

Of Analogy, Tri-partition, and Logical and Poetic Form

Mustn't [injustice] be a certain civil war among those three—a meddling, interference and rising up of a part against the whole soul in order to hold rule in it otherwise than the nature of the being; . . . and the disorder and wandering of these parts are injustice, intemperance, cowardice, lack of learning, and, in sum, vice entire?

—Socrates, *Rep* (444b)

Our argument has been that Plato's mimetic-philosophic constructions are the kind of thing that is required for people subject to delusion, which is no mere intellectual error, but a highly cathected, mimetically engendered and practiced one, and that Plato is at least as cognizant of this kind of psychic and political problem as anyone in the last two millennia. We have also outlined a significant connection between modern and contemporary political theory and the *archê* of Thrasymachan politics in the delusion of possessive individualism. That it is a delusion is taken for granted by Socrates' hypothetical *archê* for his own construction, but it was demonstrated to be false as either *archê* or *telos* in our comparison of the two implied cities (chapter 1). That presumptuous autarchy of the person has an echo in the idea of the autarchy of the sexes (at least of the solitary strong male—Thrasymachus), which presumption, chapter 3 argued, Socrates sees in Athenian culture and drives to its logically implicit, dialectically related, hyperbolically ridiculous conclusions. Such delusions require what Socrates calls noble lies, which are a mimetic cure, but which, being *pharmaka*, must be mixed and used with considerable care. We have seen that the laughter provoked (or ridicule lev-

eled) in Socrates' comedy intends (and expresses his own) freedom from cathexes enchainning to delusion. While Plato must be hoping that our laughter begins our own cure from delusion, or gadflies us out of mimetic acceptance of our democratic culture's noncognizance of such, he also gives a more philosophical outline—discussed in chapter 4—of the way the undeluded can see that clarity and unclarity about the world and things in it (including persons) are related.

In the process of telling his interlocutors about this line from imagination to perfect knowledge, Socrates gets Glaucon (at least) to follow the educational climb he prescribes to the point where he is able to see some further truths about soul and city. These truths fall out from Socrates' original hypotheses in building the city; hypotheses precisely opposed to that of Thrasymachus (and his modern echoes). Now, while I hold that Socrates' originating hypotheses are cogent, plausible and logically imply the formal patterns of regime I will defend in the following chapters, many scholars think those originating hypotheses are either nonsensical or implausible¹ and have no clearly reasonable connection to the regimes which Socrates takes up in the later books. So before going into the details of this much debated philosophical ground, let us pause to consider the poetic structure and argumentative outline of *Republic* with an eye particularly to the interconnected issues of the city-soul analogy and tri-partition.

The larger argumentative outline of the formal structure of Plato's poem has seemed fairly obvious since antiquity, somewhere within which time it probably picked up its subtitle, "On the Just."² I will briefly retrace that structure with one additional complication—keeping track of how the particular interlocutors enter and exit. After a one book tuning, or prelude, the questions of what kind of thing justice really is, and whether or not the just life is connected to happiness in a way superior to the unjust life, is reinstated by Plato's brothers. Glaucon polishes up the opposing statues, giving the Thrasymachan advertisement for injustice the strongest possible arguments in its favor; it ends with "if there are gods and they care" they must either "be persuaded by sacrifices" as has been taught, or have at least as adequate a knowledge that justice is best as the best of men, who—according to Adeimantus' addition—would "undoubtedly have great sympathy for the unjust and not be angry with [them]" (365e–366c). Between them the two brothers have set out what seems an impossible assignment.

Socrates, fearing that it is "impious not to bring help to justice while he is still breathing and can make a sound" (368b–c), agrees to make a counterargument beginning with three originating hypotheses:

- H1) the city is like the soul (368e–369b);
- H2) a city "comes into being because each of us isn't self-sufficient" (369b);

H3) “each of us is naturally not quite like anyone else, but different are apt for different” (370a–b).

None are argued for when introduced; they are accepted, like axioms of geometry by beginners, as the starting points for argument. From them he intends to prove what has been asked: what kind of thing justice is and how the just life contrasts with the unjust life regarding happiness. The argument is set up, *pace* book 6 (510b–511a): from hypothesis, to what is to be proven, using an image (the city). What follows in Plato’s text is, then, an example of *dianoia*. We have already seen how H2 and H3 are chiasmically related between the original argument (book 2) and the repetition “as if from the beginning” in book 5’s gender comedy. What follows here will investigate the interplay of all three.

From H2 and H3 Socrates produces the “city of necessity” (or the necessary city, *anagkaiotatê polis*, 369d), and “the true and the healthy city” (*alêthinê polis . . . hôsper hygiês tis*, 372e). The discussion (with Adeimantus) continues along lines natural needs and natural differences among the citizens set out, as well as showing the way that labor will naturally produce better work among them because divided according to nature—each does what he is good at. Socrates is about to answer the two problems—what justice would be and what manner of life the citizens would have (371e, 372a)—when Glaucon interrupts, complaining of the lack of relish. Socrates allows that looking at the luxurious and swollen (*phlegmainousan*) city might be helpful for seeing how justice and injustice naturally grow (372e). This acceptance of Glaucon’s interruption as valuable depends upon H1—the city is made like the the soul. This new city must be bulked up to include prostitutes, pastries, swineherds, a mass of imitators, and then add warriors to conquer new lands to support the larger population (373a–373a). This is the first of three interruptions by the interlocutors of their own assignment.

Concerning this new city, Glaucon answers about the nature of the guardians (to 376), but when Socrates asks if talking about their education is to the point Adeimantus begins to answer; this was the matter of his earlier complaint (362e–366b). Socrates describes their action as “telling tales within a tale” (376d). Adeimantus answers about education until melodies and rhythms become the issue (398c), then Glaucon continues until the “pictorial conclusion” of the noble lie (414d). So this “city of the noble lie” is clearly woven out of the problems noticed, and answers given, by both brothers. It is the city in which luxury is serially “purged” (399e), on behalf of these two would-be leaders, of a wide variety of imitators (398a–b), instrument makers (399a–d), cookery, cakes and Corinthian girls (404d), as well as Herodian doctors, which the more luxurious city would demand—and pay for (405e–408b). Through testing (412a–414b) the citizens are set in their natu-

ral place in the noble lie, told for a once luxurious city that is purging its way to health. Here tri-partition of the city is first most clearly laid out.

We are not, however, allowed to go to the question of what justice looks like in that city yet (as we should expect), for now Adeimantus starts the second interruption. His interruption at the start of book 4, “these leaders are not happy,” echoes Glaucon’s unhappiness with Socrates’ healthy city. To emphasize this congruence, in each case the interruption is immediately followed by Socrates *adding* to the complainant’s charges; among those things pointedly missing according to each brother (and added by Socrates) are wenches and things to win their favors with. Socrates then points out that “it wouldn’t be surprising if these men were happiest,” as nature “assigns to each of the groups its share of happiness” (420b, 421c), but Adeimantus had forgotten that “these men” like all others can hardly be human, much less happy, except with others in a city; his *question* arose out of the imagination of Thrasymachan possessive individualism. Clearly both brothers consider the aim of the city to be their own private enjoyment; polity is a means to mistresses, etc. Socrates satisfies this echo’s complaint and the conclusion of his response leaves no doubt that “your city would now be founded” is directed to Adeimantus, who has been answering for a long time. But the next sentence is “now call in your brother and Polemarchus and the others and see if you can find justice” (427cd). So it seems this whole discussion with its two interruptions is all one city, woven by both brothers (from luxury under the delusion of individual autarchy), with Socrates (toward something more wholesome), for the sake of the whole group (itself a “city”), in order to find what justice looks like—in its coming to be from feverish delusion and luxury, not its coming to be *kath auto*—as if from the mind of Socrates alone.

Now the above-mentioned fact, that tri-partition of the city first falls out of Socrates’ cathartic city, that it most clearly presents itself *in the noble lie*, might make one suspect that Plato is not entirely serious about it. While Socrates confesses that he doubts their present argument will allow a “precise grasp” of the soul, confessing also to knowing of “a longer and further road leading to” such knowledge, when Glaucon allows that he “would be content” with an argument “worthy of what’s been said and considered before,” Socrates continues on the easier path (435d).³ Although tri-partition is presented as arising within the noble *lie*, Socrates argues in terms evoking *logical demonstration*: “isn’t it quite necessary that” (435e). The noble lie’s picture of tri-partition arises within a process that is at first dianoetic demonstration (we have argued that parts of Socrates’ argument rise to *noesis* later). These contrasting points exhibit precisely what is needed: Noble lies need to have some truth, but also need acceptance from the sick or deluded.

We have seen how in the true-breeding (*gennaios*) lie—for example, “that all the children be held in common”—there is a literal sense which is a lie, and a moral sense in which it is true. My suggestion here is that tri-partition

works in a similar way: it participates in both fiction and dianoetic demonstration. One way it is literally not true is revealed by Socrates in book 9, when he posits a particular *desire* and pleasure in *each* part, so eros is not really as it first looks. The letter-like arithmetic simplicity of parts makes the interlocutors pay attention to something other than the mere flow of desire, which is here penned as the orientation of beasts, by making them attend to something more abstract and permanent—not this particular desire, but desire.⁴ Arithmetization also *mimetically* enhances this instrumentality: abstraction from aesthesis and animal desire is produced by arithmetizing. We have already shown something of how this strict penning is part of the cure required by the excessiveness of the (particularly piggish) desires Glaucon and the others have confessed to at various points (notably by their interruptions); it is not, then, “out of nowhere” that “desire is bestialized,” nor is it for no good reason (though it is “with no argument at all”) that Socrates slips eros into the class of desires like hunger and thirst.⁵ When the wider view of eros opens up (in books 8 and 9) arithmetical simplicity need not be wholly abandoned, for even in understanding each “part” as a particular mode of eros, or desiring source of motivation, one may still see that different orderings lead to different sorts of activities on the part of the whole being. The order C-A-T makes the whole word work differently from the similarly lettered A-C-T. But as this is part and parcel of the vexing of the question, let us put off this issue until chapter 5 and return to pursue the more easily dealt with formal and poetic issues.

While Socrates does not allow Adeimantus’ objection about the rulers’ happiness to stand, for “in founding the city we are not looking to the exceptional happiness of any one group among us but, so far as possible, that of the city as a whole” (420b), he still hopes to “consider the opposite [i.e., the unjust city] presently” (420c). Through the noble lie, he has brought the luxurious city back up to something nearer the healthy city, and he has not forgotten the full comparative breadth of the original assignment: to compare two cities, as images for two sorts of soul. The city being sufficiently finished, in the second half of book 4 Socrates calls for help from all to find justice (427d), introducing a fourth (but bi-partite) hypothetical conditional to help look for it: H4a) “If [the city] has been correctly founded,” then “it is perfectly good” and H4b) if perfectly good, then “it is wise, courageous, moderate and just” (427e). He then finds the required virtues in the city and moves to “complete the consideration” by looking to the soul.

It is because the city they have built exhibited itself as tri-partite that Socrates must take up the question of tri-partition of the soul, but when he does, he does not merely ask again for acceptance of the thesis as an unexamined hypothesis of likeness between city and soul (as in first setting up H1), rather he asks “isn’t it quite necessary (*pollê anagkê*) that the same forms and dispositions” are in souls as in cities? It would be ridiculous (*geloion*) to

think otherwise (435e). He argues that the known personalities of several cities echo the characters visible in the three classes of the city just built and that the characteristic of a city can come from nowhere else than the characters of its citizens. Then, starting from a statement of the principle of non-contradiction (436c), he demonstrates three distinct motions of the soul: reason, desire, spirit.⁶ Whether or not we accept his arguments as demonstrations, Socrates' language here clearly presents what he is doing as demonstrative, and starting from an unquestionable (nonhypothetical) premise: opposites, like "acceptance and refusal" cannot be held by the same part of the soul, at the same time, regarding the same thing (436b–440b). Glaucon affirms the tri-partition as necessary ("*anangkê, ephê, triton,*" 441a). The diaoetic hypothetical beginning of H1 has been destroyed as mere hypothesis; Glaucon is on the way to achieving *noesis* about the city and soul (the other hypotheses remain hypothetical at this point). If the city being like the soul is no longer mere hypothesis, we should expect that the tri-partition found in the city is not merely hypothetically in the soul as well. Socrates then shows that, and how, tri-partition explains several distinct sorts of acts and disagreements within the soul (436a–441a).

It was a hard swim, but this argument lets Socrates set out the virtues of soul in the same deductive way: "isn't it by now necessary (*anagkaion*) that the private man be wise in the same way and because of the same thing as the city was wise?" (441c). He then produces the virtues of soul as echoes of the virtues of the city, so much that Glaucon exclaims that "by Zeus" things cannot be otherwise and Socrates ends where he began (in H1 and H2):

then that dream of ours has reached its perfect fulfillment (*teleon . . . apotetelestai*). I mean our saying that we suspected that straight from the beginning of the city's founding, through some god, we probably hit upon an origin [H2] and model [H1] for justice.

To which Glaucon responds, "That's entirely certain" (*pantapasin men oun*, 443c). This certainty allows Glaucon to make the further conclusion that the question about whether or not it is profitable to be just or unjust is an inquiry that looks as if it has become ridiculous (*geloion*) from the standpoint now achieved (445a). So, by the end of book 4 Socrates has brought the luxurious city back up to something nearer the healthy city with which he began; he has pointed out what justice looks like in both it and the similar soul; he has thus demonstrated the nature of the one side—justice—and its happiness; what remains of the original problem is to consider the opposed figure—injustice, and its happiness.

He is about to begin this final assignment when the argument is interrupted (for the third time) by a question raised by desire, specifically about sex, and the argument swells, this time into three waves. This interruption

“starts everything up again from the beginning” as Socrates says—and it involves all of the interlocutors, including the long silent Thrasymachus. All now vocally jump in to the city that has been built.⁷ Curiously, what sparks their interest is how the women will be shared—*ta aphrodisia*, again performs the *interruptus* of their ordered intercourse. Thus no new city is started due to this interruption, rather the one city built to answer the original question about justice in the soul is now something *out of which* they all confess to wanting to see how their more private particular desire is going to be answered. That is, they still (and all) see the city as woven together to achieve the *telos* of possessive individualism: the city is *only a means* to private pleasure. How they will get their own (sexual pleasure) pulls them away from the problem “how do we achieve justice?” Thus the delusion of gender autarchy joins . . . hands . . . with that of individual autarchy in Polemarchus’ aphrodisiac final interruption. Putting these swells to bed (while visions of the long straw dance in their heads), Socrates is finally allowed to continue with the second half of the original assignment—the comparison of justice to injustice (books 8–9); *Republic* then concludes with a coda.

We have three interruptions, and within the third, three waves: “tales within a tale” indeed (376d). That all of these interruptive questions fit with the original thesis about the delusion of possessive individualism, and that Socrates is trying to break its hold (and requires extreme, even ridiculous, means) should be clear. The weave of the dialogue’s argument, the interlocking stitching of characters who are interrupting and responding in a search for private(s) pleasure, the unity of desire for mistresses, and universal interest in multiple shared wives weaves what some take to be two cities (one for Polemarchus, one for Glaucon) into one. Its purpose is to cure the delusion of possessive individualism against which Socrates set his *archê*. This one city is built as a cure for a long continuing, trebly revealed and confessed to (via interruption), political and psychic delusion—a sickness, a fever; the same fever Thrasymachus confessed—that ruling is for the private benefit of the ruled.⁸ At 527c Socrates does say “your *kallipolis*” to Glaucon, but the interruption which got this part of the dialogue going was developed from a Polemarchan whisper, enlarged into a universally desired investigation. Just as Glaucon’s original interruption (372c) brought both brothers into a chiasmic weave, here the original objection is voiced by Adeimantus (speaking the Polemarchan whisper), but Glaucon answers during the first part of Socrates’ consideration of the problem. Adeimantus then raises the further objection that philosophy seems useless (487b), and answers himself until Socrates begins the Sun analogy. Glaucon then again picks up, answering through the more fully developed educational laws. Just before Socrates *erroneously* places astronomy after geometry he says to Glaucon that “the men in your beautiful city must not abstain from geometry.” Glaucon’s affirmation of the

statement and the next (erroneous) move indicates he is not yet seeing the beauty of mathematical order—though he does show knowledge of its utility *for achievement of his desires*. The weaving order of speakers and interruptions shows us that this whole discussion is still oriented to the one point of curing the delusion which holds each of the individual interlocutors to a greater or lesser extent. Book 5's interruptive beginning allowed all the interlocutor's to reconfess both their interest in the problem of justice *and* the influence of their autarchic delusion and desires. Thus, the city and education built from Glaucon's city of pigs complaint to Socrates' philosopher kings conclusion is one seamless garment; Socrates is not changing to another story, he is weaving so that all the interlocutors are in the weave—for none of them is self sufficient, nor does any get a city of his own.

In sum, from the development and assignment of the double task out of the mouth of Plato's brothers (book 2), to the conclusion of the evaluation of the tyrant (book 9), Socrates has *proven* what has been requested by Glaucon and Adeimantus: show what justice is alone (*monon*, 367e) and show how it compares with injustice regarding happiness of life (361d) against what "they say" and "they suppose" (358e, 360d, 361e, 362c, 363a–364e). The language Socrates uses, and the language of his interlocutors, indicates that they are taking the argument as a demonstration, something with which it would be "ridiculous" to disagree. Whether Socrates' arguments are that good, and whether or not Socrates believes they are that good, or is rather merely presenting what he thinks his interlocutors will accept in a way which, through accepting, they will be made better, are matters about which there is much scholarly debate. There can, however, be no doubt how *Plato* is making this argument appear. From the first three hypotheses Socrates is *constructing a proof using the image* of a city: this is the way of geometry, a *dianoia*. Socrates then argues that cities must not only be *like* souls, but *find their causes* in the souls of their citizens; he then demonstrates the tri-partition of the soul itself. The argument is presented as one of absolute necessity, at least partly curving back on itself to provide an anhypothetical necessity to H1. Whoever follows breaks into *noêsis*. Having followed the argument in this way, we can see why Glaucon responds "how not?" when asked whether "with respect to virtue and happiness won't the relation between man and man be that between city and city?" (576d). More strongly, he says it is necessary (*anagkê*) that in the tyrant soul the most decent part is enslaved "if, in fact, the man is like the city" (577c–d). When asked about whether it is worse to, "by bad luck, be given the occasion to become a tyrant," Socrates scolds him that he "not go *conjecturing*" (*ouk oiesthai*) on the basis of what was said before, demanding that he "consider them quite well" (578c). Finally, just before the judgment: "No one *of nous* can contradict you" (*oudeis soi tôn noûn*, 580a).

Perhaps this deductive presentation is merely a poetic-rhetorical form Plato makes run through his argument (which has many and not small interruptions); even so, it presents the logical outline undergirding the flow of dialogic give and take. Furthermore, the theses of tri-partition and writ-large likeness of soul and city are not merely the main frame of the *central argument* we have just laid out (books 2 through 9); they appear *in the structure of the whole book* in more *poetic forms* as well.⁹ In book 1 we see one small community form on the road between Pireaus and the city. The community has one resource under discussion—how to spend the evening. There is some debate about how to decide: Socrates supposes persuasion; Polemarchus presents the *ad baculum*, which—covered by the velvet glove of voting—is allowed to have won the victory. There are three options that appear to be desired by three factions: Socrates wishes to discuss the matter of proper honor to the goddess with Glaucon—they are leaving the Mardi Gras port, which is less than suitable for such engagements; Adeimantus suggests a horse race; Polemarchus an all night festival, supplying a democratic variety of postprandial delights. Dinner provided. Tri-partition's first semblance: desires for wisdom, victory, pleasure, all appear.

Socrates' evaluation of the processions has got Glaucon to start considering the truth about the exercise of piety; he is thereby marked as one of those able to be ruled by "the part which . . . is always directed toward knowing the truth as it is" and seeks the pleasure of wisdom (581b)—though he turns out to be much more democratic than Socrates. Socrates is clearly not merely accepting cultural prejudices, finding Thracian and Athenian processions to be equal; he is leading Glaucon out from his culture cave. Polemarchus (who died in Pireaus defending democracy against the Thirty) has a wide variety of pleasures in mind, which his family's wealth is able to afford (like the proffered dinner), and will perhaps (given his name) be willing even to force Socrates to accept. He exhibits the desiring part's work—and interrupts on its behalf to start the three wave digression of books 5 through 7. Adeimantus breaks into the first scene's discussion, just as it seems someone is going to have to give in to force or be openly defeated by it, with his suggestion of a horse race. Adeimantus' suggestion—a competition—as well as its dramatic moment, which allows all parties—Socrates, his own brother, Glaucon (who has measured the odds, 327c), and Polemarchus—to back off from the threatened violence in a face-saving way, mark his activity as oriented to the desire of spirit—which is "wholly set on mastery, victory and good reputation" (581a). The sons of Ariston are, additionally, of the class which could have horses in the race, which is unlikely for Polemarchus and not possible for Socrates.

Cephalus gives a similar tri-partite division in the next scene: the old comprise logos lovers, honor lovers, pleasure lovers. He claims that he and Sophocles are glad to have escaped their mad desire for sex, and he is now so

constituted as to find that “the desires and pleasures that have to do with speeches grow more” (328d). Some others “bemoan the abuse old age receives” (329a), while the greatest number long for the pleasure of youth and reminisce about sex, symposia and feasts (329a). Not only are the fathers like the sons, but the proportionate size of each part in each cohort accords with the size of the coming tripartite city, which was wise by that part which was fewest (428e–429a), courageous or concerned with honor by something larger than that, and got its desires satisfied by that part (the bronze) which was largest. There are “far more smiths than guardians” (428e), and more auxiliaries than guardians as well.

So, long before tri-partition and the hypothesis of city-soul likeness are even suggested, these two principles are ordering the structure of the poem, visible in the pictures it paints, and exhibited in the kinds of desires operating within communities young and old. The closing picture of book 9 (after both parts of the original assignment have been completed) repeats this tri-partition: the many-headed beast (including both tame and wild desires), the lion, and the man, all grown together into one being and covered over with a human form (588c–589a). This closing picture (supposing we treat book 10 as a coda) has, however been operative from the beginning as well. For it is the human looking Socrates who contains *all* the voices of the dialogue, and through whose one mouth all of them speak—from the wild beast Thrasymachus (336b) to the simpler, gentler, more reasonable head which the speaking, humanly shelled animal (588de) identifies as “I.” Socrates’ soul is itself, then, a tripartite polis, and the human part asks: “don’t you see that all these are in your city too, and that there the desires in the common many are mastered by the desires and prudence of the more decent few” (431c–d)? The veritable small society of interlocutors is itself Socrates’ soul.¹⁰ The purification which *Republic* performs upon Glaucon’s luxurious dream of a city, then, is *literally* Socrates’ self-purification, and the proper measure of repeating such catharses is a whole life (450b). Surely, the victory won thereby is more blessed and fairer (and the fame more long lasting) than that of the Olympic victors (465d).

While the analogy says that by looking at the larger (city) we will more able to see the smaller (soul), the structure of the poem gives us the smaller (Socrates’ soul) containing the intermediately larger (the community of all interlocutors) in whose dialogue the largest (a whole city in words) is presented. This story about the largest is taken in (as a medicine) for the purification of both the intermediate (Socrates’ interlocutors on the first festival of Bendis) and the smallest (Socrates) for his own continuing catharsis, as well as being presented by Plato for our purification, on the day after. This clearly drawn pattern, mutually insetting the tripartite *eidē* of things known as soul and city, makes claims, like those of Bloom and others, that in *Republic* there is “a glaring problem” relating “the justice of a city and that of a man” and

that “it would seem to be possible to be a just man without being a just citizen”¹¹ rather difficult to countenance, since, if true, it should make this clearly operating dynamic of city within (Socrates’) soul built up within the intermediately sized society of interlocutors impossible to play out as smoothly as Plato does. But Bloom’s problem clearly arises out of a possessive individualism which does not take seriously Socrates’ H2—that no one is self-sufficient. If H2 is true, then no sane man accepts that he can be a man, much less a just man, without being a member of a polis. The poem demonstrates precisely *through this intrapersonal political justice* of Socrates’ soul that *he is the good citizen* of his polis, engaged in saving his fellow interlocutors (yesterday) even as he is purifying himself (and us) today. *He cannot do otherwise and be just* or wise, for to abandon them would be to abandon his own H2, and, *literally*, a part of himself. It is, as Burger says, a “radical implication:” “any action of one individual in relation to others, no matter what convention may say, is to be called just and beautiful if it helps produce or preserve the desired condition of the soul.”¹² Conversely, any action which does so thereby also aims at the desired condition of the city (and the souls within it). The dialogue *is* this mutually implicating happening. That “radical . . . individual” spoken of here can only be one who knows and behaves as one *not* under the delusion of possessive individualism: one who knows and acts in the knowledge that the good of the whole city is part and parcel of his own good, and the converse. This knowledge explains why Socrates goes back down to Pireaus; it is his good to do so, for these are deluded members of his own city, who need catharsis, and today is an auspicious and holy day. There is nothing better for him to do; to think there is so is to think he a being whose good is independent of the good of his city; this only seems plausible under the Thrasymachan delusion. So then, Socrates can see the Polemarchan *threat* (327c) is *really* the demand of Justice herself, disguised by the crowd’s own delusion and conventions to look both unjust (insofar as they threaten force) and conventionally just (insofar as democratically voted on). Socrates sees what is “his own business” (443c). He does it. Justice breaks forth within him and within the community formed at Polemarchus’ house. Here, too.

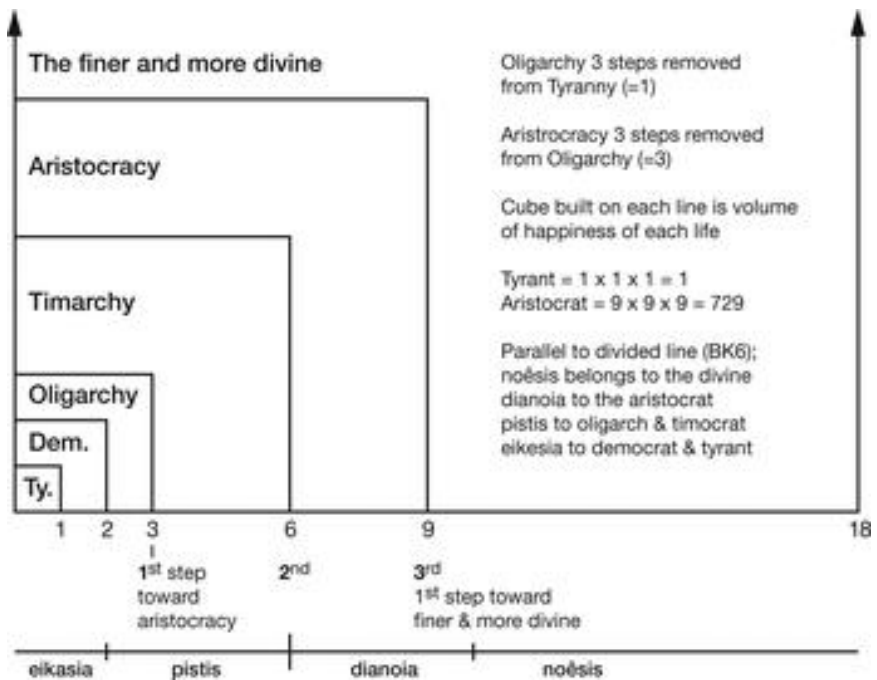
Thus “the *Republic* is,” as Bloom said, “the true *Apology* of Socrates;”¹³ it is also the encomium of Socrates, almost his apotheosis. But it is none of these in the usual forensic or epideictic way; it does not so much argue or show or tell, but draws us into rehearsing ourselves, and in ourselves, what Socrates rehearses the day after the festival of Bendis—and perhaps every ordinary day. By such mimetic artistry it brings us into a sort of slavery to that “best man, who has the divine rule within himself” (590c), and far from being to our detriment, this rehearsal brings us up into the practice that is apotheosizing—or at least apo-aristosizing. Thus is Plato’s mimesis a “saving” one, and through repetition of it we begin to “fare well” (621c,d).

A final purely formal remark about Plato's tripartition of soul and city: 729, the amount by which the king's life is happier than the tyrant's (587e), is somehow the result of figuring the pleasures of the soul, of which there are "three—one genuine and two bastard" (587bc), though the bastard pleasures—those which are mixed by nature with pain (584a–e)—must still be claimed as human and as such are unexcisable from our nature.¹⁴ It might be that, in what follows, Socrates is laying out a base line (for a cube) between the tyrant and the aristocrat; on this line the oligarch is three removes from the tyrant, and the aristocrat three removes from the oligarch; so if the tyrant's line is one unit, the oligarch's is three times (removed from) that (= 3). Then the aristocrat is three times (removed from) the oligarch, whose base is already three so, the aristocrat's base line is 9—"a number that is three times three" (587d). But a human soul is not one dimensional; it is tripartite, so to measure the volume of pleasure a life contains properly, Socrates cubes each soul's basic line measure (the following diagram shows only the plane each cube is built on). The tyrant ends up with the unit cube (1)—a number that is "three times" ($1 \times 1 \times 1$) its soul's "three" elemental pleasures (587d); the oligarch is twenty-seven times more happy than he, since he is three times removed from the tyrant, not once, but on all three dimensions—so three times its own line of three units; and the aristocrat "lives 729 times more pleasantly" (three times removed from the oligarch's three unit base line, on each dimension, so nine cubed), "while the tyrant lives disagreeably by the same distance" (587e). Now I am not absolutely positive that this is what Socrates means to point out, as this segment of the dialogue is rather obscure and has produced widely various interpretative answers;¹⁵ it is clear, however, that this closing "prodigious calculation" (587e) must somehow be formally related to the tripartition thesis.¹⁶

Finally, if I am correct about the coming arguments regarding six forms of soul, we could place the geometry of six regimes (and their accompanying solid geometric measures of happiness) along the one dimensional divided line. Dividing an 18 unit line in the ratio of two to one, the first division will be at 6; using the same ratio on both lower and upper parts of the line puts the lower division at 2 and the higher division at 9. This clearly associates the tyrant and democrat with the realm of imagination, the oligarch and timocrat with the realm of *pistis*, the aristocrat with *dianoia*, and the finer and more divine regime with *noêsis*—which is, of course, where *noêsis* belongs: with the god. The finest regime is two steps from aristocracy (counting the Greek way), whose base line is nine. Socrates suggested in book 6 that philosophy taking hold in the best regime "will make plain that it really is divine as we agreed it is, and the rest are human" (497b–c), but when asked by Glaucon whether or not this is the city they have been founding, Socrates seems to be hedging: "it is the same in other respects, and in this very one . . . that there would always have to be present in the city something possessing the same

understanding of the regime as you, the lawgiver, had in setting down the laws” (497c). This part that understands the regime would seem to be the golden guardians in the city they have been building, so perhaps “philosophy taking hold” would be a regime in which all, having been properly prepared by the gymnastic and music of their upbringing are not only “in agreement about who should rule” (431e), but have born in them, as John Cabanis hoped, that same desire for wisdom that the gold have in the city they have so far been speaking of. Perhaps then the god will grant it to them. The happiness of that city exceeds our page’s measure.

The entire poem, from beginning to end, is woven on the tri-partite structure Socrates first draws out explicitly in book 3. Its mimetic structure—Socrates speaking the parts of all the desiring and spirited heads, as well as for the reasoning part he takes as most truly himself—brings into harmony and friendship within him (as, extramurally, in the community at the house of Polemarchus the night before, and extrapoetically in us) the same three “parts” that appear in all the significant images and analogies. The final argument in proof of Socrates’ assigned problem—to show how happiness and justice are related in the just and unjust man without attention to the



Socrates’ “Happiness” Calculation and Divided Line. Created by the author.

rewards given by man or gods—is given to conclude with mathematical necessity and precision. There can be no doubt—from this argumentative and poetic structure, the interwoven analogies and the mimetic form, and the concluding prodigious calculation—that Plato builds this entire poem on “tri-partition” of the human soul and its likeness to the city. The forthcoming arguments about the devolving civic/soul regimes, the kinds of occlusion of the good causing each regime to suffer symptomatically distinctive delusions, and the place of each character, will treat this tri-partition thesis with the *deductive mathematical exactness* Socrates himself uses. Therefore, there are six regimes; their distinction defined by tri-partition. This deduction from tri-partition exhibits that our interpretation sits more perfectly *with the entirety of Plato’s poem* than any interpretation which cannot fit the characters and the devolutionary story of regimes with the tri-partite thesis. The story I am about to tell is of a piece with the formal arguments, analogies, and structural poetics and mathematics of *Republic*; it requires the tri-partition thesis, using it as formally, dialectically and mathematically directive, just as Plato uses tri-partition and the city/soul analogy in his poem. We hope, as well, that such a thesis can be made more philosophically cogent and plausible, but that debate is unlikely to be settled soon.

NOTES

1. Preeminently, Bernard Williams in “The Analogy of City and Soul.”
2. Bloom notes the subtitle is not mentioned by Aristotle (*Republic* 440, n2), which silence proves nothing either way. It is, by all accounts, ancient. I doubt Plato would provide such a painfully unpoetic nutshell.
3. It is at least plausible to think that, “to describe it [soul] as it is would require an exposition of which only a god is capable” (*Phaed* 246a). If one considers that a true, completely objective view of a thing might require one not be the thing one is trying to get an objective view of, only the god would be able to describe the human soul. So then, if one finds an infinite regress within the description of that soul which is developing the description of soul (as Williams does), this might merely be the formal logical expression for the act of self-description the soul itself is undertaking. Such an infinite regress would be *more accurate* regarding soul than a structural description pretending completeness. Or, one could think that the human soul is like the divine, having perfect self-understanding; to this hubristic view I doubt Socrates would succumb.
4. Compare Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 27.
5. Contrast Ronna Burger, “The Thumotic Soul,” *Epoché* 7, 2 (2003): 151–167, at 155.
6. There is a debate in the literature about whether or not this is “the earliest explicit statement . . . of the Maxim of Contradiction,” because of which Roochnik opts for calling it “The Principle of Non-Opposition,” but it seems to me that, whatever we call it, the important point is that it justifies Socrates’ (and Glaucon’s) use of modally absolute terms like impossible and necessary (or ridiculous) in what follows. See Roochnik (*Beautiful City*) 13–14. The quote in this footnote is from James Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 246.
7. Like many others, Howland (*Odyssey*, 94–118) argues that there are two distinct cities here: the city of Adeimantus to tame Glaucon, and then *kallipolis* to hubristically attempt to tame the erotic necessities recalled by Polemarchus and the others in “restarting” the dialogue. This pays some, but not sufficient, attention to the cross-stitching of the characters answering.

More accurate is Peterson's *Socrates and Philosophy* 107–115, which argues that the whole of the discussion is one city. Roochnik, too, uses the term *kallipolis* to cover all of books 2 through 8.

8. Thrasymachus held there were two kinds of good—one's own and someone else's (343c)—and the real man (and true shepherd) achieves the first. Sheep achieve the second. The sheep are possessed, not autarchic and self-possessing. The strong possess.

9. Ausland ("The Decline of Political Virtue," 2) rightly requires that we regard the "literary blueprint" of the sections of *Republic* with which his argument will deal. We must put no less weight on the literary blueprint of the whole.

10. Thus the idea that there is a "discrepancy between what is being said and what is being done" seen particularly in the "discrepancy between the city in speech, made up of artisans, guardians and rulers and . . . the dialogic city of Socrates and his companions" is not really a discrepancy; what makes artisan, auxiliary, and ruler is what rules in each soul—desire, spirit, or reason: all of which heads are voices in Socrates' own soul; the *purification of their relation* is the action of the argument, more exactly—the action of the poem. Cf. Burger, "The Thumotic Soul," 163n8.

11. Bloom, *Republic of Plato*, 378–379.

12. Burger, "The Thumotic Soul," 160.

13. Bloom, *Republic of Plato*, 307.

14. So, we are two thirds bastard and one third divine. Tri-partition shows up again.

15. Compare, for example, Bloom, *Republic of Plato*, 470 n10; Dorter (*Transformations*, 298–99) changes Socrates' calculative procedure from addition to multiplication between the first triad (tyrant-oligarch) and the second (oligarch-aristocrat); we need not read Socrates' calculating this way; following Adam, he explains that the number reproduces the Pythagorean estimate that there are $364\frac{1}{2}$ days and an equal number of nights in a year, so that the aristocrat is happier every day and night of the year than the tyrant. R.S. Brumbough, in his "Note on Plato's *Republic* IX. 587d" (*Classical Philology* 44, 3 (1949): 197–199, hoped to show the relation between his 3x3 (plane) matrix to "the final cubic image" of Socrates' calculation (199), but apparently never did so. Richard Kraut, among others, thinks it is "a playful estimate." See "The Defense of Justice in Plato's *Republic*," in R. Kraut ed., *The Cambridge Companion*, 314.

16. Consider the diagram concluding this Interlude. It shows the unit line and square used to base the measure of happiness of each of the "distinct forms" (445c) of regime that Socrates talks about. The diagram presumes six regimes, proven next.

Chapter Five

From Mathematics to Social Science

The Six Geometries of Regime in Republic

You were making your arguments just as you are doing now, passing through what concerns the city, saying that you would place a city such as you then were passing through, and the man like it, as good. And you did this, it seems, in spite of the fact that you had a still finer city and man to tell of. At any rate, you were saying that the other cities are mistaken if this one is right. About the remaining regimes, as I recollect, you asserted that there are four forms worth having an account of, and whose mistakes are worth seeing; and similarly with the men who are like these regimes.

—Glaucon, *Rep* (543c–544a)

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According to the usual interpretation of *Republic* Socrates builds his ideal city through most of the dialogue and book 8 gives four descending constitutions, so there are five forms of regime for soul and city in total.¹ These five are usually taken as an historically, sociologically, or mythically patterned heuristic device of Plato's, and frequently as contradicting previous agreements about the soul and city.² Glaucon, however, is quite obviously counting differently in our opening quote: he notes that there are six regime forms, including a "finer one" he thinks Socrates has in mind, but seems not to have spoken of. Immediately before this Socrates had set out a rigorous training in

mathematical sciences for the philosopher kings, clearly convinced that the summoning of calculation is the awakening of understanding (523e–524e), for arithmetic and geometry are the first steps above the cave of belief and imagination on the divided line (509d–511b). These sciences invent eidetic hypotheses to prove further eidetic conclusions, using images (like triangles and squares), which can have further (though less exact, 473a, 510c–511a) application to real things (like houses and temples). Let us remember that it was Glaucon who was answering when Socrates introduced the investigation of whether the soul is three-formed (*tria eidê*, 435c) and that it was Glaucon who was answering throughout the book 7 arrangement (and rearrangement) of mathematical studies; given what he has seen of soul and been led to admit of the way these sciences are arranged and work, perhaps he entertains an alternative view of the relation and organization of regimes—one thought through on a mathematically rigorous basis of the accepted *tria eidê*.³

Further, Socrates concluded book 4 by saying that the five types of regime is how things “seem” to be to him from the height they had achieved at the end of that book (445c), which height is the aristocratic city and its not yet complete education for the guardians. Since they are climbing (or being carried) intellectually (not politically) higher between the end of book 4 and the beginning of book 8, some other regime may well have come into Glaucon’s view. In fact, the very possibility of climbing means that there must be a further height to achieve—Socrates and Glaucon are still on the way up out of Pireaus, not yet at the temple district. The waves Socrates notices approaching at the beginning of book 5 are quite a bit higher than the sea level around Pireaus. The higher climbing (or sailing) they accomplish in books 5 through 7 has indicated three important matters: 1) that there are two kinds of thinking—that starting from hypotheses and looking down (*dianoia*), and that starting from hypotheses to show how they are held by something dialectically higher (*noêsis*), making them more certain; 2) that there are numerous such dianoetic sciences, which operate like geometry; 3) that these sciences have a *necessary order* based on number and orderings of dimension (arithmetic to geometry to solid geometry to astronomy). The number and ordering of these sciences seems itself to be an act of *noêsis*: Socrates *corrects* his original order (geometry-astronomy, 527d) by considering that between plane figures and solids in motion there *must be* a science of solids, as between 2 and 4 there must be 3 (528b), since numbers increase (*heksês*, 528a, b) by one. If Glaucon can apply what Socrates has asked him to think through while climbing, and the reasoning for his self-correction, it should be no surprise that by the time they sail over the highest wave (as book 7 ends), Glaucon has himself espied the implication of such sciences for their tripartite hypothesis about regimes of soul and city, without Socrates showing him where to look. Nor does Socrates correct Glaucon’s new counting of

regimes; rather, he calls Glaucon's answer *orthotata* (544b): most exact, most straight, most true, (and with overtones of:) most upright, most just.

Consider what follows, then, as a superlatively exact (*orthotata*) puppet show (cf. 514b), based upon a mathematical discovery Glaucon makes based on the thesis of tri-partition. I do not present it as mathematically proven in the text—though it could be, if one is thinking like Glaucon, and Glaucon is thinking as I hypothesize—but as a more mathematically exacting determination of how those things *are*, and so what underlies how each is *seen to behave*. The Interlude already argued that such an explication, if plausible, fits better with the entire poetic and analogical construction of *Republic*. In what follows I will present the regime puppets as if they are mathematically derived orders originating from the tri-partite eidetic thesis (which is no longer merely based on hypothesis after 435e) about soul and city, then show how these mathematically derived ideas can be used to “look down” and *explain realities* of soul and city behavior—just as we expect geometry to be able to look down and apply to the real world of houses and temples (and in all cases the real world is less exact).

This chapter will frequently look like a deductive mathematical argument—as if one could derive psychology and political science from mathematical operations upon the kinds of good at which the soul, in her parts, intrinsically aims. If Plato were a serious philosopher, my thesis is that he would have given precisely such an argument.⁴ But this is a conditional contrary to fact: there is not a single extant page exhibiting that Plato had either the talent or the inclination for such serious and hardheaded philosophical efforts; his every page (excepting a few letters—frequently denounced as forgeries) is mere poetry. Can it be Plato who argues thus? Plato denies it. More exactly, Plato says nothing. His every page is that kind of *diegesis* which comes to be (or is made) entirely through mimesis (392d, 393c)—in which the poet himself nowhere appears (cf. 393c). If such a one never defends his own speech as his own, never defends an argument as something *he* means, it is foolhardy for me to attempt to do so, as perhaps I seem to have been doing and as this chapter will undoubtedly sound. Therefore I have thought it good to present this introductory *pharmakon*: This is only a puppet show; the puppets are deduced by Glaucon and dressed on the stage by Socrates; both of these are themselves not real men, but themselves puppets in a play by Plato. One should not expect truths of metaphysics or mathematics, morals and politics from puppets of puppets; such things are three removes from the truth any serious philosopher would defend directly by logically determinate inference, if not transcendental deduction. Which, I repeat, *Plato* never does.

Very well then: taking Glaucon as a serious thinker at the start of book 8 produces the double thesis that A) there are six geometric forms of regime for soul and city and that B) there is an algebraic function which both under-

girds his count of the regimes and provides an outline for the geometry of each constitution. Further, this mathematically rigorous alternative provides grounds to resolve a perceived tragic difficulty between the account of the city and the account of the soul under the received view. The tragic difficulty, pointed out by Bloom among others, is that the best city, which attempts to find a place for each kind of soul in accord with its eros, ends up requiring philosophers to take part in cave-dwelling political concerns against their own eros for wisdom;⁵ it is therefore (of necessity) unjust to its best members. However, according to Glaucon's thesis, we see that *kallipolis* is not the best geometry of regime, so it cannot be expected to provide the most beautiful social-political life for human souls.⁶

There is a beautiful and interesting geometric result of taking Glaucon's count of regimes seriously as well. I present it, too, for its mathematical rigor and elegance: If the six regimes are put on a line in accordance with their proper order and then the line is cut in half, each half of the line is the inverse of the other. The lowest order of regime (tyranny: Spirit/Desire/Reason) is the precise inverse of the highest (the divine and unnamed: Reason/Desire/Spirit); the next lowest order (democracy: D/S/R) is the inverse of the second highest (aristocratic: R/S/D); and the two middle regimes are also mirror reversals of order (oligarchy: D/R/S and timocracy: S/R/D). About whether or not actual souls and cities really are such mirror reversals of each other the geometry makes no claim; it merely points out, like Copernicus, an elegant and perhaps useful set of relations. If souls and cities are such exacting mirrors of each other (or rather the top half are better versions of their lower reflection), we should expect that democracy advertises itself to be most "reasonable" among the lower three—for it both allows all to speak and even rule for five minutes, and looks just like the reasonable aristocracy (if the democrat is looking in a mirror). Similarly, tyranny dreams that it is itself most divine, seeing its mirror image—the "finer" (544a) and truly "divine" man (500d, 501bc). The line of regimes sets the limits of the idea that "there are two patterns established in the very being of things: the most happy is divine, and the godless the most miserable" (*Theaet* 176e). The whole line of regimes is united, as the argument about varying measures of happiness previously discussed and diagrammed in the Interlude—though there I had insufficient room to draw out the plane on which the divine cube could be built; perhaps its happiness exceeds the capacity of man to measure.

If we are to take Plato as the most mathematically serious of poets, in such a way that Plato's Socrates is being exact in his "prodigious calculation" (587e), and my outline at the end of the Interlude concerning relation of different regimes' happiness is correct, then the divine regime is itself two steps (counting in the usual Greek way) removed from aristocracy, so its line would be 2 times the aristocratic 9, or 18. The volume of its happiness would then be 5832; this volume equals the volume of the oligarch (27) multiplied

by that of the timocrat (216) as well the aristocratic volume (729) multiplied by the democrat's (8)—a truly superhuman measure of happiness. Of course, the number of its own happiness does not change at all when multiplied by its mirror image, the tyrant's unit cube. Thus, it takes two mirror regimes multiplied together to produce the happiness the divine regime has of itself (and the tyrant imagines he has). In addition, it turns out that each of the other regime's basic line measures (1, 2, 3, 6, 9) are the only whole number factors of the divine regime's length (18). The true measure is divine, every human regime—even the aristocratic one—is a “smaller coin” (cf. 395b); hardly able to imitate even a likeness. That each is a whole number factor explains why these regimes are the ones picked out as most visible: each *eidos* of regime has its own number, and solid geometry can order and view each of them inside its next larger neighbor and as a rational fraction of the largest—the true measure. There are, also then, an “unlimited number” (445c) of volumes (or “measures” of happiness) based on the other line measures between 1 (tyrant) and 18 (the “still finer” regime). Perhaps this is all mere happy numerological accident.

THE ALGEBRA OF REGIMES

Having explicated the city in which the three classes have been both initially distinguished as well as set in order through their education and testing, and having exhibited the place and operation of four cardinal virtues within that city, Socrates had ended book 4 by saying that “there are likely to be as many types of soul as there are types of regime possessing distinct forms” (445c). This point is what Glaucon (at Socrates' request) is remembering at the start of book 8, while to it he adds an implication he apparently now sees in the longer evening's argument: that there seems to be remaining a “still finer city and man to tell of” (544a). When first broaching this subject at the end of book 4 Socrates had said “now that we have come to this height of argument there seems to me to be one form for virtue and an *unlimited* number for vice, some four worth mentioning” (445c). This remark, besides echoing the Pythagorean teaching that evil is in the same column as the unlimited, suggests that there are, despite that, distinctly discernable “shapes” among the unlimited varieties of evil; namely, four. In a similar way, when one knows the paradigmatic defined shapes of geometry, one can seek out important differences and relationships among their unlimited real imperfections found in the world, or visible in a flickering firelight. Finally, he had noted that these four are visible “from the height achieved” at the end of book 4.

This chapter's project is to explicate Glaucon's noetic and dianoetic way into social science—such sciences need not be mere beastly empiricism (cf. 493a–c). Glaucon, who has seen the number of regime shapes most perfectly

(*akribos*)—having already climbed (*anabebekamen*, 445c5) to the highest point of the night’s discussion in book 4, is (after three books of further high and more exactly mathematical sailing) shown how to look down (*katidein*, 445b9) the divided line and see the eidetic regime forms in the actual or possible history and development of souls and cities. Book 8 is, then, practice in seeing shadows, *after having been outside the cave contemplating the mathematics of soul and city* and the *eidetic images* such sciences order. Book 8 *looks down* the divided line, from what is *known absolutely* about regimes of soul and city, through dialectic and mathematical hypothesis, to what *is visible* in the world. The invisible, but knowable, regime order (*kosmos*) is the cause of visible occurrences and choices of the city or soul. The causes of the actual world’s shadow play, namely its ideally defined puppets’ orderings, is what we want to discern through mathematics.⁷

Glaucon’s quick and thorough answer at the start of book 8 is the best indication so far that he, more than any other interlocutor, has come to have the nature required of a guardian. Book 7 had concerned itself with the complete education of the guardians. Near the conclusion of that book Socrates had said that “the boy who shows himself always readiest [among the students] must be chosen to join a select number . . . , [and] the man who is capable of an overview is dialectical while the one who isn’t, is not” (537a–c). This is itself a repetition, with refinement, of book 5’s distinction “between a man who has a good nature for a thing and another who has no nature for it” on the grounds that

the one learns something connected with that thing easily, the other with difficulty; the one, starting from slight learning, is able to carry discovery far forward in the field he has learned, while the other, having chanced on a lot of learning and practice can’t even preserve what he learned. (455b; cf. 370b)

Glaucon is not just remembering what Socrates had said at the end of book 4; he has discovered something. He exhibits he has a dialectical overview, one starting from the proven mathematical thesis about parts of the city/soul and developed further, not mere rote memory of what Socrates had said; he has the right nature; this is why *Republic* began with Socrates leading him up the hill (out of the cave). Glaucon exhibits these guardian traits straightaway in book 8, having come far from desire for relishes like courtesans and cakes.⁸

From being one who could not imagine a happy city without prostitutes, Glaucon proves to have maintained (or perhaps regained) his dialectical poise, through the recent titillations of coed naked wrestling and shared spouses, not only to recall what Socrates had said before the *interruptus Polemarchus*, but also to have put together some remarks about boundaries (423b 3–8, 373d9) with the course of mathematics-based study dictated for the philosopher kings (521b–537d). Perhaps he has realized, during the

course of those discussions, that all things are given their natural shapes and boundaries by number, and this rule must apply to constitutions of soul and city as well. If so, then he knows that Socrates' statement that there were *four evil* forms is unlikely to have been merely an heuristic device or historical accident. In figuring that there are really *six* forms of regime—not five, Glaucon proves not only to have a good memory, but considerable dialectical and mathematical capacity, which no longer “surrenders itself” (373d), loses itself, or forgets its point in wrestling with passional temptations—including the desire not to think, but merely coast behind Socratic suggestion. Perhaps he no longer will need Socrates' noble lie; he has *seen through* the city they have been building *as a purification* (399e), which city, therefore, *cannot possibly be the best*. Indeed Socrates explicitly called another city both healthy and true, though Glaucon had not liked the food and entertainment (372e). The city built through most of *Republic* is medicinal; it is a *pharmakon* for men who had revealed themselves as somewhat piggish. Though good, there must be one higher: a regime of perfect health.

Glaucon's bold statement that there are six forms of regime rather than five is generally unremarked upon by almost all contemporary scholars, and what precisely the explanation is for the so-counted five kinds of city is a theoretical inconcinnity to everyone.⁹ W. K. C. Guthrie might have come closest to a correct count, for he sees that Socrates has not been at all ironic about the “true and healthy city” of book 2, so that the city that is built through most of *Republic* is “the best that can be devised for men as they are, and most men are far from perfect.”¹⁰ He does not, however, in his explication of book 8's devolutions, exhibit the mathematical underpinning his correct count of cities allows, or guess at the regime of soul for the “true and healthy”—which city is confessedly not the regime they have been building. On the contrary, he proposes that since “every man contains all three psychological elements,” there are “three main types of character according to which is uppermost” (535), and while he rightly considers that “within this framework every sort of mixture and gradation of the three main types is possible” (536), he fails to give geometric specificity to the *orderings* under each head. He concludes with the inexplicable fact, “it might have been expected that there would be three kinds of constitution, but there are five, and five types of individual” (535).

Shorey also has difficulty counting correctly, saying that “Socrates conceives a still higher ideal” so we may assume “four (five) . . . types of individual character” corresponding to the forms of state. However, he makes no attempt to explain what the higher is, having earlier described the healthy city as only “half-wistfully, half-seriously [pronounced] the true city” while Glaucon's piggish intervention is a “fully developed sophisticated society.”¹¹ As seems universal in the scholarship, Shorey seems to think the first city does not entail a paradigm for soul, which lack is *utterly inconceivable* given

that Socrates clearly starts building this healthy city *precisely to provide such a paradigm*. As most scholars, Shorey also does not propose any philosophical ground for the number of regime paradigms he allows. Some of the fuzzy math about the number of regimes might be excused by Socrates' statement, closing book 4 at 544e, that "*if* there are five arrangements of cities, there would also be five for the soul of private men"—except of course that the statement is conditional and depends on what they can see from the end of book 4. It is, under a similar conditional phrasing, also true that *if* the aristocrat is "both good and just" (544e) and the next four are worse (545a), then the better man must be divine (500d, 501bc) when he can "give himself entirely" to his longing (611e). The antecedent of the first conditional is false (for there are six arrangements); the antecedent of the second conditional is true. The best soul will prove that "it is godlike in its very being" (*tôi ontitheion ên*, 497c), while the worst (the tyrant) imagines itself to be so; that and how these things are, in fact, the case, our argument will show. Delusion (the self-sufficient tyrant) leaves one 5832 times less clear about his true state than the truly divine man is; perhaps this is the measure of the latter's forbearance and pity (*suggnômên*, 366c) for the one who chooses to be unjust.

As a convenient summary of the usual un-Copernican position, here is Nickolas Pappas' recent explication:

It is not evident why Plato should have settled on five kinds of constitution, especially when he has Socrates admit that many more variations could be described (445c). Plato probably bases his classification on an empirical observation of existing governments, as sound a reason as any. But we can already guess that the five types of government will fit uneasily into his prior political analysis that all citizens fall into one of three classes. Five human characters should prove just as hard to describe theoretically, assuming only three parts of the soul. Many of the complications in the coming argument grow out of this awkward fit between the theories.¹²

According to Glaucon's thinking, almost everything in this paragraph is mistaken. There are six types *in toto*; there is a mathematically deductive and a dialectical proof for that, based on the determination of tri-partition; while five types *would* fit uneasily with the three parts, six fit perfectly; there *are* empirical correlates among real regimes to these souls, but the correct answer is not defined by empiricism or built out of it, rather it *is known through the mathematics of the idea and applied to the empirical*: just like an architect applies geometry to building. In discussing the divided line (chapter 4) we showed how the vagaries of opinion and imagination, that is, the social world, were related to the dialectic of ideas seen in the light of the good in the same way that real things are related to geometry and the like. It turns out that the real possibilities for, and history of, political and psychic devolutions exhibits a similar relationship to a paradigmatic or eidetic regime geometry

present within them (history being in the realm of visible). More precisely, history is the tale-wagging result of people's beliefs: it is the shadows caused by the wonder puppets carried in the society's cave. The wonder puppets are designed and explained mathematically. Poetry is more philosophical than history though, as a great Platonist once said, and the history of regime devolutions can be given an ideal poetic order following a noetic mathematical pattern dialectically certified to be complete, and ordering a precise series of geometric constructions. Book 8 rests upon this mathematics.

Book 8 repeats for regimes what we saw occur just previous to Glaucon's opening review. For, book 7 had very precisely shown that both the subject and the order of the sciences the guardians must pursue was arranged—and corrected—mathematically (522c–530d). If this is possible, then regimes of psyche and city—as knowables, not merely opinables—must have their *necessary dialectic and order* as well. Not to have a necessary dialectic and order means a matter is *not something about which we can think*; it would be a mere opinable. It is not at all plausible that Plato would accept this implication—particularly about *psychê*; he must think the opposite. Further, since there is *one line* on which both the intelligible and opinable dwell, we should not even be able to imagine soul or city regimes if they are not knowable also. Thus even Plato's *poetry* concerning regimes is impossible unless a dialectically certifiable mathematics and geometry (or some science like those) is available, and neither we nor he can *know* about whether his poem moves us from worse to better or better to worse regimes *unless we can order their paradigms* correctly. That is to say, either there is a demonstrable eidetic order of regimes or else Plato mixes his *pharmaka* willy-nilly. This last possibility is absurd, *or else* it is simply a waste of time to read Plato—perhaps even dangerous.

In finding the equation for Socrates' statement that there were “four worth mentioning” from among the forms of vice (445c), Glaucon discovered that the mathematics of the soul *requires* there be another form besides the one of virtue and the four of vice; one that he figures to be “still finer” than the aristocratic regime of soul and city upon which they have so far been fixing their attention. That he considers the missing form higher rather than a middling one might be due to recalling that his own erotic enforcing of the luxurious city is what *led away from health and truth to aristocracy*—that is, the *curative* city—in the first place (372e).¹³ Now (having been purified somewhat), perhaps he would like to hear what Socrates has to say about the true and healthy. (And that discussion might well require a different dialogue.) In fact, such an unhindered discussion would be a sign of his purification during the festival of Bendis.

From tri-partition, which Socrates, Glaucon and the others had derived from H1, H2, and H3, and defended as necessarily true somewhat later (435c–436a, 441a: *anagkê* . . . *triton*), a simple mathematical equation gives

the correct number of permutations of regime. The number of permutations of order for a set of n elements is always $n!$ (n factorial); so in the case of the tripartite soul, $3! = 6$. The question of whether or not Plato or the Pythagoreans had a proof for the factorial function as universally definitive of permutations within a set is, in my view, a historicist's red herring. The correct answer about the number of permutations of any *tria eidê* thing can also be figured dialectically, *without remainder or doubt*. We can know, through making the proper distinctions, that there *must* be six and *only* six ideal orders of regime. These are very strange claims—must, only, no doubt—for empiricism, or a merely historically inspired list; no merely empirical science can ever make such claims. Socrates and Glaucon both do.

Either algebraically or dialectically then, we can show this. Given any one order—let us say the aristocratic one, R/S/D (Reason/Spirit/Desire)—all others are definable. Anyone familiar with mathematics (Pythagorean or not) would see (*nous*) the *necessity and completeness* of the six ordered forms. If lacking the algebraic proof, one merely has to go through (dialectically) the possible arrangements starting from the given definition. One might do this with angles; given the right angle there is also the less than right (acute) and the greater than right (obtuse); thereby all possibilities are covered. This is all Glaucon needs to see. That there could be such varying arrangements, or factional unions, in ordering the soul was suggested much earlier (440b) when Socrates asked whether Glaucon had ever noticed spirit making common cause with desire or only with reason. One might also order an education in the sciences based on a similar mathematics of dimensions. Glaucon sees a mistaken order *and its correction* at 528de. According to Socrates, solid geometry is not well developed; *despite this historical and empirical lack*, he still sees where it *must* go in the order of sciences. Imagine that: seeing a science that *must* exist where as yet none does!¹⁴ This is not mere history or empirical sociology; this is not *ad hoc*. This is rooted in dialectical (if not algebraic) demonstration; it is a *logos* of necessity; there are no other clear ideas of the relation of parts of a tripartite soul possible, though, of course, like carpenters' geometric applications to reality, there are an infinite number of actual versions.

In any case, having done the math, which provides an *a priori* proof (or a dialectically grounded anhypothetical certainty—*noêsis*) for a seeming unmentioned form of regime, Glaucon recollects that it was his own desire to “exceed the boundary of the necessary” which led Socrates to abandon the original “healthy and true city” for luxury (which needed immediate and continuing purifications). This devolution was the first fall of regime: from health to fever. We saw it happen in book 2, and its result (the luxurious city), and process of curing (the aristocratic city) are what Socrates and the sons of Ariston have been building up since. The “sons of” locution turns out to be not merely biological (or poetic metaphor) but an algebraic-geometric

function that is exhibited in its sociohistorical iterations in the seriatim devolutions of book 8. This is to be expected if what we *opine* on the divided line—here, a history of regime changes—can also be *thought*. That his main interlocutors are “sons of” the best (*Ariston*, 368a) is notice of precisely the kind of city they have built: the one devolved *from* the best. Their own so-called aristocratic city is really only second best, for it is a *pharmakon for the city of luxury*, made to lead these sons back to the best—which is its father and the proper measure of all good and happiness. That this iterative “sons of” function is not merely a sociological fact, but geometric and mathematical, is given additional proof by Socrates’ concluding prodigious calculations (587c–588a). Being sons of the best may be the best we can achieve in our present human state—perhaps we are born feverish, as the cave is cold and wet, and so need medicine. Be that as it may, most souls and cities are further down the road, and *there is* still something better than that which the “sons of the best” have built now becoming visible to Glaucon.

We see, now, that Glaucon’s early demands for cheesecake—“many kinds of many of them”—was a confession to the doctor (Socrates) of a certain kind of fever, which led Socrates to abandon the discussion of health for something more appealing to the sensitive—or is it piggish?—appetite of the sick. Such passional sensitivities will be visible in book 8’s devolutions too. The mothering desire’s similar complaints (549c–e) lead to the second devolution (which is the first devolution spoken of in book 8); and the further devolutions will “purge” things held good in earlier cities in order to achieve their own particular desire (cf. 560d, 567c, 573b).¹⁵ His own inordinate desire has made the correlation of justice and happiness so hard to see. That the night’s cathartic discussion has been *necessary* is a sign of Glaucon’s own soul’s imperfect organization; that it has been *possible* is a sign that he has not yet descended to the lowest geometric figure possible for souls. Socrates has not been able to talk directly about the best city because the souls of his interlocutors are feverish; health tastes bad to them.¹⁶

GEOMETRIES

The following arrangements of soul I have been calling geometries because (like geometry) I will be *constructing an image* of each in accord with our hypotheses, a sort of soul x-ray, an *eikôn*; by contrast, Socrates gives empirical-looking pictures complete with histories in book 8. So I will be showing how Socrates’ devolutional *stories* are themselves shadows of these eidetically carved *eikones*; I will be “using them [the stories of city and soul] as images,” and through these “seeking to see those things themselves, that one can see in no other way than with thought” (511a, 510de)—as Socrates says geometry does. As geometry can be applied to visibles, so these *knowable*

ideal geometries can be used to *look down* into the actual shadowy intrapersonal affections and activities of souls, as well as the historical doings of various regimes of city. The minimally defined ideal parts of the soul—Reason, Spirit, Desire—are put together in six noetically certified, paradigmatic ways to produce a dianoetic explanation of the activities and habits we see each actual regime engages in. The paradigms make us become more exact about how “we act with the soul as a whole rather than by means of three parts” as Roochnik argues must be the case against Williams.¹⁷ The parts cannot be subjects or agents on their own account, but are sources of distinct desires (580d–e),¹⁸ which—*depending on their relative order in the soul*—enlighten, encourage or occlude the aims and working of the other parts in distinct ways; these relative *ideal* relations thus shape each soul’s *actual* habits. We avoid thereby the implication that there are “totally irrational and non-human parts in the soul” since *epithymia* and *thymos* are, in human beings, always connected one way or another to reason—unlike their existence in beasts.¹⁹ The “look” of the soul as a whole is different, and changes as different “parts” gain or lose relative dominance. In the early books Socrates is penning desire’s “part” particularly as a beast, in order to weaken its hold in his interlocutors.²⁰ The geometries laid out on that early arithmetization provide a *complete dialectical overview of psychê*, and a range of paradigmatic political regimes extending from far beneath the earth (the Lake of Tartarus into which tyrants are condemned, 616a, to be exact) to the furthest rim of heaven. Socrates’ *histories* of devolution are “cave knowledge”—each is a *story of what happens*: the *geometries* of regime are *real knowledge* of the soul. It is not full knowledge so long as it is merely “based on the hypotheses” (510bc) leading to tri-partition’s acceptance in book 4. But Glaucon does not consider its basis mere hypothesis after 441a.

What follows is largely in agreement with other scholars concerning half of the souls;²¹ what is distinctive is exhibiting how each description matches an explicit regime order. The last three souls require more exact consideration of the regime’s supposed distinctiveness than the usual view, which is based on a division of the “desiring part” alone, without reference to the other parts. In Glaucon’s view, the limitation to six main types of constitution has been demonstrated algebraically, offering a kind of completeness proof to *Republic*’s argument comparing justice and injustice; this sets the limits for the geometries that need to be discussed, granting Socrates’ historical-phenomenological descriptions of the visibles in book 8 an eidetic foundation. Under this geometric ordering we should suspect that there could be a number given to the happiness of each as a fraction of the measure belonging to the true and healthy regime. That mathematical relation has already been outlined in the Interlude.

Aristocracy to Timocracy: R/S/D to S/R/D

Let us begin with the order of regime determined by the evening's inter-course: the soul whose ruler is the rational part, seconded by a spirited part which enforces limits on both the type and size of the desires according to reason's vision (R/S/D). In the corresponding city this second part (the silver) will enforce the rules regarding poverty and wealth (as well as other matters) among the citizen craftsmen (422a).²² Here spirit is not merely connected to reason but *follows the direction* of reason; under this direction *thymos* limits and trains the many-headed beast of desire (589a–b). It does not act on its own accord, as the spirited man does, for example, in Aristotle (*NE* 1116b23–17a9) and as we will see in lower types. Such a soul has, by its training under philosopher kings, come to honor only what the golden souled guardians honor; this reason-directed desire for honor rules over *epithymia*'s multifarious passions (for we all probably contain even “some that are hostile to law,” 571b). *Thymos* is only aroused by what *reason knows* as honorable; it does not, for instance, become aroused by mimetic competition or mere pain. In fact, its music and gymnastic training has tested it regularly precisely for these temptations (413a–e). While honor and a passion for victory are ordinarily mimetically induced passions and will become so with a vengeance in the coming society, the aristocratic soul has *practiced not responding* to that sort of instigation; his courage has *bred true* to reason's teaching.²³ Courage not only rouses itself against enemies, but also does not rouse itself *against* friends (375c)—not even under provocation (consider Socrates in the first scene); but the ability to distinguish one's friends is not something *thymos* knows of itself. Even the most noble dog will lap the blood of his master when he is hacked to pieces at the gates of the city. *Thymos* does not of itself know the good, nor can it speak (though it can cheer); it has been trained by music and gymnastic to be a good dog—now it waits for commands. This reorientation of spirit is one thing that has to happen to Glaucon in the course of the evening.

Of this civic regime Socrates admits that, though it seems difficult—for “a city so composed is hard to be moved” (546a), there will be some failures in the applied mathematics of sexuality and “grooms [will] live with brides out of season, [and so] the children will have neither good natures nor good luck” (546d). Just as we see is the case between geometry and architecture, that “it is of the nature of acting to attain to less of the truth than speaking” (473a), so too in politics and psychology. The eidetic is that through which we understand and direct, but is hardly (if ever) perfectly actualized. So the aristocratic city falls because of some inaccuracy in working out the practical measures of desires. Further, even if we accurately choose the best we can find, nature might not have blessed us; perhaps there is only more and less

crooked timber available: the best child might not have the perfectly right nature to be king in the city (546d).

In the soul, Socrates suggests that, due to constant importunings, the spirited part begins to consider that what desire—the mothering part of the soul (549c,d)—honors is worth honoring as well as what the fathering reason honors; it is as if someone else is secretly feeding your dog treats. “False and boasting speeches” (560c) abound in non-aristocratic societies. Socrates says that the timocratic soul comes to be in “a city not under a good regime” (549c), for in every city except the aristocratic one such treats will be constantly offered to souls in the form of mimetic and epithymetic temptations (cf. 492b–d); therefore purifications will be necessary “one’s whole life” (450b). Worse, any lesser city than the aristocratic will not have the appropriate catharses, for they do not know the measure; thus, they do not know how to mix their metaphors: they have bad poets. So, in every other city, it is precisely the constant mimetic importunings within the culture which bend the young wood; only kallipolic culture keeps it straight. Even fractionally disordered souls, however, set up faction in soul and city, so arises the Great Compromise: the regime becomes “a certain middle between aristocracy and oligarchy” (547c5).²⁴ Honor is, after all, honor; and many other things (besides wisdom) *are acclaimed*, and so mimetically aroused or engendered in the soul. All of the many heads of the human soul can be led to bark by mimesis; many heads are even engendered by it. “What education can hold out against it?” (492c).²⁵ The problem, then, is that while each main ‘part’ of the soul does have its desire and pleasure, each does not have the ability to see in the light of the good.²⁶ If the rational part does not see all of the soul’s parts and desires in that light at all times, some contraband treats will be going around: the freedom of the guardian soul requires constant vigilance, constant self-examination.²⁷ Even this aristocratic regime of soul, built as a *pharmakon* for the sons of Ariston, requires more than most of us can achieve, and it requires it for a lifetime; no wonder that we need daily cathartic rituals, 365 divine festivals per year (*Laws* 828b). Every human day belongs to the divine, for our sake.

The one who comes to be from the secret treatings of desire with spirit is ruled by a *thymos* that has been raised and trained (by music and gymnastic) to align with reason’s honors, so it does not abandon this entirely. The not-yet-disconnected-from-reason *thymos* “knows” (by habitual upbringing under the law, not philosophy) to keep the cloak of darkness and seamliness over its desires—to be seen as money grubbing is shameful, though having money is not (548a–c, 550b).²⁸ Reason has moved to second place, an instrument for the acquisition of honor and useful for the disguising of desire, and desire is still third, but it is closing fast.²⁹ Rosen, then, is not quite correct in saying that “the spirited and desiring parts of the soul are released from the control of intellect,” for desire must be controlled in timocracy lest one look

like a money grubber (or worse).³⁰ Spirit is controlling reason and thereby using reason to help hide the less honorable desires, for it sees the good is honor. Desire is still under reason, though not a reason seeing by the light of the good, rather by the fire of the desire for honor.

In this soul desire is no longer *really* under control (i.e., by knowledge), but thanks to habit and the light of desire for civic honor it *seems* to be so. Reason is *already* in this second place in the auxiliary souls of *kallipolis*; the silver have not (yet) seen what the true guardians see and know; that is why they are in the second place in that city: it is not merely their relative youth, but *the way* they hold honor and what is honorable—through mimesis and habit, not knowledge—that makes them silver. This is what *being* silver means; it is why and how the “warriors” can be “unworthy” of rule (434b), which is not merely a function of youth or incomplete education; their further education may make them more worthy. *Thymos* is still connected to reason in them, though through reason not to the true communal good so much as *its reputations* (for reason’s view of the good is blocked in them by the presently superior power—*thymos*). In the aristocratic city those reputations are orthodoxic—in every other city they are crooked shadowy *doxa*. In this first fall, reason is no longer the only voice that is heard cheering; rather, having the reputed good (such as the larger society enjoys and—at least occasionally—cheers) begins to fill this regime’s sight and hearing. Thus the fall and continuing devolution of the regime occurs through mimesis; a new song lets the dogs out and it is impossible to point out a single individual who is to blame.

Thus, when Williams says that in the good city “an epithymetic man—surely—is not *adikaios* man”³¹ he is technically correct; the epithymetic types (timocrat and tyrant are both run by spirit according to our argument) are kept in line through the laws of the aristocratic city, and can be justly used by it in their appropriate place (silver) in that city in order to achieve the city’s good—if they are willing to stay within the laws. Through this very practice and good use, as well as some further education, we (and they) may hope for further advancement. The city is using the different regime types within it in accord with their nature. As things are, each type is *behaving* justly, their particular imbalance only comes out in dreams (571c–d), or in their interruptive questions and complaints in the dialogue of their education. We note that Thrasymachus was prevented from interrupting (336b), then from leaving (344d) by the others in book 1. Due to this lawlike constriction it is possible for him to become better in the city forming around Socrates. It seems he does. Certainly, none such are yet just in the full sense, as the epithymetic types in the aristocratic city are not, but in obeying the laws of the just city they are—surely—not unjust. The silver are not merely spirit, as Williams seems to take them, for they are human and all three parts/powers/motivational sources must be present in them as in the more desire-driven

craftsmen, which we will see have the oligarchic and democratic arrangements of soul. These latter, too, will not be acting unjustly in the true aristocratic city, since the laws will not allow it.

Unlike the aristocratic *political* regime, where although each one does not have the divine and prudent ruler in himself, each yet obeys that ruler (the philosopher king, his poets and the laws) so all “are piloted by the same thing” (590d), not all of the citizens in the timocracy are piloted by the same thing, for not all are concerned to behave in a way so as to receive honor. The non-honor seeking—of whom, in particular, the philosopher who should be king is one (549c)—are simply regarded as “lacking in courage and too slack” (549d), so disregarded for positions ruling the city: Socrates in Athens. In the first city *all* citizens *are* concerned to *behave* aristocratically (law and artistic culture enforce it), though private speech in the home may go as it goes (549c–d). As well, though this second regime may still have a kind of temperance, it is not the temperance which is the embodiment of “friendship and accord of the parts . . . [regarding] the opinion” of who/what should rule in the regime (431d, 442c). It is a temperance operating under the rubric “what will be perceived as honorable.” Thus I agree completely with Ausland’s portrayal of the “purging” of a particular virtue in each devolving regime, and his suggestion that even the “virtues” that remain to each lower regime are not true, but are appearances like virtue.³² So, in losing wisdom, the timocratic regime changes the true temperance of the aristocratic city to “temperance.” Ausland’s points have a further explanation: the way these “virtues” *appear* is determined by the part(s) and order occluding reason’s clear vision of the good.

The rise of *thymos* marks a regime which Socrates describes as distrusting reason (547d), for in it reason has lost (or never attained) its simple eros for wisdom about the true good, “holding the wiles and stratagems of war” to be what ought to be measured (547e). Reason, here, is occluded by the desire for victory; that desire (not yet labeled a desire, but only spirit) stands between reason and the light of the good. Spirit shows reason one good: find means. These days we might call the reputed good a social construction of good, while reason in the aristocratic soul knew the natural good. Making that distinction, however, requires eschewing postmodern political sensibilities; it requires not only the hypothesis of, but the truth about the distinction between, the socially constructed or reputed good (and its honor) and the natural good (and its honor). If we hold to a postmodern agnosticism about the good, or *require* such agnosticism as part of a minimalist procedural requirement for justice, we disable ourselves from seeing any real difference between the aristocratic and timocratic societies and goods. Thus Plato looks like a fascist. The practice of such determined agnosticism actually results in something worse than mere timocracy: in the postmodern view the one *claiming* to be aristocratic and natural we *must* regard as delusory, on purely

procedural grounds; he is a tyrant. Still, isn't it true that the question about which one of these really is delusory is a question about which neither man nor god would want to be mistaken?—and *that* is not a socially constructed truth? So, we still *know* aristocracy to be better: there are nonsocially constructed truths about the good. The timocrat, however, does not *know* nature; honor is, in him, a function of imagination, trust and mimesis; reason's task is to figure out how to get it.³³ Reason has been instrumentalized; we shall not see it seek its own again, except but briefly—as a candle in the storms of democracy.

Timocracy to Oligarchy: S/R/D to D/R/S

The timocratic souls are playing king of the hill, so Socrates suggests that while the son of such a father is reared to follow in his father's glorious way, he will some time see his father be taken down and lose everything, thus "he thrusts the love of honor and spiritedness headlong out of the throne of his soul" (553b). He vows he'll never be hungry again; thus, desire comes to the throne in his soul, ordering reason as a slave "to neither calculate about nor consider anything but where more money will come from less" (553d). Spirit, having caused the problem, is silenced. Risking some desire for the sake of honor is seen as perfect foolishness. This person has already experienced where desire for honor leads: to starvation. It is therefore perfectly willing to leave the horse named *Thymos* for dead; no honor is worth spending money on (554e–555a). The resulting oligarchic permutation is clearly Desire/Reason/Spirit. Such a one will make clear cuts in the educational program of his children (554b), and holds his dronish desires in check by fear of what they cost rather than knowledge of what is best (554c,d): Plutus, the blind god of wealth, is the ruler of the soul (554b). Such a one will offer sacrifices to the gods out of fear as well. Piety, such as he has it, is a utilitarian virtue; as it is for Cephalus. Plutus only allows for counting of amounts; under this enforced blindness reason can make distinctions of more and less, but not better, nobler, wiser; in fact, it may not even enquire about what is perceived as nobler—that way disaster lurks. Reason *is mere* calculation; its specific desire and love (for learning and truth) is firmly blocked by fear of loss if attention wavers from desire's ruling purpose. That fear is reiterated frequently as a great motive in this story of soul and city is precisely because spirit has been so thoroughly reduced in its order. Our geometry exhibits the source of these behaviors in the relation of the parts.³⁴ It is not that there is something higher than appetites which "holds them in check, by compulsion and fear" (554d), rather appetite itself is divided against all those which do not lead to increase, including anything which even smells of *thymos*. Reason—given only the light of appetite—can sort into more and less, thereby helping rule out the expense of spirit. It is not sorting goods (for each desire

claims its X is good) but weights. Absolute cowardice has the weight of prudence since the land of want narrows our attention. Again we see that losing the timocrat's "courage" leaves the oligarch with "temperance₂"—looking something like true temperance and like the "temperance₁" of the timocrat, but several steps removed the wisdom ordered (and so true) temperance of aristocracy.

As with the regime change in the first case (to timocracy), here too Socrates tells a story of generational change; in this case, the son moves to the next geometry of constitution due to the timocratic father's complete destruction and his own impoverishment. It is probable, however, that in all cases a single soul might go through any change Socrates relates—or even the reverse of the changes book 8 illustrates, as book 10 will say of Odysseus, who after his many sufferings is "recovered from his love of honor" (620c). Psychic regime change, in other words, need not wait upon generation (or transmigration). While it is true Odysseus' conversion took a whole lifetime, if a soul's education (by experience or otherwise) occurs when he is young enough to change—and the education itself does not destroy him (as experience might)—there is every hope that he may embrace the more quiet life of "a private man who minds his own business" (620c). Such conversions are the purpose of Socrates' discussion with Glaucon, and the youth of Athens generally, as well as Plato's purpose: for "now" and "here are all the danger" (618b8), and *every* choice runs under Clotho's spindle (620e), binding eternally.

In that concluding story of Odysseus there is also a half-visible connection between education and re/penitance: Odysseus is *walking back* up the hill of regimes from timocracy (among whose heroes he had spent his life) to the more just and quieter aristocracy. Rising above that hill is the temple which is the dwelling of the gods and their children: their regime is one of perfect health.³⁵ Socrates was headed here, as he illustrates by his first description of a healthy city, which is not merely private men minding their own business, but a community in which each helps produce the good of every other precisely by doing what he is best at, and all join together in sweet intercourse and hymning the gods, besides (and in) satisfying each other's needs. Socrates, then, is a hero whose aim surpasses that of Odysseus.³⁶ Like Glaucon, Odysseus barely escaped becoming a pig; by the time he comes back from his thousand year journey (620c), he is completely cured. Glaucon is being purified by Socratic intercourse during the festival of Bendis, rather than by Odyssean life experience, and he has already indicated his inkling of a "still finer" regime, which Odysseus can only pick in the myth of Er, not Homer. This is Plato's proof that Socrates is a better teacher than Homer, for Socrates aims at a better city than the poet has imagined: Socrates is not aiming for Ithaca, or a quieter place further inland, but the Isles of the Blest. The City of God is the only true measure for human happiness.

Oligarchy to Democracy: D/R/S to D/S/R

The oligarchic soul, not *knowing* what is truly necessary or not (for to the many-headed desiring part of the soul, which is in charge, each head's demand is the same: "more, now"), does not really have the ability to distinguish among desires. Desires are mouths; each wants to feed. The only way to *explain* the victory of the "necessary desires" over the others, then, is by allowing reason to have some minimal functioning so that the enriching set suppresses the others. The oligarch's desires are controlled by desire's order that reason make money—the dark diligence of this soul driven by desire's fear of loss, which disallows profligacy (554cd). Desire occludes Reason from the light of the good; it can see only plus and minus as made visible by the fire of desire. "Many kinds of many of them" (373a) is not something this soul would suggest; but its reason for not suggesting it is fear—not knowledge or embarrassment.³⁷ Socrates does not argue for the devolutionary fact that such a reason loses its capacity to see distinctions of value, but the references to blindness (550d, 554b, 555e) make this incapacity hearable, and, in an exchange with Adeimantus, Plato allows it to exhibit itself, through the soul closest to this ideal order.

I suppose *Plato* means something by showing rather than telling here. What he *shows* is that certain kinds of facts are no longer visible to certain kinds of souls—like the one Socrates is talking to. Naturally, you cannot *tell* that soul this, for they won't see it; they can't see that they can't see something. Still, if Plato can show what they can't see, then the thing that soul is missing is seeable, and the reason they don't see it is something in them: they are suffering from a kind of madness (331c, 382b). *If the reader sees* what the oligarch shows but does not himself see, good; if not . . . Well, *de te fabula narratur* is a constant trope of literature if not of criticism. As explaining this what-is-to-be-seen-in-the-showing takes longer than telling simply, this section is somewhat longer than the other parts of our chapter.

After defining necessary desires as "those we aren't able to turn aside, . . . as well as all those whose satisfaction benefits us" (558d), and the unnecessary as those "of which a man could rid himself if he were to practice from youth on and whose presence, moreover, does no good—and sometimes does even the opposite of good" (559a), Socrates asks for examples of each. Adeimantus agrees that we "must have" examples, but offers none himself; this is a preliminary marker about the capacity of his vision: having been given a hypothetical distinction, he can repeat it, but not apply it. But to memorize a distinction and not be able to apply it to visible things is to have the dianoetic hypothesis merely in the way one has *pistis*—as our line diagram showed. One needs a further *pistis* to know what it is linked to; he waits for Socrates to tell him. Adeimantus (and his ilk) do not have knowledge; he has not advanced as far up the divided line as his brother; we are now in the

area of the cave where he is to be found. An exchange about the proper use of the term “necessary” (559a) continues the discussion, pointing up his inadequate cognition; there is a certain kind of necessity—which he cannot himself supply or see (how strange!). Plato is *illustrating* that a sort of feeling of mystical necessity pervades the lives down here, where true necessity—seen only by reason in the light of the good—cannot be seen:

Wouldn't the desire of eating—as long as it is for health and good condition, the desire of mere bread and relish—be necessary (*anagkaios eiê*)?

I suppose so (*Oimai*).

The desire for bread, at least, is presumably necessary (*kat amphotera anagkaia*) on both counts, in that it is beneficial and in that it is capable of putting an end to life.

Yes (*Nai*).

And so is the desire for relish, if in any way it is beneficial to good condition.

Most certainly (*Panu men oun*).

But what about the desire that goes beyond toward sorts of food other than this, of which the many can be rid . . . ? Wouldn't it rightly be called unnecessary (*orthôs ouk anagkaia*)?

Most rightly indeed (*Orthotata men oun*).

. . . Then won't we assert the same about sex and the other desires (*Outô dô kai peri aphrodisiôn . . .*)?

The same. (*Outô*, 559a–c)

There are several jesting and serious points to be made about this interaction. The first is to notice Adeimantus' growth in relative certainty. He *supposes* bread and relish to be necessary; he is willing to give an *unexcited affirmation* to the necessity of bread alone; but then *closes absolutely* to the offer of *conditional* relish.³⁸ It is humorous of Plato that the modal logic of Adeimantus' responses is a bit at odds with, well, modal logic—to say nothing of the facts of nature (another realm of hidden necessity from such souls); it also exhibits precisely the problem of a soul whose ruler is a blind mouth (or set of them). Undoubtedly the first order of business will be to get some research going on the relative health benefits of varieties of relish—the research would have to be about its relative cost; . . . but maybe we can just sort of estimate? I *know* we can't eat research, so spending money on an exact evaluation seems. . . . As to the question about sex (*peri aphrodisiôn*), it is stated in an ambiguous way by Socrates, as if sex could be on either side of the oligarch's “principle” (spendthrift or money making, 559c)—in itself the difficult moral dilemma of choosing between being the john or the pimp. It is answered no less ambiguously by Adeimantus: “we'll assert the same.” What exactly is being asserted about sex is . . . nothing very exact at all—though based on the oligarchic “principle,” the odds lie firmly in favor of pimping and against johning. It seems clear (to reason), however, by the

earlier definitions, that sex is a desire of which a man could rid himself “if he were to practice from youth on,” and whose presence sometimes “even does the opposite of good” (particularly as the oligarch counts: he loses substance) and so is unnecessary and therefore should (under strict oligarchic regimen) be gotten rid of.³⁹ On the other hand, the many will disagree, and we saw in the case of Sophocles’ book 1 admission that this head has a particularly loud and persuasive voice; it has interrupted frequently. It might even be so among scholars. Neither Socrates’ question nor Adeimantus’ answer are specific on the point about sex. It is a *feeling* about necessity rather than knowledge that is operative in the oligarch; reason is occluded by desire, which has a fire of its own. The truth and exactness of necessity are a dark science to such souls.

We might have suspected this in Adeimantus from his earlier seconding of Polemarchus’ desire to hear about how the women must be shared; perhaps the clever polemarch palpates his friend’s confusion and presses through precisely on the weak point. Adeimantus is in the realm where calculation can only attempt to distinguish largenesses among the shadows cast by the fire of desire. His confusion at this stage places him near the dialectical *topos* of Glaucon when he affirmed that relishes, courtesans and cakes were *necessary* things in a truly happy city (372c–373b). The music of *Republic*, here, offers a repetition, in a different voice, of that earlier Glauconic interruption; in the education of Adeimantus we must now rebegin the dialogue from that point: the question of relish (as Shorey points out). Glaucon has climbed past this confusion; he has already noted the difference between erotic and geometric necessities under the influence of the coed naked wrestling of the soon to be golden girls and boys (458d). That distinction might have a place here, but Adeimantus does not recall it, nor does he provide any other means for distinguishing either absolute or conditional necessity.

Socrates’ famous statement that he (unlike we sophists) could only educate one soul at a time shows itself here in Plato’s construction, which is not so much an *argument for* and presentation of Platonic education as a liturgical outline and *instantiation of* Socratic education: a mimesis to be entered into as necessary, and one which restarts itself “as if at the very beginning” (450a) at the instigation of each soul newly awakened to its ignorance or confusion. The question to ask the oligarchic here is, “how does one know what health is?” His “principle” says, “whatever makes the most money.”⁴⁰ One who *knows* natural goods might deny this.

We should consider the significance of the fact that it is Socrates (symbol of the rational part of the minimalist polity being created in Polemarchus’ house) who introduces the idea of distinguishing among desires, as well as produces any way, or examples, of distinguishing. Adeimantus (closest to the oligarchic type) can’t see to do it for himself. The reason he can’t is ex-

plained by our geometry: the way to *understanding* is blocked in him by the hugeness of desire; he is only going to give to those desires *appearing* not to run to bankruptcy. While this difference between desires that *appear to maintain* the substance of the being and desires that don't or that merely *expend* substance *may* sort desires into the same extensional groupings as Socrates' distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary, it is clear that the intentional distinctions are not the same and that Adeimantus can't make the rational distinction; calculation only says "it adds" or "it subtracts" of every choice. His temperance is therefore not temperance.

Sex provides an interesting example. If the good is increasing one's substance, sex and its likely results are almost as large a drain as war. But if sociality is a necessary good of human beings—as the first principle of Socrates' healthy city maintained, but Thrasymachus did not, then a much more complex analysis of the matter might be necessary than the oligarch can begin to manage. So while other scholars say that in this soul the necessary desires are ruling (and in the next two other sorts of desires take the part of ruler), the *kosmos* or order Glaucon's geometry must imply here—desire ordering reason to get more from less and totally disallowing any weight to *thymos*—provides us an *understanding of the oligarch's way of seeing* the good that is more clearly like *the oligarch's actual way of seeing* goods. Adeimantus *shows* this soul to be incapable of judgment based on rational principle; our geometry *explains* this incapacity in accord with Glaucon's mathematics of tri-partition. Thus science gives *knowledge* of appearances. The distinction necessary/unnecessary, as Socrates draws it, is a distinction available only to *unoccluded reason*; it requires one to know what does one *good*, but the oligarch is not reasoning (he merely weighs) and cannot see the good (or, he calculates by firelight). The oligarch *perceives* increase and loss of substance; he can *feel* something like reason's distinction, and that is how *desire orders* reason to find things that are filling. So Glaucon's geometry produces an understanding of the oligarch's operations under the light of that "good" by which the oligarch himself *actually* sees (desire's fire) rather than understanding his operations under the light of a rational distinction he is incapable of making (as it requires the light of the good/sun, from which he is blocked). Socrates *is* able to see by the light of the good, so *he* makes the distinction. He describes the reality Adeimantus cannot himself pick out.

We should be able to see that Adeimantus is not yet seeing for himself. Desire is itself polymorphously perverse, as Socrates points out at the opening of book 9 (571a), where he gives a brief outline upon which no Freudian could improve, and to which no criminal psychologist could make addition. Already here in book 8 we see Adeimantus agree to two rather distinct qualifications of necessary desires: "those we aren't able to turn aside" as well as "those whose satisfaction benefits us" (558d), both of which are true of bread, but may well be separable in the case of a seventh glass of ouzo, the

importunings of a randy Alcibiades, or the offerings of a walk in the way of temptation by Leontius. Those we *aren't able to turn aside* may be mad masters, while the second qualification alone picks out a good master. Similarly, Adeimantus agrees to two different definitions of the unnecessary desires without noticing: those from which a man could free himself by discipline and whose satisfaction does no good (559a), and “those of which the many (or in most cases) can be excised by training” (*ek tôn pollón apallattesthai*, 559b9)—a principle which may easily be given a very widely democratic reading. It might become the case that the many simply cannot do without smart phones, large screen televisions and internet porn service, for example—many kinds of many of them! The oligarch, such as Adeimantus, falls into darkness about all these mouths. He cannot get clear on either the definition of necessity or on how the definition quite dictates the solution to the problem of what to spend money on. And he is not clear about money itself, which, through mimetic competition with others, becomes the “limitless acquisition of wealth” (373d) that led Glaucon to war. Money itself is not an object of natural desire, but one that arises only in human society; it is socially shaped and engendered—is *it* a necessary desire? It seems so—to many.

The short interaction with Adeimantus illustrates the problem of the oligarchic principle: “bread, yes.” After that things are rather dark: the light of human desire is a flickering one, in a dark place; only an animal is likely to get even bodily desire correctly. This ambiguity and darkness is a function of the oligarchic geometry of soul; that is, no desire for honor, little for truth (correct addition preferred). That is what it means to have the appetitive part as leader, but reason is second. The noble is, under no circumstance, to be fought for (555a); it can *not be seen as noble*, for there is no clear light; in fact, under the light of desire “the noble” is certainly seen as foolishness leading to death—the ultimate subtraction. In the ensuing wealth this fear of loss will be mitigated; so Adeimantus’ vagaries about necessity are only a short step—or credit card—away from the soul which says that all desires are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among them that “all are . . . to be honored on an equal basis” so that the ruler of the day is, as it were, decided by lot (561c). But the lottery of the soul is no real principle at all, for there is no lottery master or even ticket comptroller. Its principle is having no principle. Reason has nothing to decide about when the principle is that everything available is to be tried; the erstwhile lieutenant of the oligarch is thereby busted down to being just another mouth. This coming devolution shows that, as time goes on, there won’t be very many desires the many *will* be able to get rid of. As *thymos* begins reasserting itself in the soul, all of them will demand to be heard. The rotation method arrives; method replaces principle.

So it will come to pass in the democratic soul, where spirit seconds whichever desire sticks up its head, that each will turn out to be one “we cannot turn away.” Thus, it is clear that the “principle” which decides the “shouldness” and “goodness” of sexual activity—or any other desire of the oligarch—cannot *really be* the ambiguously stated, rational seeming one Socrates voices, but is a function of the position of *thymos* in the soul. If spirit is disenfranchised (D/R/S) the soul runs on fear of loss and *looks like* it is making a distinction between desires necessary and not. If spirit is rising (D/S/R), whichever desire attaches to it in a given day (or fifteen minutes) is king; the whole desiring head is acclamoring, and measuring one’s expenses is cowardice; this is the brave democracy. The democrat will *have to* allow “many kinds of many of them” (373a); each, with *thymos* on its side in serial fashion, will *not be able to be turned away today*. And desiring heads are the type of thing that, being satisfied, go to sleep for awhile (as Freud said). Another mouth speaks; *thymos* seconds it. . . . Thus our geometric construction *dianoetically outlines* relations within the soul that explain the *difference in appearance and activity* between oligarchy and democracy. This is exactly what is required of the second highest step of the divided line: dianoetic hypotheses explain real things.

Socrates’ description of the “diligence” of the oligarch was, then, not a virtue that has its root in a *rational* distinction such as Socrates offers; rather, it is merely an expression of “the insatiable character of *the good oligarchy proposes* for itself” (556b). This insatiable desire to increase one’s substance and its concomitant fear of loss allows that “*for the most part* his better desires would master his worse . . . , [but] the *true virtue* of the single minded and harmonized soul would *escape far from him*” (554e). True virtue could really tell the difference between necessary and not.

Meanwhile, in the democrat, we may say desire is ruling because there are so many kinds of many of them. At the same time, the demand for *equal honor* among all in it is an indication of the rise of the spirited part from the ash heap it had been reduced to at the fall of the timocrat. That Reason has no more particular claim in this soul is indicated by Socrates’ suggestion that the democrat “sometimes spends his time as though he were occupied with philosophy” (561d), for a *real* interest in philosophy depends upon recognition of the divine inequality which adheres to the truth; this is something the mouth of desire cannot discern and to which the spirit of equality refuses to accede. Desire lives by its own light (not that of the good) in the democratic order; it can only desire (cf. 437e–438a)—to each mouth, the one thing it licks is the good. Reason’s reduction to the status of “just another mouth” explains why the democratic soul fulfills lawful as well as unlawful desires. This soul does not see these as different, nor can it discern the tame from the wild—though *Socrates* can describe them (for he knows), and *Adeimantus* can agree (for he fears some). Such indistinction allows all mouths license in

the colorful and brave democracy. On the other hand, truth requires a political relation which, because it tastes unacceptable to the democrat, is spat out: philosophy *may only* be pretended at here.

To speak less imagistically and more sophisticatedly, in the democratic order freedom is mere arbitrariness based in “post-metaphysical thinking . . . , [which] eschews the rationalist presumption that it can itself decide which aspects of . . . doctrines are rational and which irrational.”⁴¹ This is precisely the kind of soul for which dialectics is a danger (539a–c), and Adeimantus reveals how close this democratic position is to his own soul when he says, “you’re telling me my own *dream*” (563d). He *feels* this kind of boundarilessness as a threat, though *he can’t rationally explain* it. (He needs an interpreter of dreams, and their peculiar mixture.) Being more oligarchic than Polemarchus, he still considers it something of a nightmare, one which he has a tendency to run into only in the more rustic areas (563c). The city—thanks be to Plutus—still has somewhat more class and organization. There is, in one sense, no hierarchy in the democratic soul for there is no principle or leader (558c); but in another sense desire is ruling, for it must be the thrower of lots among ends for the day—“each arranges his own life in whatever manner pleases him” (557b). Since each desire in turn may take up *thymos* as its second (are we not all equal?), it is the democratic soul which exhibits what *looks like* the true “emancipation of desire.”⁴² No differences allowed: all desires free and equal.

In this transition, Socrates’ story of generational change again makes excellent sense. Someone who lived through a long depression or war and postwar poverty would be unlikely to lose his fear of loss; the son who never suffered so—particularly as the result of thumotic activity—would give spirit a longer leash. Neither oligarchy nor democracy really have a rational principle (like seeing the difference between necessary/not), for reason is not able to see realities in the light of the good when it is occluded by another power—or two—in the soul. All four forms of bad regime share the occlusion of reason: *this is what being in the cave means*. Further, each regime form *believes* it is acting for the best; each of the bad forms is therefore mad; its use of the word “good” does not really measure, for it is not looking and measuring in the light of the good. Similarly all the other words fail: honor, wealth, freedom—even pleasure.

It would not, however, be helpful to tell the soul this. So, what does Socrates do? He lies—sort of; he submits the oligarch has a rational principle (being human, he does have a rational part)—and he states it and exemplifies it in such a way that it is clear that the principle is none too clear to the oligarch, yet might lead him into the truth. It would not be surprising if Adeimantus soon faces a sexual question on his own accord (rather than it being suggested by the tugs of Polemarchus, 449b); perhaps he will be bitten by it to reconsider this inconclusive conversation. On the other face, the

principle “looks like” what the oligarch is doing; he *believes* he is operating on a rational principle: he knows how to make money—which is more than can be said for Socrates! The oligarch has a stolid confidence in that; he is so confident in it that he will use this “principle” to define his educational system. Perhaps, however, Socrates’ lie gets the oligarch to attempt clarifying the principle, for he does see that he needs to decide which desires are necessary and he (at least the still educable Adeimantus) does *feel* that he doesn’t quite grasp the concept: what *should* we say about sex then?

We might also ask, what should we say about philosophy? For the timocrat, and oligarch, it is clearly unnecessary; the democrat regards making such distinctions (necessary/not) as a form of hate speech and disallows it, so philosophy is allowed back into the city, soul, and curriculum, so long as it knows its place as merely one among many mouths. If it presumes to a higher status than one of the plausible entertainments of the soul, something more than one of the free and equal citizens of the polis (or university) it is clearly on its way to becoming tyrant and must be killed or ostracized. A passionate commitment to freedom *requires* this. Let us call it procedural justice. A purge of hemlock will cure us of people who think this justice is too thin.

We could just give up trying to think about such distinctions entirely; they seem so hurtful, so unequal, so . . . uncaring about the feelings of others. In that case we are confessing that reason has moved to the bottom of the soul’s hierarchy and the soul has moved further down the line (or ladder) of regimes from oligarchy. But in a society (like the one forming in Polemarchus’ house—or between you, dear reader, and me and Plato) where everyone is listening to thinking, giving up on listening and thinking entirely is mimetically unlikely: the “sweet intercourse” with one another (372b) has a mimetic effect even if the reasoning of it isn’t yet entirely clear to all the souls that are present. In a different society, well, whatever.

Democracy to Tyranny: D/S/R to S/D/R

Two permutations of soul remain to be accounted for; the first is the soul ruled by reason, with desire following and the spirited part markedly less active (R/D/S), which will turn out to be the unrecognized best regime. The other (and last) is the soul ruled by spirit, in which reason is utterly enslaved, with desire occupying the middle position (S/D/R). We saw the comic version of this tyrannic regime in the first scene’s polity, where Polemarchus sends his slave to stop Socrates, and he and his crowd offer Socrates the *ad baculum* for returning to party in Piraeus; when Socrates suggests persuasion of a more reasonable sort Polemarchus responds with “bear in mind that we won’t listen” (327c). The democrat and the tyrant share this trope: they don’t “admit a word of truth into the guardhouse” (501b); rational discussion is cast to the bottom of the soul (for it cannot be cast out of the human), while

in the tyrant the giving of orders is the glory of man.⁴³ Generally tyrants don't order one to come down to Mardi Gras, but clearly Polemarchus expects obedient recognition of his superiority *without speech (a/logos)*, and enforces reason's (Socrates') abject powerlessness. The crowd surrounding him seems to approve. For a slave to grab a free citizen as Polemarchus' factotum does might well have been treated as capital offense in Athens.⁴⁴ Such lawless and unreasoning expectation of obedience is the signature of tyranny. (Of course, if it is not a slave, but merely Polemarchus' child—*pais*, 327b can go either way—the giving of the order is more comical.) Reason (Socrates), not unreasonably, and perhaps even for reasons of its own, honors the polemarch—in a way; this recognition quiets him. Polemarchus' spirit is satisfied and goes to sleep for a moment—he is not really a tyrant; in the tyrant, spirit never sleeps.

Back at Polemarchus' house another, more practiced tyrant awaits. Though Polemarchus “and his drinking fellows . . . [do] get their support from his father's property” (568e), Polemarchus is only, it seems, playing at tyranny (as a democratic soul might on occasion)—honoring the military man in the morning, for in the second scene he comes to his father's rescue, which a real tyrant would not do (569b). His *thymos* is neither in complete control, nor disconnected entirely and always from reason and principle, though we should “bear in mind” that it could well go that way: it rotates. Reason, too, is a mouth in the soul, so occasionally the democrat will “spend his time as though occupied with philosophy” (561d)—pretending to yet another regime of soul which is not his—but he doesn't know he is only pretending then either. Thrasymachus, however, is rather more practiced at tyranny, so more difficult to convince of reason's—Socrates'—friendship or worth (498d). He does not quietly threaten, but springs with a rage into the argument (336b), pours out his demands, and expects them to be accepted (344d).

Polemarchus and Thrasymachus each illustrate, in lighter and darker colors of less and more permanent dye respectively, that the object of such tyrants is unequivocal obedience to their will, and it is a will to power unconcerned with reason or any more particular desire. Polemarchus is not concerned, in scene one, that Socrates join in enjoying eating, drinking, young men or horses: just that he not “escape” his power. Thrasymachus' definition of justice as the will of the strong means just this. He says what he wills and expects obedience; the epithet Socrates attaches to this type is “mad” (573b). It *behaves like* some great lawless desire, and our geometric picture of the order of the tyrannic soul exhibits this disconnection of *thymos* from all principle: Spirit-Desire-Reason. No principle is possible in such an order: lawlessness of command is ideally pictured: reason is completely occluded from the light of the good.

The usual view of *Republic* accepts Socrates' *reasonable story* as truth: that the tyrant is a soul run by a lawless desire, while the democrat was "pulled in both directions"—enjoying a life which has a measure of insolence and a measure of the more law abiding (572c–d). But, as earlier, *these rational distinctions are available only to those who can yet see* some difference between tyranny and law, between tyranny and truth. That is *not true* of the tyrant; it is not *how he is in himself*. In himself law, truth and will are one: the good is my will—obey! Socrates' distinction between these (the ruler's good, the ruler's will, 339a–340a) in book 1 is enraging to the tyrant; it is a distinction only a reasonable being would make. If each part of the soul has its own desire and concomitant pleasure (as book 9 explains, 580d–583c), the desire of *thymos* is the one that can kill all the others to achieve its end.⁴⁵ Socrates' description the tyrant's rising in the soul notices both the nonrecognition of distinction among desires and the elevation of *thymos*. He says that from rubbing together of much unbridled desire (*anomon epithumiōn*, 572b) an *eros* is engendered and arises as protector of the appetites. But the only *eros* that can protect one appetite from another is the *eros of thymos*. This is why tyranny leads Socrates to develop a fuller picture of *eros* in the soul, and book 9 breaks into his smooth running set of devolutions in order to show how each "part" has a desire; each is itself really a kind of *eros*.

Thus, to see the tyrant *as he is* we must understand that for the tyrant, the law is his will, and the truth is his law; or, in Thrasymachus' words, it is the will of the stronger who never errs (341a); *logos* is merely a tool of this spirit: that with which we give orders. He never errs *because* there is no truth outside of his will. (If Schopenhauer's Will would use the word truth, we would have the adequate identity of will, truth, law.) This will is unleashed in the postmodern world; if there is no natural good, or none knowable to human beings, then all creation of good is real *creation*—the flexion of power. Any consideration of otherwise is dead. Of course this postmodern condition need not be true, it only needs to be what is said in the cave. Such an opinion does the tyrant's work, for it preempts all and any work for moral reasoning. Disbelief in a *telos* for moral reasoning abrogates all sense in its operation—except as a different kind of flexing.⁴⁶ Reason has no work, certainly no work *of its own*;⁴⁷ it is buried under the other parts of the soul—it is just another desire. When we understand the tyrant's geometry, we see that his soul has an order both entirely *debilitating* reason and always *demanding* allegiance: *Thymos* makes the rules; reason is in the dungeon; the desires crowd around to lick the horse's hooves. That in entering the discussion of tyranny Plato's Socrates gets more specific about appetite is important here, for what arises in the tyrant is not any body-centered appetite, but a mad tyrannical temper which "*lays hands on and expects to have power to rule not only over human beings but over the gods as well*" (573c). This is the extremity of *thymos*: the will to power unbounded by reason, or any

desire for the community's honor, or even recognition of that pseudo-natural distinction the weak pretend exists between human beings and the gods—which distinction only lickspittles, children and sheep believe in. Expecting to win out even over the gods means one will not admit to *any* boundary—what is there for reason to do given this kind of ruler in the soul's regime? Or the city's? It must go under; it must lie. Poetry only can speak.

The true tyrant's principle is that there shall be no law except his will. That is what Thrasymachus *aims to accomplish* through his argument in book 1: winning. His error (or salvation) is that he *speaks* and tries to win *by argument*; a real tyrant gives a forced feeding (345b)—or whatever—and leaves. But *logos* is something Thrasymachus shares with these snot-nosed sheep; it is not his invention, nor only his tool. For he, in fact, has been *shaped by it* too; he too is a mimetic and rational being and has become rational first of all through mimesis. The “true shepherd” of Thrasymachus' example (343b) does not argue, nor does the wolf speak. So then, the usual description that the tyrant is run by an unnecessary, wild-headed animal *appetite* takes the *appearance* for the *reality* of the soul. The reality is that soul is run by a lion—*thymos*—disconnected from the taming *logos*. Such a person is not antimonian, but fully autonomian; it is not breaking the law that moves him, but being it—even to the point of being nature's law, as a god.⁴⁸ Those desires that lick are liked, for those that do not there is a final solution. And that solution is the correct one—it goes without saying. They shall be silent.

The leader in this soul, then, is no appetite in the narrow sense which the tri-partite scheme has penned it; this “desire” does not rest when it is satisfied as the other “desires”—our natural appetites—do. One may call it a desire insofar as each part of the soul is now recognized as having or being a desire, but it is unlike the usual beastly desires for sex, drink, and cheesecake—there are “many kinds of many *of them*,” but this is singular; if we call it a libido, let us be more specific: it is the *libido dominandi*. The hyperbolic extremity of this soul (should it occur) can only be locked up or killed, for the *real* wild cannot be brought into the taming of reason; such a thing would not merely “refuse to listen,” it can't hear *words*. It is the outside of all sociality. From this ‘outside’ modern political theory pretends to begin; it produces sociality—including language—as its artifice. Just as there is no way from outside an already present and active sociality to construct sociality (no human being is self-sufficient), so the complete excision of reason from the soul (which is the tyrant's dream) would no longer be a human soul. That would be a madness that *is* bestial; a human being becomes this madman by attempting to be (and presuming to be) divine. This madman has divorced his moving principle from reason, being separated from it by desire, over which spirit rose as a seeming protector (*phuetai turannos, ek prostatikes rizes, 565d*)—protecting the desires from the light of the good which reason would use to

sort them truly; but the soul still carries that baggage (reason) along—in most cases. In most cases we can still speak to him; he can still hear words (not just growls and purrs), and even understand them in a way, but we had better be lying (and not letting him know we are lying). The tyrant, most of all, needs the poet.

The tyrant's geometry is the repudiation of the rational at least as strong as the oligarch's repudiation of spirit. Since here it is spirit doing the repudiating, expect it to be stronger. The ideal form of tyrant cannot *be* human: *logos* is what is common to all rational souls, and he wills either absolute ownership or excision, so sociality too must be, as far as possible, repudiated by him; the extremity of tyranny is silent and asocial: Cyclopic, Thrasymachan. Society is the invention of lesser beings. This is why Socrates says of the tyrant that "his desires get no kind of satisfaction" (579e) and that his vices—faithlessness, injustice, friendlessness, and impiety (580a)—far exceed those of the alpha gorilla; his will is to excise humanity; one or another mouth in his soul gets fed, but these are hardly *human* desires anymore. This rule of a soul by the spirited part attempting to become disconnected from reason is an essentially human possibility, but its depths require the removal of reason: figuratively, the death of Socrates in the polis; absolute unspeakable madness in the individual. That, at any rate, is the mathematically ideal endpoint of this regime. One may cheer for it, but it is not possible to sing its praises.

The geometrical relations we have been exhibiting show a significant difference between the *thymos* in the tyrant and that in the timocrat. *Thymos* is *thymos*, but the *thymos* of the timocrat has some connection to reason, like Achilles' indignation, which has some rationale and justice behind it, rising out of the socially accepted good about which our praise-songs sing; Achilles speaks of it in no uncertain terms and does not get a rational argument exhibiting that his position is mistaken—in fact, Agamemnon merely expresses his will to take (*Il.* 1: 120–165). In this face-off of timocrat versus tyrant, the tyrant wins the first battle; but if he has a larger war he wants to win, he has to moderate his *thymos* toward one who has desert and something closer to real courage—someone who is *by nature* superior.⁴⁹ Eventually Agamemnon caves. In the true extremity of tyranny, such an orientation to a future reality is not possible, for *thymos* has no such connection nor does it want or see one (for only reason can see to tomorrow). It is more like an animal anger, savageness (410d), slaying any desire that admits of shame (573b) or temporizes with its order. That latter passion (shame) was available to (and notable in) the timocrat, but the true tyrant would utterly extinguish it. That Thrasymachus blushes (350d), and remains through the night (and speaks) indicates that he is not yet what he dreams of being. If *thymos* is "the political passion, the passion whereby every political good is gained,"⁵⁰ under the tyrannic geometry *thymos* eats the very ground of politics, for it

starves all the other parts of the soul and the city, or drives them out. Thus Haemon's summary judgment on his father is fitting: "You would rule well—in a desert" (*Antigone*, 739).

A Still Finer Constitution: R/D/S

The "four worse forms" have now been laid out as they devolve from what has been taken as the best through most of the *Republic*. Glaucon's inordinate desires led the way down: he cut the investigation of the healthy regime off before the question about justice could be fully answered using it as a model. That the city built there was a model of piety seems obvious. Socrates can't discuss justice in its proper place (under piety, formed to piety, in the healthy rather than the medicinal city) because it tastes thin. He must use a medicine first; perhaps he himself must be the medicine. The city of the philosopher kings, which most of *Republic* is at pains to set up, is therefore *already a political compromise between the truly healthy city and the more polymorphous eros of the young and wealthy scion of a democratic city*. Glaucon, however, has now come to consider that a type of "still finer" regime remains (544a).⁵¹ His geometric outline predicts a soul in which desire arises directly and only out of reason's vision of the good (so R/D/S); this regime does not need *thymos* to keep desire in line or arouse it where it is lacking (as the aristocratic R/S/D order). This is the *true* "emancipation of desire," which Bloom argued was necessary for a human being;⁵² other uses of the phrase—including Bloom's—have not got the proper measure of freedom; they consider desire on a line that is insufficient for the human being's natural measure, which natural measure exceeds all mere appetite. If desire arises *only* under reason's recognition of the good, *every* desire which arises is the free fulfillment of our natural good. Thus does emancipation differ from license.

Before speaking of this finer and truer measure in detail however, we might now ask where the luxurious city stands—for certainly it must be among the worse forms. Glaucon's demand for quite a bit more than bread marks the city of luxury—with perfume, incense, courtesans and cakes, many sorts of many (373a)—both as a regular "general store" (557d) for the desires, and as "a bulky mass" (373b, cf. 555d); so, something turning between democracy and oligarchy. Perhaps a place which alternates between them at fairly regular intervals—or, to join them into one: a rich democracy or a loose oligarchy—there is no law regarding a wealth requirement for political office, but . . . historical examples are neither hard to find nor very distant. For Glaucon and for us, this city is what's "conventional" (372d); for such feverish citizens in love with their feverish cities—as Glaucon confesses himself to be—*Republic* is the poem Plato prescribes. In any case, there is

no reason to suspect the city of luxury is only one step below the purging city *kallipolis* instantiates, still less that it is only one step below health.

There is no settled scholarly view about what regime this luxurious city is. Indeed, the details of its political rule are never given by Socrates; rather, after adding all the additional Glauconic conventionalities—the prostitutes and pastries which necessitate war—Socrates begins straightaway with his purifications. I suppose Plato's vagueness here allows a citizen of any earthly city to take up and read. Besides oligarchy and democracy, I suppose anyone under a tyranny would recognize Glaucon's complaints (if he could find *Republic*) as those of the tyrant—who must have pastries, prostitutes, cooks and perfumers (many kinds of many of them)—and many will have to die to secure them. Perhaps a timocratic political regime as well can be recognized here—certainly part of the honors of going to war (and winning) are the girls and gold one receives as the award for valor—ask Achilles. Or ask our athletic heroes. So, say Plato means that the regime Glaucon loves first is our own, whatever that is. Because of this inordinate love (which is conventional for the conventional, produced without his awareness while yet a child, through mimesis), he cannot see what justice is, much less how to defend it truly. What is surprising and divine about him (368a) is that he *wants to know* justice and defend it truly, and he thinks what he has been hearing is mistaken. What else but something divine (368a) could be the condition for the possibility of wanting something one does not know? It is true that for mimetic beings some desires are engendered by mimesis. Is this one? But what, in all of Athens, are the sons of Ariston imitating in raising their demand for a defense of justice?

Returning to the finer regime: Glaucon's phrase—still fairer (*kalliô*, 543d)—has had several different interpretations. Ferrari says that this is

not simply a man of healthy soul, but the philosopher who both rules and resembles Callipolis. . . . The philosopher too has a healthy soul, of course. But true virtue does not end for him in health of the soul. . . . The reasoning element in him is directed at something greater and more godlike than the inner politics [of his soul].⁵³

But this does not give us either a finer regime of city or of soul, for *kallipolis* already has the philosopher as king (he “rules and resembles” it) and he is already aimed at something more godlike than inner politics, for he aims at the city's good. According to Socrates' story, he is forced to go down to *kallipolis* to rule (539e–540c), despite himself having an idea of some finer life. This fact of being forced, however, belies the statement that either the philosopher or the *kallipolis* he rules is “healthy of course.” The philosopher king is still distinct from a healthy soul in the true and healthy city at least in the fact that he *must rule* in *kallipolis*; if *kallipolis* were the healthy city, it

should, like the healthy soul, rule itself—according to its own unforced nature.⁵⁴ The philosopher king is the aristocratic order Socrates has described, whose *aim* is a healthy city (hence his purging and need for the policing silver); what he aims at must be *finer* than what and where he is (which yet resembles what he is): what can that “greater and more godlike” regime look like? Nor does becoming king make the regime of the aristocratic philosopher’s *soul* better (or worse) than it was, though that soul will, in *kallipolis*, have superior *effectiveness* than Socrates, for example, had in either Athens, the democracy, or Athens, the oligarchy. If he is rightly directed toward something greater and more godlike than what he is, what he presently is cannot be the true measure of the good of his nature or health; if he is a philosopher, he would know this. Our geometry shows what that finer, greater and more godlike nature is.

Some suggest that the “better regime” Glaucon sees at the start of Eight is exactly what books 5 through 7 were exploring in giving the further education of the philosophers. For example, Eva Brann says that the introduction of the philosopher king at 473c requires a new city, as indicated by Socrates’ later remark that “our former selection picked old men, but in this one that isn’t admissible” (536c).⁵⁵ However, the “former selection” Socrates is talking about is a selection (after and through the educational musico-gymnastic process the kallipolic children go through) of those who have proven the best through constant testing of their capacities; we would want the oldest and most tested of these to have control of our city—they are the true guardians, the others remain their helpers. But having succeeded so far as that education outlined seems insufficient (and that seeming becomes huge in the approach of the third wave), for they have only succeeded insofar as they have been trained mimetically (through music and gymnastic); they have “virtue by habit, without philosophy” (619d). This is not something to be discounted, but it is also not to be counted as the perfected human form or even the best choice that we may expect to be available. It seems this education ends in a rather “dogmatic” reason, operating like the “political courage,” which “preserves through everything the right and lawful opinion about what is terrible” (430b, c). Insofar as the interlocutors have come this far, by the end of book 4 they have all been raised up above their ordinary Athenian imagination.

There is, then, something true, but also something inexact, in differentiating these two educations and two choices of leaders (between book 4 and book 7) so strongly as to think they build different cities. It is true that the earlier education sounds “dogmatic,” but this is because the gymnastic and music which are its curriculum is purposefully mimetic. Further, it seems this must be given to all, for we must find which of the coming generation are gold, silver and bronze. The purpose of this mimetic education is laid out in no uncertain terms by Socrates. Only those properly prepared through the mimetic practices summarized as music and gymnastic *can become* true

philosophers; only they have taken our city's music to heart, so are *able to hear* of the good their further scientific and mathematical education leads into more exactly. "Then, when reasonable speech comes, the man who was reared in this way would take most delight in it, recognizing its kinship" (402a). Socrates is clearly not, in his later extension of education, thinking that our young mathematicians, geometers, solid geometers and astronomers should be made the kings either; the point is, rather, that while still young we must choose those who prove apt through their earliest exercises and musical studies to immerse in these further, more difficult but still preparatory, studies. This pushes the age of the most thoroughly educated and tested—that is, the true guardians—back further than what would be the case were gymnastic and music considered sufficient education for ruling. If the third wave is that which will "carry him to his Phaeacia,"⁵⁶ it must be the same Phaeacia toward which Socrates has been tending all along.

Secondly, it does not seem to me that this first education is entirely or merely mimetic; indeed, since it uses language, it has within it that which dialectic itself uses. More exactly, language is itself dialectical, for each word means what it means through opposition to all the others. In different regime caves all moral terms have distinct differential orderings. To enter language, then, is to enter a dialectical system, though one does not thereby know how it is working. Though Socrates does not say that this early education is precisely dialectical, indeed the use of such falls into eristic most quickly among the young (454a–b), it seems that one test he proposes for the young would require more than mere mimetic habit. He suggests that we test whether our youthful gold and silver can be "robbed" of their true opinion, "persuaded to change" by a *logos* which takes it away (413b). Indeed, he says we must, "straight from childhood," set them to tasks in which one would most likely be "deceived out of such conviction," choosing that one who is hard to deceive (413c). It is false reasoning which must be found out here. While such a well-tested one is unlikely to "proceed with unflinching reason through a battle of refutations," since he is as yet "unable to distinguish the form of the good in discourse" (534b), his mimetic education has been such as to open him up toward the good so that it may work through him despite his, or his cave's, dialectical inadequacies. The sons of Ariston prove to have done so against the deafening speeches of Thrasymachus and many like him at the start of book 2—and they also feel their dialectical inadequacy. Something divine is happening (368a). So, this education cannot be merely mimetic, though mimesis is its origin and driving power; nor does this part of the education achieve divine perfection of knowledge, though something divine is working through it.

Finally, the issue of the "two educations" is made more complex by the dramatic requirements; Plato is not merely talking directly to us about regimes and educations, but discussing the matter with souls who are not

healthy but need a (considerable) catharsis in order to enable them to come into health or even see what it is. We have already argued (chapter 3 and interlude), that Socrates notices the wide-ranging, indeed almost piggish, eros around (and within) him; we see Plato structurally organize eros into three broad aims—conversation (logos), honor/victory, and bodily desires—from the very first scene (on the road). The polymorpheity of eros, only explicitly brought out at the beginning of Nine, is operating within the discussion from the start. So we have this strange contradiction that Plato shows us reason and *thymos* (as well as desire) having their particular desires and pleasures from the beginning, but Socrates only admits that each part has its desire and pleasure near the end (580d–581d).

As suggested in the Interlude, this structural process of uncovering the truth about soul and city—by which I mean that what is operative at the beginning is only set forth explicitly later—does not result in philosophical contradiction, but is part of the way Socrates cures and Plato exhibits the cure. In order for any human being to begin to listen (327c) to reason, much less grow into desiring its pleasure, our wildly polymorphous eros must be calmed, purged, penned.⁵⁷ When Socrates first starts laying out the tri-partition thesis he is conceptually accomplishing the latter. He knows that eros is polymorphous, that at any time nearly anything could suddenly appear as that which must be pursued: a horserace (328a), an argument about the status of justice (357a–b), relishes (371c), courtesans and cakes (373a), gold and silver (419a)—perhaps even regardless of consequences, like war (373d–e). Coming to anything worthwhile out of this polymorpheity requires, besides calming and purging, a preliminary penning, a broad kind of sorting, a preliminary eidetic. So Socrates begins with the general principle, “the soul of a man who desires either longs for what it desires or embraces that which it wants to become its own” (437c).⁵⁸ When he continues, “we say there is a form of desires” (*epithumiôn ti phêsomen einai eidos*) of which hunger and thirst are the most vivid (437d), he isn’t denying there are other desires, nor is it the case that “out of nowhere desire is bestialized”⁵⁹—even though somewhat later he says that this part “leads [the soul] like a beast” (439b); rather, Socrates sequesters those desires which “are the companion of certain replenishments and pleasures” (439d). He uses precisely this marker (replenishment) to pick out the same bodily pleasures when he returns to the richer story about eros in 583b–585b. These desires and pleasures are shared with beasts, but they are only one *eidos* of desire, and in the human being they *are not* apart from reason, for they exist in a soul with *logos*.

This analogy to beasts recalls Glaucon’s complaint about the healthy city—it is a city for pigs he says, and he adds considerably to its edibles and mountables, but he certainly does not add philosophy, though he does assent to gold, ivory, and beauticians (which may have something to do with desire for honor—of a certain sort). The man who is quick to affirm that prostitutes

and pastries are necessary for a truly happy city—even if achieving (and holding) them requires war—and who calls a less motivated city swinish, has already confessed to a significant herd of that kind of pleasure which operates between fullness and deficiency. He has not confessed to anything higher there; therefore these are not unfairly penned together. Perhaps an animal comedy can help cure him.

This seemingly extreme penning of “desire” into the body’s replenishing and emptying also severely constricts reason; it is mere calculation (and it is called so—*logistikon*), not itself a desire for truth in the light of the good.⁶⁰ This penning also orients the operation of the next part—*thymos*. By bringing in the analogy of desire to the beasts, Socrates begins turning anyone who considers “beast” a pejorative and dishonorable term away from enchantment by such desires. At least if Glaucon is going to be a kind of beast, he will want to be the more noble dog. Using *thymos* to straiten desire within the cloak honored by *nomos* is required for all cities. Socrates sets precisely that treatment in motion. The pig in Glaucon (and other interlocutors) has been penned as lower, by the dog. So then, Charles Kahn is correct in saying that “Plato could not present his full strength conception of the rule of reason in book 4, before the appearance of philosophy,”⁶¹ for Socrates can’t bring in philosophy until the souls of his interlocutors have been brought up (through the mimetic education and regime they shape in speech) to begin to hear its voice. To do this the pigs must be penned and the dogs trained into noble obedience in the barnyard of the soul (and the barnyard of souls participating in the discussion). The later education of book 7 is not, then, forming a new city or educational operation, but it is something that *can* only come up—and only really be wanted—after the music, gymnastic and comic catharses provided in and through the discussion have done their work—which is where it does come up. Only after feeding “the desiring part in such a way that it is neither in want nor surfeited,” and after soothing “the spirited part in the same way,” and so having “silenced these two forms” (571e–572a), can a human soul begin to listen to arguments, much less provide proofs. Plato shows us Socrates performing this surfeiting and silencing, which is also a surfeiting and silencing of his own barnyard soul. There is, to be sure, a difference between the two educations in books 4 and 7, and neither they nor the psychology of their respective books can be “simply blended”—rather, “the contrast between them is an important sign of the development” of the characters in the *Republic*.⁶² It is a development in which (as shown in the noble lie) there is significant truth in the early story, which truth is seen more perfectly after being purified by the lie and entering into what the lie encourages. The noble lie applied to soul also has something false—in this case, that human desire simply is animal wallow and surfeit while reason is an an erotic calculative power (as Hume’s, e.g.); but this very lie is an aid to coming into the fuller truth about the soul, for it begins turning the deluded

toward the true measure of things in the light of the good. It should be noted that even in spite of this early eidetic penning, desire, particularly sexual desire, keeps breaking into the dialogue, threatening to founder the entire discussion, and requiring more and stronger *pharmaka* from Socrates.

If the “two educations” are dramatically and developmentally so related, then Rosen is correct that Brann’s understanding of the “fourth city” (health, luxury, one educating Adeimantus, Kallipolis educating Glaucon) should be ruled out.⁶³ While it is possible to read the Polemarchus-Adeimantus interruption concerning the sharing of spouses and its introduction of the philosopher king as envisioning a new regime (or beginning a new education or requiring a new psychology), it is not at all necessary to do so and it is more in keeping with the unity of *Republic* and the dramatized education of its characters not to do so. The Polemarchan question opening book 5 clearly arises from the city Socrates considers he has finished building with Glaucon and Adeimantus.⁶⁴ They are questions “about the regime I was delighted to think had already been described” (450a). Nothing from that regime gets organized differently in what follows, though Socrates does have to get more detailed (“like men telling tales within a tale and at their leisure,” 376d) about both the sexual and the rational. Before the interruption takes place Socrates explicitly says that whether we call the regime a kingship or an aristocracy will not matter (445d). No new order of soul or city is set up; no new virtues investigated. There are three cities: health, luxury, *kallipolis* aristocracy. The only hint Socrates ever gives of there being a further city is the very explicit remark in book 2 (372e). It was there that Glaucon *aborted the discussion of the healthy and true* in favor of fever and luxury, which is purged in attaining the so-called *kallipolis*.⁶⁵ At 371e Socrates had asked Adeimantus whether “our city” was complete, and where justice appears in it; Glaucon interrupts. I suggest that Glaucon now sees that it was he himself who aborted Socrates’ discussion of the “still finer regime.” It was his over-active desire and spirit, in its “lack of education” (514a), that considered the healthy regime—under his own very mixed light of the desires of *thymos* and *epithymia*—to be utterly inadequate. And of course health is inadequate—when seen under that light.

Under the light of the Good things look different. In presenting this sixth regime I agree with Roochnik, Bloom and others that “*the* problem Kallipolis is meant to resolve, and thus the problem of political philosophy itself, is precisely the socialization of those citizens who have spirit and desire more than is necessary;”⁶⁶ but we must suppose, then, that there is a possible regime of soul which *is cured* of precisely that problem: what then? What does that regime look like? Such a regime would no longer be a cure for a problem; it would no longer require, or be, a *pharmakon* and verbal lie, but the true city of the undeluded. There is good reason to think that a regime that is brought into being out of sickness in order to cure that sickness is not

the same thing at all as the regime of health. In fact there are two: 1) *kallipolis* rises out of sickness and luxury, and 2) it is pointedly *invented and presented as a cure*. Health must be distinct from this; any presumed identity of *kallipolis* with health must be argued for against these two rather stark facts. Socrates never considers that city to be his, healthy, or true: “your city would now be founded” (427c) addressed to Adeimantus closes the interruption begun by Glaucon and “your beautiful city” must study geometry (527a) addressed to Glaucon considers the education Socrates must detail due to Adeimantus’ voicing of Polemarchus’ interruption at the start of Five; he only calls “our city” the one filled out at 371c, whose happiness ends with Glaucon’s piggy interruption (372c–d). Thus Socrates weaves together a city with and for the interrupters of his speech, which he hopes will bring them into the healthy and true.⁶⁷ But that weaving is not itself the truth—its *ergon* is to work us toward that. Only when the soul is properly turned and tuned can it see and hear what is true. “True,” “healthy,” and “ours” all pick out the same regime.

The healthy regime must, then, be that organization of soul in which, as soon as reason sees the good, desire is aroused and aims to achieve it. In it desire is not active otherwise than under reason’s vision:⁶⁸ a soul “which needs no whip” (*Phaedrus* 253d), and is its own bridle. This healthy soul might be most adequately described, then, by the *Laws*’ dictum that “the *unforced* rule of law over willing subjects” is most natural (690c), and that true self allows the easily broken but noble golden cord of judgment, “free from violence,” to prevail over the other cords of the divine puppet which we are (645a,b). These descriptions are clearly *superior to* the aristocratic regime, which requires the violence, or threat thereof, from *thymos*/the auxiliaries to keep some desires in check, or spur the inadequate on. The healthy soul, we might say, has custody of its many eyes; it is a kind of custody different from that which would be illustrated by Leontius *even if his reason and spirit won out against his desire*—which does not happen (439e). This difference between aristocratic and divine regimes is analogous to the difference between the morally strong and the fully virtuous in Aristotle (*NE*, 7.1, 7.7, 7.9).

Such a perfected (Phaeacian) soul neither has to look around the desires of *thymos* or *epithymia* to divine a good (as all the lower souls), nor does it have to *rein in* or spur on desire by the help of *thymos* (as the aristocrat). It sees all things as the god sees them—in the light of the good; and only in this light does it desire, choose, move, accept, refuse or fight.⁶⁹ The *intramural* polity of the more perfect soul will not need much *thymos*,⁷⁰ for in that soul desire itself will be quick to follow reason—and will only arise under reason; *that is already victory* and the most honorable way for the soul to be—as reason can see.⁷¹ Nor will any externally validated victory or reputation be considered worthwhile by such a soul except that it appear so in the full light

of the good, and then it is *not the reputation* or the victory that validates, but *the good* which is sought: reputation and victory in the world may come along—or not. And it is, in one way, of little matter whether reputation and victory do come along, or whether crucifixion comes of it. We cannot say it matters not at all to this good man whether the good man's end is achieved in the world, for this man knows his place is inescapably the world of other human beings, and that their happiness, too, depends on his success, for to become more divine is the perfection of the human. So, on the other hand, it makes all the difference in the world and to the world whether or not such a one does come to be and be king. We can say that the result in terms of acclamation is not this soul's concern; but that result is also not entirely within his power, for he does not have the immediate obedience of all citizens as Alkinoos did (and as a man ought to have in his soul). It is this "still finer" regime of city to which he directs all his power—set up in heaven though it be (592b). Such a soul, in other words, will not be charmed through mimesis to compete for the goods acclaimed by the theatre of others. His *thymos* has no such independence as to be so mimetically entranced, but is responsive to reason and the desires aroused thereby. We might imagine such a soul as a chariot with two horses: a white one which can only see things under the sun of the good, and a more powerful black one that is entirely obedient to the charioteer, and beats with the same rhythm as the wings of its more divine partner. This "still finer" man knows he needs divine help if his project is to succeed in the world: not only is he not self-sufficient, neither is all humanity.

We see, then, how this soul paradigm, wherein *thymos* wanes, is superior to the aristocrat, in whom *thymos* is second. We have not yet, however, settled in the Islands of the Blest (519c, 540b), or Phaeacia. So, until the world is perfect, that is, *in every earthly city*, spiritedness will still be necessary in interaction with other souls who are not yet so perfect, for one needs to achieve victory over them—and for their own sake as Socrates argues (590d). This is not a seeking after acclamation, but it is a seeking after victory—a quieter form of courage, for the victory (being in the soul) is invisible to all eyes. This courage is shown by the philosopher who goes back down into the cave, where he knows the chances of being scourged and having his eyes burned out are rather good. The culture's mimetism and his own mimetic nature militates even against his own soul's continued success. In every human city we see *thymos* is indeed the necessary *political* passion: the aristocratic soul, with its reason inspired *thymos*, is necessary in the political world of imperfection. It will be necessary so long as there are delusions about. We may pray that in a better world than this we may have more love and knowledge of each other, but until such time the aristocratic regime is the best we can achieve. Presently, *thymos* allows one to face the wild beasts (336d) when reason sees that it would be good to do so; on other

occasions, *thymos* will not be roused, but the person will just duck behind a wall and wait for the sandstorm to abate. Courage is needed to face the difficulties others raise, as Socrates says and shows (368b, 450c–451b, 474a,b). *Thymos* here follows the bidding of reason, pulling with the *eros* which is more divine, linking knowledge and love for a rational good that is endangered (justice, e.g.) because this soul is in, and surrounded by, multifarious regimes of imperfection organized around multifarious delusive opinions about the good. Such surrounding imperfections underwrite, in a mimetic being, possibilities of infection, which is why Socrates is so careful about the entire cultural edifice within which the children are to be raised. *Thymos* must be mimetically trained, through music and gymnastic, to resist such infection, and to aid reason in fighting it off.

The geometry of the “still finer” soul, then, takes us back to the simple city, “the healthy and true city,” with which Socrates began his argument; this is the sustainable city in which each contributes according to his ability and takes what he needs, the city in which, because of their mutual and mutually recognized dependency and contribution, there is mutual respect rather than competition for honor, and in which the citizens “will have sweet intercourse with one another, and not produce children beyond their means, keeping an eye out against poverty or war” (372b). It is the city where human beings recognize their complete interdependence, and live it out in truth, rather than delusively operating as independent deities joined only by a mythical contract. This truth runs mimetically through the whole city, so that the children are from the first, and in everything, taken up by it, rather than growing into the infection of possessive individualism.

It is a frequent and famous complaint to think that neither Socrates nor Plato is serious about that first city.⁷² Bloom holds that it is “obviously impossible” and that the fact Socrates calls it “true” does not imply “that he thinks it could come into being or that he would wish it to do so.”⁷³ Glaucon—in book 2—(and many others outside that book) find it undesirable, for they find in it no politics, no *eros* or striving, no education, no philosophy, and no meat. Some also say it neither has nor can have poets.⁷⁴ Such critics as these take it for granted that we all “require more than life, [we] demand unnecessary refinements and pleasures.”⁷⁵ These Glaucons find no satisfaction in the healthy city and a Socrates could not live there, they say.

Such statements may be taken as confessional, but they need not be accepted as true. The complainers take it for granted that Socrates does not think that every human being needs wisdom, that every human soul has a part which desires it, and that this healthy city’s use of leisure (which leisure it achieves quickly) is limited to feasting, drinking and singing. To take 372b–d so literally is to understand it already as a city of pigs, but if that is the case Glaucon’s additions hardly make it human. The idea that the first city really is “a city of sows concerned only with the banausic arts and their ends:

simple material needs”⁷⁶ misses the point that the joys of that first city—hymning the gods and sweet intercourse (372b)—need not, and ought not, be read as reducing human desire, much less eros, to the cynical (that is, dog-like) level required for Glaucon’s cure in what follows. To say that eros “longs for more than the pedestrian sorts of satisfactions serviced by the banausic arts,” is true. To continue by adding, “it craves luxuries” is still quite insufficient for the true view of eros.⁷⁷ Luxury is not one of the Olympians. The more Platonic eros (of *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, say) generally requires not more things, but higher—sweet intercourse of souls, communion with the divine, or, that being barred, meditation upon and praise for that ungraspable good. It should be noticed that Glaucon’s cravings at the point of his first interruption do not exceed banausis; they merely increase it. If Glaucon is “put off by the low and boring quality of the desires served by the banausic arts,”⁷⁸ his additions do not make the city much less banausic—though it is less boring. Besides carpenters, shoemakers and smiths, he needs jewelers, pastry chefs, wet nurses, perfumers and prostitutes—many kinds of many of them. He also introduces the excitements of war. Let us not be deceived by the fineness of the tools, or the finesse of the practices, or the many exciting results into denying they are the same sort of arts, running toward the same sort of pleasures (those associated with pains) even if their ends are outside necessity’s demands and smoother on the fingers or the tongue, or . . . whatever. I suppose this term—banausic—is one with a shifting measure: shall we call the *technai* of cakery and courtesanship banausic arts, or fine ones? Or are they all merely forms of “flattery,” perhaps knavish embellishment (*Gorgias* 465b)? One *unmentioned* result of all this busyness and extraneous making is that there is considerably *less* time and devotion to the leisure the original city enjoyed in its perfectly unproductive pleasures of feasting together with their children, sweet intercourse, and hymning the gods. Thus do the practices of piety cease and the dust of the market come to cover all things. Note also that these three original pleasures are themselves a not completely washed out version of Diotima’s ladder of erotic satisfactions: bodies, souls, the divine ideas (*Symp* 210–212). The *mentioned and necessary* results of the new arts and products are disease and war (373c,d):—clearly this is happier! How could we live without them?

Even if it seems to him that it is more *honorable* to possess (or have his city possess) so much more than is necessary, note that his honor is measured in the same banausic way. Glaucon’s complaint is the foundation of consumer culture, and it requires *abandonment* of the city originally oriented to communal praise of the gods: Abandon piety all ye who enter here. In luxury we all have distinct and unshared mansions housing our cakes and priestesses of Aphrodite. Glaucon’s desires imply “a foolish adolescent idea of happiness” (466b) which a more fully developed love will find not merely insufficient, but ridiculous—or perhaps to be pitied. It is important for what follows

that we notice Socrates has provided a shadowy figure of Diotimic eros in the healthy city, and that Glaucon (among others) misses it. Though Glaucon does add a considerable number of pleasures, *he does not affirm the addition of philosophy but of courtesans and cakes; he does not add politicians but swineherds*. Glaucon adds no desire notably higher than bodily pleasure (which he merely enlarges)—the lowest level of Diotima's ladder. Apparently, proper leisure is eating bonbons in the well-appointed house on Red Light Street, with police protection against the unwashed breaking in to disturb enjoyment; now that sounds truly civilized.

Sed contra, whether our true and healthy city will come into being or not may be for a god to answer, but its desirability is certain, and for it we ought to fight. There is clearly a politics in that first healthy city, though there are no politicians—but who would consider that a terrible loss? Politics and law as *we* have it are necessary for people who are unjust,⁷⁹ but Socrates built this original regime *to exhibit perfect justice* and if these souls desire nothing except under the light of the good, and each of these *admittedly incomplete* beings minds his own business by contributing according to his talents and taking what he needs (both of which he understands clearly) there would be no injustice among them. Their mutual and recognized dependence on and need for each other further guarantees their mutual respect and concern; and their children mimetically participate in all these goods from their first days. Under such conditions what further external political guidance is necessary? *Law* is as unnecessary here as the legalistic minutiae of markets and harbors is among the aristocrats (435d), but to consider that these citizens have no essential relations as a social, political and economic community is absolutely false; their essential relation was the *archê* of Socrates' city. Freedom with perfect justice is a political relation, one which aims at and achieves the common good.⁸⁰

There is also clearly an eros in that first city, most certainly since, as book 9 says, each part of the soul has its own kind of love. The primary love of everyone in this healthy regime is for knowledge under the light of the good, so far as each is capable. Socrates admits that some may have been given but small capability by nature (371e); he does not, however, make even these men slaves. The cave is open across its entire width; all are participating in the praise of the gods insofar as they are able. Thus, there is a place in the liturgy of *Republic* for all; several named people are silent throughout, but as they participate in *logos*, so they participate also in the liturgy Socrates performs at the first festival of Bendis. To hear and follow may be the best they can attain now, but this too is a participation in the common and highest human good: praise of the goddess in sweet intercourse. With this eros leading, other *erôtes* will develop as their objects are seen to be healthy, good, necessary; each soul, seeing his work is such for all, will love it (and improve it); thus even in work will be praising the god and remaining in sweet inter-

course with all others. Each, through his education and upbringing, will find what he is good at, what work he can accomplish for the good of his family and society. Such would be a regime in which desire is limited only by, because subject to, the desire for wisdom, which desire all have, and by which they all desire to live. That there is no competitive striving visible in Socrates' description of this city is further confirmation of the low place of *thymos* in this "still better" regime, and that the paradigmatic geometry I have assigned to it is true. The idea that there is no philosophy, no poetry and so no place for a Socrates (or Plato) presumes that by "hymning the gods" Socrates means only and literally singing praise songs—but even this much (so far as any Greek of the time would consider) requires a Homer (or perhaps a Plato) who writes such Homeric hymns to Zeus, Apollo—or perhaps Bendis. Perhaps Plato's poems fulfill Socrates' claim to an appropriately named Theodorus: the philosopher is he who best knows how to "tune the strings of speech to fitting praise of the gods and happy men" (*Theaet* 176a). If the healthy city is hymning the gods in a true way (a way, perhaps, more suitable than either Thracians or Athenians, 327a), then they are all following philosophy, as here, in this room, now.

Further, Plato clearly thinks that the choral arts are an adjuvant medicine and education as we have discussed earlier, and that even *if we were healthy* and serious (rather than sickly and needing education) "every man and woman should spend life . . . playing the noblest possible games" (*Laws* 803d). It is unlikely that he considers draughts or any glass bead game other than philosophy to be that noblest game or best hymn to the gods. Socrates, we might say, is the priest in this society; his idea of the right festival for a god or goddess is *being enacted* even as we read *Republic*. In the best city, all souls would be similarly *structured*; and though they might not have so much skill, or natural giftedness, in dialectic or in poetry, it is their love of wisdom which leads them through life, and keeps them celebrating together the goodness of the god.

Socrates is reforming his interlocutors—even Cleitophon and several silent others—as members of this healthy and true society by leading them in the procession we are reading. And Plato is leading *us* there through his mimesis. In the healthy city every necessary thing was "plentiful, finer and easier" (370c) due to their division of labor according to nature, so they are quickly faced with the question of the proper and just use of their accompanying leisure, of which there will be much. What should be done with human leisure? Partying in Piraeus was Polemarchus' suggestion; prostitutes and pastries are the early Glaucon's. The "sweet intercourse" of the dialogues are Plato's answer to that question; he spent his life proving that was his answer; he seems unwilling to live with any other city in mind than one which praises the god(dess) in this way. Socrates' activity in Athens was his answer, and the activity Socrates is portrayed as practicing at the festival of Bendis is

Republic's answer. *Republic's* educational laws, as well as its mimetic construction, aim at making all human beings (who can read or be read to) into philosophers, and philosophers “as divine as is possible for man” (501d). Philosophy is both the way to, and the truth of, the best life. These dialogues are his hymns. We find we are singing appropriately so long as we continue in this pattern we have been practicing.

Nor is this healthy city's eros entirely detached from the body. It seems plausible that this city will have meat; clearly it has sexual activity—a self-limiting one, “keeping an eye out against poverty or war” (372c). Socrates says they will plant barley, wheat (using oxen?) and have cheese (372bc), so they must have goats, sheep or cows—in fact he says so (370d);⁸¹ they do not, it seems, have pork chops, but perhaps his addition that “we are going to need swineherds” (373c) in the city of Glaucon's appetitive invention is to be taken as a political metaphor for what Glaucon's more wide-ranging eros and invention require, not merely a dietary supplement.⁸² Glaucon's regime (of soul and city) apparently needs an external swineherd—an internal one would be preferable, and is presently lacking. The cure needed by his ‘requirements’ will have to build one up in him, or excise some of his more omnivorous heads. The “sweet intercourse” (*hêdeôs tsunontes allêlois*, 372b) of these citizens with one another ties all together, for besides the sexual or erotic this phrase is equally applicable to coming together in speech, as the interlocutors of *Republic* did last night. —And as we are doing here, called together by Plato.

Socrates knows he does not live in such a perfect city, but he wishes to get there, and it is not Socrates who thinks theory is less adequate than practice (473). We get there by working through the difficulties and dangers of our less perfect regimes—which, *mirabile dictu*, we have been doing for some time now. Because of the dangers, particularly the danger of falling into mimetic desire after the pattern of the many less well organized souls, the reasoning part of the soul needs the alliance with an obedient *thymos* while in the world of less fine regimes, while surrounded by souls which are not the best—itsself not the best. The achievement of the difficult good requires this more irascible passion; that is to say, a soul in which *thymos* plays a greater role. Perhaps our target regime doesn't exist anywhere on earth, but it may still be the pattern laid up in heaven (or Phaeacia) for the one who knows how to look (592b). In this healthy city only could we imagine the perfect soul's happiness, for all of the other souls in it are equally perfectly ordered. And this can be so without denying distinction in their talents or the existence of each soul with its body. That this city's sweet intercourse is more than sexual, and that their hymns to the gods are exactly the sort of hymn Socrates is leading these young men in at the first festival of Bendis is *demonstrated in the action of Republic*. See what Socrates does to celebrate the new goddess: He does not *argue that* such philosophical relays as he

engenders are the most proper hymn to the goddess, he *practices* it, and *produces* it in, charms it forth from, the community he is in at the time; including the community reading *Republic* over two millennia later. Now that's a horse race! Handing on the light into the darkness of the future, in a mimetic machinery which instigates each to light his own torch. This is the proper liturgy for *anthropos*.

Thus the character of Socrates in the dialogues exhibits that justice is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the good while holiness is its *ratio essendi*: Socrates exhibits his friendship for all (335d–e) by attempting to lead them to the justice each needs (and needs to know) to be happy and, according to *Ap* 21–23, this is his assignment from the god; one which he piously fulfills. Socrates' life in Athens (according to Plato) and his continued life in Plato's dialogues is the instantiation of this real indivisibility of justice and holiness against the false dilemma he presents in, and equally false passions exhibited by, the ironically named *Euthyphro* (the good god's judgment, or good as god's judgment). A Platonic dialogue instantiates just such a liturgical act: the proper torch-passing horse race is the one from soul to soul—the mimetic induction of divine virtue, which, “if it should catch on,” would “make plain that the rest of natures and pursuits are merely human, but this one was godlike all along in its very being” (496c). A later Platonist will call the polity thus produced, whose eternal act is one of rational praise, the City of God, and note that our hearts are restless until they rest there.

So be it.

NOTES

1. Recently, Stanley Rosen (*Plato's Republic*, 306) reiterated the received view: “this city [they have been building] is the only good and correct city and regime; the other four kinds and their associated souls are all bad and flawed.”

2. As Adam (*The Republic of Plato*), Barker (*Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*) and Walsh (“Plato and the Philosophy of History: History and Theory in *Republic*,” *History and Theory* 2,1 (1962): 3–16) among many others have noted, there seems a clear logical order to the five regimes. This “logic” has been taken in various ways: as strictly historicist—by Aristotle (*Pol* 5) and Popper (*The Open Society and Its Enemies*), for example; as quasi-historical by Barker (177), by Adam as psychological, by Walsh as an attempt on Plato's part “to treat politics as a theoretical science” (10) like ballistics or economics in which the actual movement of regimes will be given significant explication by what ought to occur in theory even when it is not historically and materially exact. What follows is closer to Walsh, though he fails to give any mathematical underpinning to the science he imagines Plato has in mind. Further, I do not think Socrates is giving us the *theory* in Eight; rather its imaginatively real results.

3. Burger notes that the soul is not said to have parts until Socrates speaks of the virtues (442b–c), until then (in the psychology proper) forms of *eidōs* are used. This is noticeably true, though I do not think it is for the reason she gives: “there is no talk of parts because there is no whole. Desire and reason will be understood as essentially in conflict” (“The Thumotic Soul,” 153). These two are not *essentially* in conflict. Socrates says only “we assert that *sometimes* there are *some* men who are thirsty but not willing to drink” (439c); the whole is presumed, Socrates is showing how it “looks” like contradictory things are going on in it (being thirsty and being willing), particularly visible when it disagrees with itself.

4. This, of course, implies that readers who think Plato is a serious philosopher should understand me as developing an argument Plato seems to have neglected—unless, perhaps, he purposely left it blank as a test for his readers.

5. Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, 407–410. This position may be considered true by acclamation.

6. For the best and most complete view of this solution we will also have to go through the next chapter's explication of eros in the characters of the poem as well.

7. So it may be true, as Ferrari claims (*City and Soul*, 77) that Socrates' regime categories "are true to the reality of Greek politics," but my point is that the reality of Greek (or any other politics) is so by virtue of being true to mathematics and geometry of regimes—though many such (an infinite number, actually) sit on irrational segments of line.

8. One might complain that an evening's dialogue is hardly sufficient for the conversion of a soul with as great an eros as Glaucon appears to have. This is true, but the night's discussion is a purification ritual, as Michael Morgan explains in *Platonic Piety* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990): 121–125, 127, 138–139. This ritual, like many, is not a once in a lifetime operation, but, as Glaucon himself prophesied (450b), properly measured only by a whole life. That Socrates is repeating the night's discussion to himself the very next day ("I went down . . . yesterday") indicates the same thing. Glaucon exhibits the purification *working*; Socrates' repetition of the dialogue indicates the purification is *never entirely worked*, but is repeated daily. Plato's poetic construction shows us both at once, as well as mimetically engendering the same kind of catharsis in us, which we must continue tomorrow.

9. I. M. Crombie, in his two volume *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* (NY: Humanities Press, 1962), offered two pages on the devolution of constitutions, claiming (as is the usual interpretation) that the last three constitutions "are all forms of domination of the third, appetitive, element" (134). Torsten Andersson's extensive study, *Polis and Psyche: A Motif in Plato's Republic* (Gothenburg: Elanders, 1971) expresses the view that Plato is presenting an empirical sociological typology in which "what is lost in respect to historical accurateness is counterbalanced by the rational scope, the psychological insight and the heuristic possibilities offered by the typological system" (157); it seems "sociological typology" means a useful *ad hoc* organization, for he leaves the choice and number of types totally unexplained. Annas claims "Plato's procedure is both confusing and confused" in *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 294, since it partakes of both the *a priori* and the experiential in a psyche/polis parallelism that is "not plausible" (298). Friedländer proposed an extrinsic explanation: "Hesiod's myth of the five ages of man serves as prototype for the process of corruption" in his *Plato*, Vol. 3 (Princeton: Bollingen, 1969), 118. This connection is seconded by Zuckert (*Plato's Philosophers*, 368). The most interesting mathematical thesis is Robert S. Brumbaugh's who, in "Teaching Plato's *Republic VIII*," *CJ* (New Series) 42,1 (1992): 343–345, suggests that the five constitutions are jointly determined (as the Pythagorean 3–4–5 triangle) by the tripartite soul of books 2 through 4 and the divided line of knowledge in Five through Seven. This is interesting mathematics, but does not help explain Glaucon's claim that there are six forms of regime.

10. W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 447–449, 528n4.

11. Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1933, 217). Bloom (*Republic*, 346–47) and a legion of others echo Shorey's view of Glaucon's "sophisticated" philosophy of relish.

12. Nickolas Pappas, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Plato and the Republic*, 2nd. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 164. The thesis that *Socrates* (Plato nowhere appears) would present an outline of regime types based on *empirical observation*, having mocked the sophists for just such a procedure (493a–e) requires an incomprehensible change in his characteristic *modus operandi*.

13. It is surprising to me that while many scholars might agree with Dorothea Frede (in "Der ungerechten Verfassungen und die ihnen entsprechenden Menschen," in *Politeia*, Otfried Höffe, ed. [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997], 251) that "Die zentralen Bücher der *Politeia* sind also eigentlich ein Exkurs," the causes and implications of this eccentric centrality are not more exactly meditated upon. If an epistemology is set forth as an answer to a particular off-center view, would this be an argument for its truth *tout court*, or for its curative power (as eyeglasses,

e.g.) for an eccentric way of seeing? And when, exactly, did this eccentricity begin to be effective in the curve of the dialogue? —book 2: 372e. I have previously argued that the “Exkurs” began there in *Platonic Errors* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), chapter 2. Rowe, in *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing* (Cambridge: University Press, 2007), does see that the first and true city is in book 2, “to which Callipolis approximates so far as prevailing conditions, including fever and division, allow” (184).

14. That Plato posed “problems to the mathematicians of his time, sometimes with striking results,” as well as provided suggestions for methods of proof, Ian Mueller considers obvious—see his “Mathematical method and philosophical truth,” in Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion*, 173; that this investigation of the number of regimes is such a problem is plainly true. For further historical details see Jacob Klein’s *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*, translated by Eva Brann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968).

15. Hayden Ausland shows how the devolutions of book 8 purge the aristocratic city of its virtues in a serial manner in “The Decline of Political Virtue.”

16. As we argued earlier, a noble lie is *bifrons*: it looks at both *the truth* (what is), and *the seeming* acceptable to the ill. It must speak with one voice out of two mouths. The metaphor of sickness continues with considerable ‘purging’ in books 2 through 4; conversely, it is the good that is purged in book 8’s devolutions. This feverishness and incapacity to see or taste truly would imply that Socrates must give the sons of Ariston and Cephalus a noble lie. See David Rozema, “Have We Been Nobly Lied to by Socrates,” in *Platonic Errors*.

17. See Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 20. These geometries help us avoid the problems resulting from an extreme isomorphism of soul/city such as Williams’ in “The Analogy of City and Soul.”

18. Compare Mariana Anagnostopoulou, “The Divided Soul and the Desire for the Good” in Gerasimos Santas, ed., *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic* (Malden, MA: 2006), 178–180.

19. Roochnik (*Beautiful City*, 17, 22) thinks that the language of parts leaves us stuck with either the implication that there are totally irrational and nonhuman parts in the soul (and city) or Williams’ third man infinite expansion problem within each part; but if “that by which we calculate,” “that by which we get angry,” and “that by which we desire” (cf. 436a–b, Plato’s way of speaking) gives us *eidē*, distinguishable looks, so are like parts, but *not separable*, the soul is human in all its arrangements, though some of these “parts” can look pretty bestial—and when ruling make the being so. That some look pretty bestial is also how Socrates gets his earlier “penning” lie to work. Compare *NE* 1150a: the bestial human being is far more terrible than a beast.

20. So, too, Roochnik: “it is useful for Socrates at this particular stage of the dialogue [book 4] to present such an exaggeratedly arithmetical, such a ‘flat’ conception of the soul” (*Beautiful City* 25). Socrates’ move is, in the history of philosophy and religion, the quintessential Gnostic move; their answer is more extreme—*removal* of bodily desire from the human, or angelism. Plato may be read this way, but it is erroneous to do so. Such a soul is no longer human. We are two thirds bastard, one third divine

21. Many descriptions of each soul in the literature are largely quotation and paraphrase from *Republic* itself. Compare, for example, Shorey (*What Plato Said*), Andersson (*Psyche and Polis*) and Pappas (*Guidebook*); see also Jeffrey Sikkenga, “Plato’s Examination of the Oligarchic Soul in Book VIII of *Republic*,” *History of Political Theory* 23,3 (2002): 377–400. Even Roochnik, who rightly sees that *Republic* is a dialectical relation of the dry arithmetical construction of book 4 and the fluid interruptions of eros (which come to a head in book 9), fails to keep the dryly arithmetical in mind as he slips into the narratives of sequential erotic interruption in book 8. Rather, he claims that “the dream of arithmetical stability” which served as the principle building the “perfectly stable city” “cannot possibly account for” “the progression narrated in books 8 and 9” (*Beautiful City*, 103). On the contrary, the number of stages is predicted by the mathematics; their progression (or regression) depends on the order of parts, and so how eros is functioning, which is determinable by the geometry of the desires in the soul.

22. All of the citizens, it should go without saying, are human; they may have different orders of soul, but they work together in the city through mimesis and the laws set by the gold—who know what they all dream of (571b–572b).

23. Compare our earlier discussion of the noble lie (*gennaion pseudos*), in chapter 2.

24. Ferrari considers the politics of soul “is politics still; it entails compromise; even the healthy soul is not yet pure” (*City and Soul*, 37). Of every city below aristocracy, it seems true that compromise is working; but reason does not, itself, order this way; compromise is the *sign* that something besides reason is attempting to order the regime—and succeeding. Compromise—Great or small—is a symptom of disease. True, the healthy soul is not purely rational; that’s because it is human, not divine; it has three parts by nature, but *health is not a compromise* among them.

25. Socrates is here echoing Adeimantus’ earlier complaint (365a): “what do we suppose [these things being said] do to the souls of the young men who hear them?”

26. This fact, incidentally, is why Socrates had earlier (most un-Socratically according to most scholars) argued against desire for drink to be desire for good drink (438a). Each desire is, we might say, a one eyed Jack: thirst desires drink; hunger edibles. To distinguish good from bad in any case requires another eye. The desire defines the good and distinguishes it from all else: drinkable (good)/not drinkable (bad). It requires a different power to distinguish whether a thing really is good drink. The baby under the sink will mouth the Drano and the dish soap, for they are mouthable; the man lost at sea is sorely tempted to drink the sea, for sea water is drinkable. In both cases, we hope, another power discerns that the real good is not discerned by the desire; what each desire sees is only its own particular: “those of a kind are related to a thing of a certain kind” (438a). Socrates’ argument, then, does not strip desire of “any orientation to its own good” (as Burger, “Thumotic Soul,” 135, says), rather each desire sees the world in a very precisely bifurcated way. That the desire may not be seeing the true good is not something *the desire* can see; thirst sees “drinkable,” = good.

27. Thus it is not the case that there is a rational choice for degeneration as explained by T. H. Irwin, *Plato’s Ethics* (Oxford, 1995), 285–288, nor yet a person beside the three parts (as Blössner, “The City-Soul Analogy” (*Cambridge Companion*, Ferrari, ed., 345–386). Rather, the mimetic power of the culture warps (in every culture save kallipolic—or better) the young wood so that reason’s capacity to see by the Good is occluded by the good(s) the culture calls out and cheers for and the soul accepts. For example, universities are a preparation for working life; this being the good, statistical political science may be helpful to some, logic to most, but serious consideration of *Republic* for none. But this is not really rational (knowledge in light of the Good) or a choice. Mark Johnstone’s description of each devolution being a “settling” into compromise, in “Changing Rulers in the Soul,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 41 (Winter 2011):148–153, 159–163 provides a more accurate account. Mimetic settling, yes; rational choice, no.

28. So I do not agree with Ferrari (*City and Soul*, 68) that “at no point will he [the timocrat] have to be secretive about money.” He must be secretive about his growing desire for it. I will also be disagreeing with his claim that timocracy “does not contain timocratic men, nor is it made by timocratic men” (Ibid. 66).

29. Andersson (*Polis and Psyche*, n. 6) diagrams this soul absolutely correctly (165), but his further diagrams (174, 184, 192) lack all geometric precision. His general thesis is that Plato is presenting a sociological typology, of which, it seems, there might be any number of equally useful versions. There is no *nous*, nor mathematical *logos* for the orders of *psyche*, in his understanding of *Republic*.

30. Compare Rosen, *Plato’s Republic*, 309.

31. Williams, “Analogy,” 52.

32. Ausland, “The Decline of Political Virtue.”

33. Spirit is, then, *essentially social*, as Burnyeat explains; see “The Truth of Tripartition” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 (2006): 1–23. It is shaped through mimesis of the society around it. Desire is both natural and mimetically shaped and instigated.

34. Our geometry also generally agrees with Hendrik Lorenz’s psychological explication of the oligarch in “The Analysis of Soul in Plato’s *Republic*,” in *Blackwell Guide*, Santas, ed., 158–59.

35. *Laws* suggests that the best city must have “gods, or sons of gods” as its inhabitants (739d). The truly best city of *Republic* (above the so-called aristocracy) is that (sixth) city. In his fifth chapter Michael Morgan points out many ways in which *Republic* makes use of religious vocabulary, exhibiting thereby Plato’s “reverence for philosophy as an ecstatic rite whose ultimate aim is divine bliss” (*Platonic Piety*, 127). I do not think Plato’s views on that matter change (as a developmentalist might hold); it deepens, becomes more sure and more particular.

36. See Howland’s considerable insightful work comparing Socrates to Odysseus in his *Odyssey*.

37. Johnstone’s reading allows a place for shame in the oligarch, requiring then that spirit not be thrown “headlong from its throne,” “Changing Rulers,” 154–157; there are infinite ways to go wrong, but the truest oligarch will not be ashamed of anything preservative.

38. In his Loeb edition at this word (relish), Paul Shorey helpfully points us back to his note on the word relish at 372c: “anything eaten with bread, usually meat or fish, as Glaucon means; but Socrates gives it a different sense.” Glaucon agreed wholeheartedly with that new sense. Which sense of relish is being used here is not clarified. Its sense in that earlier context included a strawberry blonde *hetaira* (as well as several other flavors); the last question in the series we have quoted tests whether or not Adeimantus has discovered anything about such relishes.

39. Schofield (*Plato: Political Philosophy*, 279n47) explains that “necessary are those we can’t fend off” (notably sexual desire, doubtless).” Doubtless, this is a view most of contemporary culture would agree with; as if there weren’t ever people like Thomas Aquinas (about whom there is a famous story of fending off sexual desire) or Mother Theresa. The text here is rather more doubtful than Schofield considers. Doubtless, there is a good reason for this.

40. There is an interesting scene in a movie version of “A Christmas Carol” in which Scrooge, suffering from a cough, pours some medicine into a tablespoon, looks at it, pours half back and smiles to himself: a perfect illustration of the problem with the oligarch’s “principle.” As Aristotle says, such a one “does not even help himself” (*NE* 1121a28).

41. Habermas, *BNR* 143 (cf. chapter 1). The postmodern is apparently a permanent possibility of soul, having as much to do with time as geometry does: nothing.

42. Ct. Rosen (*Plato’s Republic*, 328) who considers emancipation of desire to occur in tyranny.

43. As Blondell points out, Polemarchus later (336a) agrees with Socrates that “his own standard moral code must have been thought up by some wealthy tyrant” (*The Play of Character*, 176).

44. Treating a free man as if a slave, as on equal footing with a slave, as well as hybriatic acts of aggression and insult—even between citizens (much less a slave pulling on a free man’s garment and giving orders?)—were punishable by death in Athens. See Gabriel Herman, *Morality and Behavior in Democratic Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 297–298.

45. Freudians might call this uncapped motive *thanatos*—the death instinct (e.g., *CD* 95), but *thymos* is not so destructive in any other order. Freud is too simplistic in his psychical economies.

46. Nietzsche points this out in *Twilight of the Idols*; see, “The Problem of Socrates,” §6–8, concerning the new form of *agon*—dialectics: the *agon* for nerds, not men.

47. This is Hume’s position: reason is and by rights ought to be the slave of the passions. He is not the only English speaking philosopher who thinks thus.

48. Ludwig (“Eros in the *Republic*,” 230) thinks the tyrant is “not merely anomian but antinomian. He wishes to flout convention.” He does, however, agree with my point that *thymos* is ruling in the tyrannical soul.

49. Compare 578e–579a: “He is compelled to fawn on some of his slaves, promise many things, . . . even though he doesn’t want to.” Achilles, surely, is not Agamemnon’s slave, but the king has been dropped by the gods into a place where he needs assistance from him over whom he would rule.

50. Laurence D. Cooper, "Beyond the Tri-partite Soul: The Dynamic Psychology of the *Republic*," *Review of Politics* 63,2 (Spring, 2001): 364. The way this thesis is true will be taken up in more detail when we speak of the thumotic characters more particularly.

51. So, I can only partly agree with Mitchell (*Plato's Fable*, 19), who says spirit cannot "emerge (and so justice 'rendering each its due' come to be) unless at the outset the mortal condition is diseased." It is not precisely the case that "justice will be found in a city in a state of fever" not elsewhere (32, italics added), rather the *archê* of both justice and injustice may be *more visible* there; there is more darkness against which justice sticks the more fiery off. One thing visible in the diseased regimes is that spirit emerges as a ruler (in two), and once as a dead horse.

52. Bloom, *Plato's Republic* 347; compare our discussion of the democratic regime above (283).

53. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 109.

54. One might consider such a city to operate as Kant proposes in discussing the "kingdom of ends"—the sort of rule whereby each citizen's self-determination accords with the self-determination of every other citizen. Compare *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 432–435.

55. Eva T. H. Brann, *The Music of Republic*, 136.

56. Compare *Od.5*: 313, 425; the quote is from Brann (ibid. 136); Howland also notes this connection in his *Odyssey*, 112. It is a land ruled by "Alkinoos and Aretê—King 'Mighty-Mind' and queen 'Virtue,'" or perhaps queen "Prayed-for" (Arêtê) but I disagree with Howland (53) that this is *Plato's* Kallipolis. Rather, since Virtue (or what we pray for) is a soul that does not have to threaten or force its desires to agree with Nous, Phaeacia must be symbolized in the regime not yet talked about (rather than Kallipolis), where the two (reason and desire, what is prayed for) are in perfect marital agreement. Plato accepts Homer's teaching that those of us who live after Odysseus can no longer sail there to live, though he institutes a liturgy through which we may prepare ourselves to live there after another kind of sailing. Cushman described "the principal goal of *Plato's therapeia*" as the "marriage of knowledge and virtue" (*Therapeia*, 295).

57. "We must have some way to soothe and gently persuade him, while hiding from him that he is not in his right mind" (476e).

58. This definition is strikingly reminiscent of Diotima's agreement with Socrates (204d, 206a) about the nature of all eros.

59. As Burger, "Thumotic Soul," 155, claims.

60. I am agreeing, then, with Roochnik that book 4 is "partial and provisional" and "not simply negated" in the later books (*Beautiful City*, 3–4), but my explanation for the partiality of the first books is psychological and dramatic: It is part of the cure for Socrates' interlocutors. I am also agreeing with Kahn that the true "conception of calculation is a form of desire . . . for the good." See "Plato's Theory of Desire," *Review of Metaphysics* 4, 1 (1987): 80–84.

61. *Ibid.*, 88.

62. The quotations are from Burger, "Thumotic Soul," 164 n14; she argues that there is a distinct difference in the *argument* which disallows the two educations, cities and psychologies "simple blending." I agree that the educations, cities and psychologies cannot be *simply* blent, but not because the educations, cities and psychologies of Four and Seven "contrast," much less, contradict each other, rather the souls of the characters must be shaped by what goes on in books 3 through 5 to come to the point (at which Socrates has been driving all along) at which a dianoetic science of the soul can be seen (or heard). This science, based on the thesis of tripartition, structures the entire *Republic*, as the Interlude explained.

63. Rosen, *Plato's Republic*, 306.

64. To call one city Glaucon's and another Adeimantus' based on one line or another of the discussion (e.g., 427c10, 527c1: "your city") being addressed to one or the other presumes that this careful interweaving of interlocutors, noticeable repetition of complaint by each brother, and similar addition to the complaint in each case by Socrates (traced in detail in the Interlude) is merely decorative, not structurally implying that this is all one story produced for one purpose—to find justice in the city and try to read justice in the soul from that. The city that is built belongs to all the interlocutors (including us—the interlocutors of Plato; through it they

(we) will draw closer to being able to see the true, divine, and healthy regime. “We make the lie as much like the truth as possible” for the mad or foolish friend (382d).

65. See also the earlier noted argument of Peterson (*Socrates and Philosophy*) favoring such a reading; she thinks *kallipolis* a term alliteratively disparaging (114)—which makes much sense, considering that in it the humans are dogs engaging in coed naked wrestling.

66. Roochnik, *Beautiful City*, 47, italics original.

67. While I agree that the brothers are in a sense “full collaborators in the argument” and that they are “putative equals,” I do not think that Socrates is merely “attributing to them even the most outlandish of his own ideas,” or allowing them to be co-legislators “of his ideal city” (Blondell, *The Play of Character*, 199). They are full collaborators in that Socrates’ construction is precisely responsive to the delusions and blindnesses the brothers’ (and others’) queries and answers confess; the outlandish ideas are admittedly Socrates’ invention, but only for their cure; the city is not Socrates’ ideal; it is, in fact, not really his city at all—but theirs, built in response to, and as a cure for, Glaucon et al. requirements for luxury. The equality of the interlocutors is (in one sense) putative: one of them is the doctor, but all must participate in the cure, and speak so that he may know their disease. If this relation looks “hierarchical” (200) rather than equal, it is for the same reason that a doctor-patient relationship looks so: one of them knows the other is sick and how to get out of it. This hierarchy can be written on the divided line.

68. It does not seem to be the case that reason is or must be “essentially in conflict” with desire on the Socratic picture as, for example, Burger (“The Thumotic Soul,” 153) among others have held. Socrates says only “we assert that sometimes there are some men who are thirsty but not willing to drink” (439c); sometimes, then, the mastering and bidding parts may agree. In the best regime of soul/city they do not disagree at all. The goods of desire are goods, only desire does not have the true measure of their goodness. Socrates is, as noted above (n26), being precise about this when he says that thirst desires drink, but not good drink (505a).

69. It is such a human being Augustine has in mind when he says that even the generative organs would be under the full and untroubled control of the rightly oriented soul, “though now there is no example to teach us” (*City of God*, 14: 23).

70. Ludwig asks “could there be a soul without thymos?” (“Eros in the *Republic*,” 227); he suggests that such a bipartite soul could be more fully natured out of the tripartite “naturing nature.” I think one could only be or remain this in a polis where everyone was so, and *all nature* answered right desire, so the good could not be endangered.

71. So I do not think it is true, as many scholars (including, e.g., Mitchell, *Plato’s Fable* 52) that the “appetites cannot be educated” or yet that spirit differs in that it can be. Rather both are trainable through the same process—mimesis. And they must be trained in the right way in order for the soul to ever become truly educated. It is only this right training in music and gymnastic which will allow the divine power to become *hearable* and directive of the soul (443b–c). Unless, of course, “something divine” saves one (368a, 492e–493a, 505e).

72. For example, Paul Shorey in his note to *Republic*, *ad loc.* (372d), and page xiv.

73. Bloom, *Republic* 346.

74. Howland, who also makes all these claims, reduces “hymning the gods” to Socrates’ suggestion that “there can be no political community without a shared sense of the sacred” (*Odyssey*, 91). Recently Ramona Naddaf, *Exiling the Poets*, claimed, “only when Socrates needs to satisfy the desires of the least self-sufficient people living in the luxurious city do poets appear” (11). But even the healthy city sings (Homeric?) hymns to the gods and *must* educate its children through stories and song; it is not possible to begin education with geometry. Every human city has poetry, of necessity. Rosen is only fractionally superior: “There is some poetry (hymns to the gods), but obviously no philosophy” (*Plato’s Republic*, 79).

75. Bloom, *Republic*, 347; Rosen, *ibid.*, 79; also admitting “no discernible political activity” in the healthy city.

76. Newell, *Ruling Passion*, 110; one finds this kind of comment in many places. Bloom, *Republic*, 344–347 is a main presentation of it; *tu quoque*, Rosen, *ibid.*, 79–80, including: “meat eating, poetry and the fine arts, extended sexuality, and war are all instances of luxury.” But how is hymning the gods a part of taking “bodily needs as the only real ones”? (Bloom, 345)

77. Newell, *ibid.*, 11; Bloom says similarly that Glaucon “does not like the food” (346) of the first city. Desire demands “unnecessary refinements and pleasures” (347); but this is still *too small* for a truly Platonic eros—or a human. Perhaps it is only a materialist’s erroneous misplacement for a drive that *requires* the eternal and the divine, forever, according to Diotima and the *Phaedrus*.

78. Newell, *ibid.*, 110.

79. As Aristotle points out *NE* 5: 1134a29–31; the next chapter will touch on this again.

80. So, the best city will be anarchic in the good sense of the term; see my “*Republic: The Defense of Anarchy*” in *Platonic Errors*.

81. Let those who consider that these citizens, despite having cowherds and shepherds, will still not eat of the animals, consider whether or not any society which really knows the art of shepherding or cowherding would not see the need of culling their herd, lest (among other things) they overuse their pasture. Even the good shepherd, not just the Thrasymachan one, knows when to eat his sheep (342cd, 343ab). Furthermore, in Athenian society at the time, the meat in the diet came almost entirely from the share received in the variously communal sacrifices in honor of the gods (of family, deme or city, as well as more particular sacraments like marriage). When he comes to this issue later (427b–c), Socrates makes no changes to these “greatest, first and fairest” laws about temples, festivals and all else having to do with gods and daimons; there is no reason to suspect such change in his adumbration of the healthy city.

82. Swine, unlike sheep, but like human beings, are omnivores. Sheep will not eat their offspring; the human being who chooses the first lot in the Myth of Er, imagining the constant feasting of the tyrant the happiest life, will eat his; so will swine. It is only after the addition of swineherds that “many doctors” and “war” both become “necessary” (373c–e) according to Socrates. Good poets do not make incidental connections, according to Aristotle, but those that are necessary or probable, and are universals not particulars. Swine, war, eating one’s children, considerable doctoring are all connected in Plato’s imagery with the regime of luxury, fancy that! More pastry anyone?

Chapter Six

Polymorphous Perversity

Desires, Delusions, and Catharses of Republic's Characters

If a man who is able by his wisdom to become all sorts of thing and to imitate all should come to our city, wishing to display himself and his poems, we would kneel before him as a man sacred, wonderful (thaumaston), and pleasing; but we would say there is no such man among us . . . and we would send him away.

—Socrates, *Rep* (398a)

When a certain physiognomist had revealed to Socrates who he was—a cave of bad appetites—the great ironist let slip another word which gives the key to his character. “This is true,” he said, “but I became master over them all.” How did Socrates become master over himself? His case was, at bottom, merely the extreme case, only the most eye-opening of what was then beginning to be the universal distress.

—Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Anyone with any sense knows well enough what democracy is—I as well as anyone.

—Alcibiades

Many men and women would be zealous of such a life because it carries along in itself the most patterns of regimes and qualities.

—Socrates, *Rep* (561e)

POLYMORPHOS: THE SHAPES OF SOULS IN PLATO

In that kind of poetic mimesis which takes place entirely through mimesis, the poet never appears (392d–394c). In *Republic* and *Symposium* both narrated dialogues, and narrated by someone who is going up from a seaside area to the city, the poet is (at least) at the third remove from any real speech—before we even consider the epistemological status of poetry. For Socrates is imitating all of the characters who spoke last night (some of them quoting the poets), while Plato is writing an imitation of Socrates imitating all of those characters, including the one he calls “I.”¹ Clearly Plato contains a whole city of many characters—all those dialogues! Clearly Socrates, in *Republic*, contains the multitude which speaks. All of any reader’s polymorphous possibilities for regimes of soul find some kind of notice, if not mimesis, in the discussion at the house of Cephalus. Nor is this unusual, miraculous, amazing (*thauamaston*), or difficult to understand: every human being is a many headed beast (588c); “our soul teems with ten thousand such oppositions arising at the same time” (603d), and they all might opine that they can be captain of the soul (488a). We *are* that wonderful (*thaumaston*) being; we are not merely *carrying a mirror* (596d), though we are carrying mirror neurons. That monster Nietzsche’s physiognomist is said to have found under Socrates’ skull, that amazing poet who could imitate anything, imagine doing anything, even dare to do everything—“intercourse with a mother or anyone else at all: human beings, gods, and beast” (571c–d), that Typhon—*c’est moi*, and you, *hypocrite lecteur—mon semblable—mon frère!*

One should not be surprised, then, if we are the kind of creature permanently in need of catharsis—purification, more often than purgation; the kind of being which (if intelligent) would know that “the proper measure of listening” to such purifying works of mimesis is a whole life (430b); and that all our cities are the kind of polity that “must never cease singing, as an incantation to itself, these things” (*Laws* 665c)—should one? Or what hope is there for such as us? Are we not in permanent need of *pharmaka*? Must we be singing constantly?² Are not “here”—on whatever road, in whatever polity between port and temple—and “now”—somewhere between birth and the city of God—always “where all the danger” is (618b)?

Plato’s mimesis of Socrates sets in motion some catharses for some of *our* many perversities, just Socrates aims to purify *himself* (or recollect himself?) on the morning after the feast of Bendis, and just as he had set to work *on his friends*, purifying their luxurious soul cities at the festival. All three removes (Socrates, his interlocutors, ourselves) are held in the same hymn: *Republic*. What we see here is something like the set of rings presented as an image of poetic work in *Ion*: the Muse (or lodestone) attracts the poet, who holds the rhapsode, who holds the audience—all by the transferred power of the goddess (533d–e, 535e–536d). Actually *Republic* performs something superior

to what that image pictures—which is external relations. We are, rather, each inside the other, we are inside *Republic's* discussion in our discussion here, as *Republic* is inside us in our private reflection on it, just as Socrates was in the discussion at Polemarchus' house “yesterday,” and in repeating it carries them all within him today. Thus, Socrates' cathartic work in the Bendic community on behalf of Justice—which holds him—is repeated by Socrates on himself, which cathartic work holds Plato's attention, who holds ours by and within the transferred magnetic power of the mimesis he writes out. Nor is magnetism a mere external power, it rearranges the forces within what attaches to the magnet.

As we might ask, of the Muse-poet-rhapsode-audience chain, whether or not the muse might be something natural working in the poet himself (as Kant will say of genius,³ and Aristotle, for example, would say of the poem as born of a natural gift, *Po* 1455a32–33), we might ask here whether the cathartic activity of last night's discussion arouses the cathartic repetition of it in Socrates the next day, or whether Socrates' own daily recollections (such as we now overhear) do not make possible his cathartic work at the festival of Bendis? Similarly, we may ask whether the work of art is the result of purposed attention, or of mimetic enthusiasm? The act of revision implies both: the first (deliberative rationality) in order to better achieve the latter (mimetic enthusiasm), but mimesis is natural to us, and the poetic work begins in mimesis. How does mimesis begin? If there is an originator, then is he not mimetic, being originator? If the human is naturally mimetic, then any nonmimetic origin of our mimesis must be something lower—or higher—than we are ourselves. A mimetic nature must be mimetic of nature (or culture); and all human beings are thus by nature. Perhaps among our mimetic natures there are those with a natural gift; so a poet intends to practice something that allows him to hear the muses—are they natural or divine?—where most of us are fairly deaf (or inattentive); thus he becomes our hearing aid as it were—if we attend to him. Or, perhaps the natural light itself strikes down into the depth of the cave once a year and a seasonal festival begins to take shape as a mimesis of cosmic or solar motion. This would no longer be noticeable in cities with artificial light—all of our festivals would merely become cave artifice, as the music of the spheres disappears under the city's aleatory soundings.⁴

Be those things as they may, Socrates is represented as finding all these heads speaking again within himself the day after the festival; at least one is wild (*thêrion*, 336b). Have his companions from the night before aroused, by mimesis, their semblables within his soul? He seems to need to repeat the festival's discussion, as if he himself were “a whole household divided”—very much like the household of the previous night—and he must try again, *within himself*, to accomplish what the festival night's discussion accomplished: “destroying no one, but reconciling them . . . laying down laws for

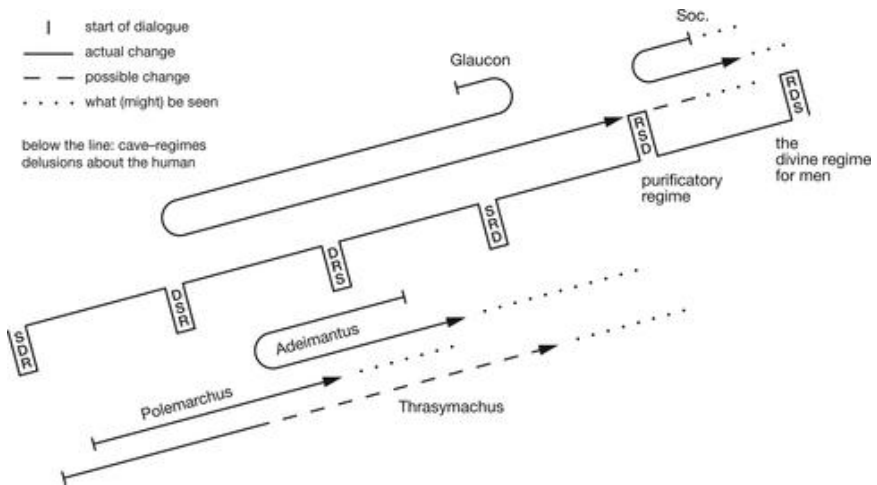
them for the rest of time and thus securing their friendship” (*Laws* 627c, 627e, 628a). On the previous night he had obtained everyone’s harmonious assent; if they hold on to the story they will “fare well.” Now we overhear him using a mimesis of that incantation—on himself (cf. *Laws* 837e). And we are repeating it; we are the speaking “I,” for, in the ancient world, reading was aloud. We are *imitating* the *monstrum in animo* Socrates; he is not merely an *object for our contemplation*.⁵ Let us give more personal names to some of our wonderful beasts, and set out, in descending order, the regimes of character Socrates—and Plato, that erstwhile hater of poets and other such magicians!—find themselves quite capable of (even desirous of?) ventriloquizing. Socrates and all the others, save (probably) one, meet “on the way,” if not on the path: none are yet locked into any particular regime; they are moving about between birth and death (the probable exception is Cephalus). Their souls have not yet become stalagmites, rocks looking suspiciously like household gods seated on their bench, or perhaps just like benches. They are somewhere between the port where all come in and the city on a hill, between Pluto’s darkness and the temples of the Olympians. “They are like us.”

As there are five main speakers and—according to our argument—six ideal forms of soul, the speakers mathematically fit on the paths between the ideals. Just as we might expect from our experience applying geometry to life, where no drawn or carpentered triangle matches precisely the ideal triangle of which we have dianoetic proofs, no one precisely instantiates the geometric ideals we have set out: they are like us—on the road; they are like us—intelligible, but not *the* intelligibles. We can recognize their likeness to these intelligibles though: through the unchanging forms of geometry we pick out differences among real individuals subject to change. When his eyes become accustomed to firelight, one who returns to the cave would know better what the shifting shadows are shadows of. So, too, we can now see where these characters have come from and where they are going (cf. *Phaed* 227a); we can now pick out more clearly the regime each begins in, and what they move toward, since we now have the science of regimes.⁶ Their movement in relation to the ideal forms is outlined in the following chart. I have placed the regime types equidistant from each other, rather than on the line Socrates seems to use in 587b–588a (illustrated in the Interlude) because the *movement of the characters* is easier to see—particularly on the lower parts of the line—when outlined this way. The lower regimes are all versions of cave. Further explanation of each character’s movement will follow.

THE CHARACTERS OF *REPUBLIC* AND
THEIR CATHARSES

From the hypothesis that the characters are between the ideal forms, and that their descending order at the dialogue's beginning fit the interstices of our six regimes, order them thus: Socrates—Glaucou—Adeimantus—Polemarchus—Thrasymachus. Two others, Cephalus and Cleitophon, either leave or cease speaking early on, so it is hard to consider where exactly they are, or whether they undergo any catharsis. It seems unlikely Cephalus suffers any catharsis—for both symbolic and dialogical reasons. This chapter will show both that this hypothesis makes sense of each character's speech and action and point out how the festival discussion works to purify each, that is, to raise him up, to free him, or begin to free him, from the *eikôn* he carries on his head—or rather, the faulty regime he is himself becoming hardened into.

The diagram is an attempt to illustrate the following points. First, each character begins nearer one of the ideal forms of regime, and comes—through their purifying intercourse—to be nearer a higher form of regime. From this higher position in the order of regimes it is plausible to think each may have a clearer intimation of something still above him (as well as seeing somewhat more clearly where he has been). All of the regimes below the healthy aristocratic regime are cave-ish, since in them reason is not able to consider in the light of the good, as it is occluded by some other part(s) of the soul. Still, one is able to rank the regimes on the basis of more, and more radical, occlusions; to have one's reason occluded by two powers is worse



Movement and Vision of Characters. Created by the author.

than being occluded by only one, for example. For reason's *immediate* occlusion to be the reliable (not to say principled) carelessness of desire always induces more darkness than if reason's immediate occlusion is spirit—which is a principle of exclusion.⁷ To exclude nothing of desire, but rather to rise up as its protector and provider (as the tyrannic order begins, 565c–566c), requires that one not listen to the one power that can truly make distinctions.

The Political Catharsis in *Republic*

There are two kinds of evidence that Socrates' activity during the festival of Bendis has been purifying or cathartic and thus moved his interlocutors in the way our diagram outlines; as is to be expected, they are psychic and civic. Briefly, let us consider the latter. We can see that the original small group that is thrown together between Piraeus and the Acropolis improves its political operation considerably during the course of the evening and night. It begins as a democracy on the edge of tyranny. For we see in the first scene that Polemarchus and his party party of fellow travelers, knowing they have the votes, make clear what their intentions are with the available communal resources of the night and each other. Knowing their power, they don't have to listen, and won't. Adeimantus, a son of Ariston with some traces of the honor-loving nature his name (fearless) and being "son of Ariston" suggest, offers what may be intended as a face-saving thumotic compromise (between the party of desire—Polemarchus and his crowd, and the party pursuing philosophical discussion—Socrates and Glaucon) with the suggestion of the torch-passing night horse race. This offer seduces Glaucon from Socrates' side even as Polemarchus co-opts this victory-loving suggestion into the evening's completely democratic menu of desirable satisfactions (conversation, horse race and dinner—all given equal value, 328a–b); Glaucon concludes, "we must remain and do" (328b). The community descends to Piraeus and the barely restrained tyranny of Thrasymachus until a certain sort of disgust (at eager overeating of arguments), voiced first by Socrates at 354c, and then picked up by Glaucon and his brother to start book 2, begins the turn to philosophic understanding: demanding a true defense of justice against its cultured despiser(s). Already the community has improved; the spirited brothers are leading the community, rather than Polemarchus; they *want to know* if justice is *really honorable* or only "said to be" so. *Republic's* prelude has tuned them.

Having invited Socrates to lead, by the middle of the dialogue the community is functioning even more aristocratically (i.e., more justly)—Desire (Polemarchus) *whispers* its question to one of the two Spirited gatekeepers of the discussion (they, in fact invented the narrow gate through which the discussion traverses), and Adeimantus, in turn, demands *more argument* from Reason (Socrates) about sharing in desirable things (women and chil-

dren, particularly). The party party no longer threatens or orders directly; nor is it silenced or excised. The community forming in the house has risen from the barely democratic to something approaching the aristocratic (for Desire now *places itself* beneath Spirit), though the polity is not precisely aristocratic since Spirit is listening to Desire's suggestions—as it does in the *fall* of aristocracy into timarchy (549c–550b)—demanding Desire be answered, although it interrupts Reason's argumentative project. Just so do the way up and the way down have all their points in common: Socrates describes the fall of other polities from aristocratic to timarchic to democratic and tyrannic (in book 8) even as he is accomplishing a raising up (in inverse order through the whole dialogue) in the community gathered around him.

Thanks to the sons of Ariston, the main path of the discussion is set out as precisely oriented to achieving the philosophical understanding of justice and its value; this path is formalizable as an ideal line produced by the sun's eye view of a journey out of the cave of opinion about such matters to the temple of the god who knows, but the path the dialogue actually takes is hardly straight, nor does the community become, straightaway, an ideal one. The path cannot be eidetically straight; for the walk takes place in the world of the visible, though the line it follows is ordered by the intelligible. That is to say, the origin of this little community has *both* an erotic and a logical *archê*—an erotic and a geometric necessity. The logical *archê* is Glaucon's complete division of the kinds of good at the start of book 2, and the demand for proof about justice's place. Some goods are for their own sake, some are means only and some are both; since "we" believe justice is both, but Thrasy-machus believes it is a means only, we must prove it is good for its own sake by subtracting all rewards and reputations. This abstract orientation leads Glaucon to set up his two statues—one of perfect justice, good for its own sake alone (since the seeming of justice is taken away), and the other of perfect injustice (which covers itself in the cloak of seeming just)—and demand Socrates prove otherwise than Thrasy-machus holds. The erotic *archê*, on the other hand, is what got them all together: Polemarchus' desire for a bigger better party. This being the community's origin, it is not surprising that the way up to the truth is interrupted by a series of excursi instigated by desire (372e, 419a, 449b most obviously), nor that an argument attempting to produce a noetic or dianoetic proof about regimes is pulled by the same earthly and *effectively visible* gravity.

One of the main points *Republic* illustrates about, and in its plan for, education is precisely this: eros and necessity are married in our kind of creature. Naturally, *Republic*'s own structure exemplifies one such marriage. A *mere geometry* of regimes could be presented as a Spinozan thinking substance's monologue, but a *purification of souls* (more than mere *thinking* substances) and *in regimes* (of city) can never proceed so; for both can be deluded, occluding reason in multifarious ways. The hold of such mad mas-

ters must be broken before (or while) the wisdom loving part is practicing its perfecting disciplines. If Plato writes real dialogues, not covers for philosophical lectures, then the soul work that is going on is closer to the surface of the dialogue than a thinking substance's philosophical lecture could ever be.

Glaucon eventually sees regimes are this mixture of erotic and mathematical necessities and makes a sort of joke about it (458d); at that point he might already be beginning to feel that his own interruption of Socrates' argument—one requiring desserts and couches (at 372e, and some severals else to share the couch when Socrates offers them, 373a)—was perhaps not quite as necessary as he felt at the time. He has begun to feel, if not see, that the purpose of education is to shape our desires to the more *really necessary* and *really nobler* ends before we become mimetically conditioned to other necessities, like a variety of flute girls and other “noble” pleasures available in wealthy and liberal democracies. To do this, we must either have a soul which sees the real good (and natural necessities), or follow the direction of one which does; first, through mimesis. So, let us consider with Socrates as he begins to make distinctions about—and tell stories of—desire, distinctions and stories that have to become quite a bit more detailed as he goes forward. The entire small community in Polemarchus' house—itsself the city of Athens writ small is following the song Socrates leads, and that song is having its effect; their interruptions make additions to the tune, but the dialogue performs that difficult task of bringing even the wildest solo (and soloist) into the hymn in honor of Bendis. At the middle of the dialogue, desire (Polemarchus) is not only whispering, what he whispers are *questions* to the intermediary Adeimantus, and then *whether* they should be heard and answered by reason (Socrates); meanwhile, one who was *therion* joins in an order for an answering *logos*, not obedience to his own. Desire is no longer so free and equal as to presume to control matters all by itself and give orders—even in its own house (which perhaps the body is); nor is the spirited beast mere beast, being human, and speaking for *logos*.

It is a visibly higher form of community in book 5, then, which finds itself “starting all over again as if from the beginning” (450a) than it was in its beginning. Furthermore, not only does the second scene's tyrant (cf. 336b–337d, 343a–344e), Thrasymachus, become friendly (498c)—enough so to be open to persuasion, and in fact require it (450a)—but it seems like they are all persuaded (for the time being) of the argument that has advanced in the course of the evening. I say they “seem persuaded” and “for the time being” because Socrates ends the evening with yet another noble lie, the myth of Er. This is identifiable as yet another *pharmakon*, so the physician must know that the community is not yet entirely healthy: it needs an adjuvant, a prophylactic against backsliding, and perhaps some further purification; all this the tale of Er aims to provide. The community is certainly not as

tyrannic as the book 1, scene one version of it, which comes to be on the road out of Piraeus; they have risen not merely to democracy, but to a polity which votes for reason to decide the issue about which desire is raising the question: they are looking for the *philosopher* to lead them and they are all universally acclaiming that he answer—they have come to desire the philosopher as king, and vote so.

The Catharses of Psyche

The other sort of evidence for Socrates' purifying activity at the festival of Bendis is psychic. While presenting our considerations for the variety of purifications of the interlocutors' souls we will have to continue some argument for tri-partition of the soul as philosophically cogent, for it is by reference to the various orders of tri-partition that we can measure the purification accomplished in each. Because our nature is social and mimetic—communities get their character from their members and the converse—that evidence and psychic occurrence interweaves with the above-mentioned social or political catharsis that is visibly going on. We have already noted in several places how Socrates had called up “spirited” and “philosophic” natures (as in a noble puppy) in response to Glaucon's positing of desire's (swinish) luxuriousness of demand (cf. 375a–376c). This political distinction begins “to purify the city we called luxurious” (399e). Having concluded the civic, he distinguishes the parts of the soul due to actual disagreements we find in ourselves, or hear tell of in others (436a–440c). We see that although the *community* has improved to being nearer aristocracy in book 5, clearly not every *soul* is as close to aristocratic as Socrates. Polemarchus is still notably desirous; Thrasymachus still rises (rather more forcefully than Polemarchus' own whispered asking) in defense of desire's request (565cd); Glaucon and Adeimantus still listen to and vote for discussion of the desiring one's preferred topic rather than continuing their own more rational assignment comparing justice with injustice—though they do want reason to lead the discussion they defect to. So, while agreeing with Ferrari⁸ that there is an analogical correspondence between city and soul, I also think there are likenesses in predominance relations joining soul to city. That is, the society of interlocutors is closer to being aristocratic because Socrates is now predominant, whereas earlier Polemarchus was (in a threatening democracy); further, there are sorts of mutual causality (primarily mimetic) among the differently organized souls, which Ferrari does not notice.

The book 4 distinction of motives and their disagreement in the soul opens the interlocutors up to the possibility (and in the case of Leontius, the fact) of desire motivating things one both is not proud of (so, contrary to *thymos*) and that one considers not to be good (so, contrary to calculation or reason). Making these distinctions might itself make one begin to feel and

see that *epithymia* is not always to be followed. We discussed earlier desire's one-eyedness (thirst has an eye only for drink, 437e); reason alone allows for the two-eyed vision of the immediate good (desire's answer) and the good of the whole regime; calculating this last good according to the light of the good itself, it can order not to drink the sea water which surrounds one though the irrational desiring part continues driving toward replenishment (439d).

The distinction of *thymos* from the other parts has been a point of rather more turmoil in the scholarship. Perhaps the most cynical view of the entire process is offered by Cooper, who suggests that "it is not easy to resist every clever freshman's interpretation that Plato held there were precisely three parts of the human soul only because he needed three in order to push through the argument."⁹ The case of Leontius allows us to think something more positive than this when we place it in the context of the characters' development. For example, though Glaucon says (considering Leontius) that he has never noticed spirit making common cause with desire (440b), we have already seen that his own desire for luxury pays no attention to the costs of impending war (372d–373e).¹⁰ He has not yet *seen* this disorder of spirit siding with desire, but this is symptomatic of his sort of soul, not a truth about souls generally. Later, we have argued, he seems to recognize that just his spirited desire is what led the discussion into its long excursus away from the regime he now labels "finer."

His earlier affirmation that he has never noticed "spirit making common cause with desire" (440b) itself allows us to consider that he takes Leontius' desire to get an eyeful of the dead bodies as something reason does not approve and thereby moves him away from his own preceding suggestion that *thymos* might have a nature the same as desire (439e). In this, I am agreeing with several scholars that Leontius is, if not precisely a necrophiliac, in any case meant as a disgusting figure.¹¹ Not so attracted to that desire, nor wanting to be noticed by their fellow citizens to be like that, begins to split desire from spirit in the interlocutors; they are wishing anger to win on the side of *nomos* and reason in them as they consider Leontius, who has become a watchword.¹² Thus, the interlocutors are emotionally practicing spirit's victory on the side of reason by condemning Leontius. They condemn him insofar as they agree with his own judgment against his wretched eyes.¹³ The judgment Socrates has them make regarding this case *requires* them to *practice* penning their desires with Leontius, and place his spirited anger as superior to desire—or else admit such desire as he succumbs to as their own, thereby succumbing.

Similarly, the insatiable desires Glaucon introduced to the city (many kinds of many of them) are being defined as beneath the worth of guardians and auxiliaries by the careful crafting of that city's *gennaïos* stories. Socrates, then, is penning their desires (and encouraging a noble puppyhood) in order to give his interlocutors room for reasonable discussion about the

growth of virtue in the city and citizens, through a) his use of already present culturally constricting determinations (the shame of necrophilia) as well as through b) the music *etc.* to which *they agree to limit* themselves. He is also (c) *actually* keeping them from what could easily have become a mimetically induced Mardi Gras riot of all the senses swamping the formation of any better city and soul by keeping them in the house during the Bendic revels. Contrast his activity with what he says happens in the democratic soul: “it escorts insolence, anarchy, wastefulness and shamelessness back in, crowned with wreaths, in torch-lit procession, accompanied by a vast chorus singing their praises and giving them fine names” (560e)—perhaps even the name of Bendis, who, if her continuing nocturnal rites outside the house were similar to those of Thracian Bacchus, might be celebrated in more than two of these ways. The night’s discussion is constructively opposing the usual democratic operation; what we practice, even so we become.

These pennings of desire in their souls by calculation and *thymos* (and by contrasting desire with reason and *thymos*), which the characters are beginning to admit as requisite for the guardians of their fictional city—and practice themselves while considering their city in speech—are at first perhaps only culturally determined rather than philosophically justified. Such a mimetic origin is in keeping with Socrates’ educational laws. The original limitation of desire (in book 4) to but a single part of the soul that, in the course of Socrates’ separating it from reason and spirit, is *made to look* generally lower and worse produces, as Bloom complains, “an incomplete picture,” not only “of spiritedness” and of reason, for “in some sense reason in the soul is a desire,”¹⁴ but also of desire or eros itself. *It has, however, the desired effect*—eros in the souls of the interlocutors is penned, it becomes (at least) more careful about revealing itself—as is true of desire in timocracy, a regime above most of them. Every indication is that the desirous ones have been drawn into listening. Following this reductive penning, and its conclusion about the virtues, the next book (5) begins with the desirous polemarch reduced to a barely audible whisper (449b). So Bloom is right about this incomplete picture, but Socrates is *purposefully* lying here: he presents desire as mere animal (and perhaps sometimes outlaw necrophiliac) appetite to interlocutors whose desires are altogether too demanding and unbounded—willing to go to war for courtesans and cakes, for example. By presenting desire in this limited and base version Socrates gets his interlocutors to quiet the eros in their soul somewhat. They at least don’t want the embarrassing and foolish to be revealed *in them* as they have seen happen even to Thrasy-machus, know as the reputation of Leontius, and as they have heard desires labeled in these early distinctions and examples. Perhaps not wanting to appear foolish has kept Cleitophon quiet since book 1. This seems one effect of Socrates’ first setting each part of the soul out in the very restricted

“arithmetical” fashion he uses. This quieting of desire allows reason to be heard, as Cephalus had said.

So, too, having been brought down to Piraeus by the wealthy party-oriented polemarch, Socrates began *his* city with desire aiming for mere necessities; and *by his continued conversation* he enforces an even more rigorous purification—the interlocutors will not even get supper tonight, much less dessert or flute girls. When the Socratic bounds of necessity are overthrown *in the argument* by just such demands from Glaucon, spirit gets defined as the noble puppy set over against the pig. When Socrates sets out to “complete the consideration” of justice (434d) by moving from the city to the soul, he continues to treat desire as concerned merely with “the pleasures of nourishment and generation” (436a), each particular desire only for its natural particular thing (437e), while spirit is distinguished as anger (*orgê*, 440a) and reason as mere calculation. This is, to be sure, a quite minimalist picture; so is geometry. It is considerably slimmer than the picture of the soul we get in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* (to say nothing of later in *Republic*), but it is suitable for the problem (and souls) at hand; its reductive animal imagery *works on* the souls hearing it. If they are going to be animals, they will be noble dogs rather than mutts or pigs; fighting cocks rather than the barnyard sort. The restrictive definitions are enlarged after its operation in the young men has, for a long time, quieted desire, and allowed answer to it only as argument, and with argument rather than any actual satisfaction—or even further advertisement of possible satisfaction after Polemarchus’ last query about sharing the women.

Thus, a richer, less limiting and denigrating view of eros is plausibly *visible* to these souls later precisely because of what the dialogue has made them practice mimetically and what Socrates has made them agree to about music and the city earlier. The richer view has always been true, Socrates has had to clear a space *through mimesis and calculation* for philosophical reasoning and eros for the truth to grow.¹⁵ It has been growing; Socrates has been watering it; their latest questions and demands indicate as much. The lower desires have been trained and penned for some time—even their “substitutive satisfactions” have been cut out of the artistic agenda. As a result it becomes more possible to talk about desire and expect something other than Attic pastries and Corinthian girls to appear. Socrates’ laws about sexual relations seem to be more of the same—their main point weans the young men forcefully from considering sexual relations as simply a matter of ease, freedom and pleasure.¹⁶ Finally then, while laying out the devolution of regimes in Eight and Nine, Socrates both exhibits and adjusts for his earlier restrictions and simplifications. We ought to expect that this expansion and adjustment in the status of *epithumia/philia* (580d–581c) will make the geometry based on mathematically simple parts of soul, set by the previous arguments, less clearly visible; it does so, precisely because the talk is about

the visible, though this does not falsify the intelligible: the mathematical simples structure the erotic lives, as geometry sets out the backbone of a building.

Book 4's division into mathematical simples makes finding the least suggestion of the more divine and soul-uniting loves of *Symposium* or *Phaedrus* in any of its bags impossible. Yet.¹⁷ Perhaps an eros for union with the beautiful gets too easily sidetracked into luxuries, and women whose virtue allows of easy union, especially among the young and testosterone infused (in a party mood) who have grown up on stories of Zeus doing his Zeus-like thing. After the souls of his interlocutors have been sufficiently purified by his sequestration, Socrates can allow, and nature require, that we (and the interlocutors) grow into a better, because truer, story about eros: love is, in fact, the underground river giving life to the whole soul. Each "part" in the soul is now *defined* as philic, having its own desire and pleasure (580d–581c). Socrates' earlier poetic metonymy, naming each "by what was biggest and strongest" (580e) and *so presenting* a less than attractive view of desire, helped purify his interlocutors. Just so, the ridiculous is something that, by laughing at, we separate ourselves from. In becoming more exact and complete, the description of *each* part broadens out.

Book 9's amplification, however, makes it more difficult to say precisely when "desire" is ruling the soul, for in one sense it is *always* so.¹⁸ Each part really has its own love: for wisdom and learning, for honor and victory, for eating, drinking and sex (581a–d). And where the earlier division of soul seemed obvious, but excluded love in any of its higher manifestations, this new division is more fully human about eros (less bestial), but seems not to grasp what was called the lower part of the soul very clearly. Socrates now calls it "gain loving" (581a), but as *more* wisdom and *more* honor would be wanted by the other two parts, this definition of the lowest part seems to grasp—well, what exactly? Between these two versions of distinguishing the "parts of the soul"—one which pens desire basely and inhumanly into a pig and one which expands and deepens our erotic aim to show its relation to immortality (611b–e)—it *appears* that talking about this lowest part of the soul as a separate part *requires* reduction to the body in order to pick out anything in particular; that in fact was what it meant in book 2, and, we recall, the desire of body for body encompassed the lowest two rungs of Diotima's ladder. So, perhaps *the work of analytic distinction* itself, not merely the easy distraction of youthful desires, mimetically induces the earlier, more restrictive limitation of desire to a lower part of the soul only—in fact, to what operates in the body. The intelligible, on the other hand, does not have all the color and body of the visible, so desire won't be as visibly operating; it is especially invisible to souls highly cathecting bodily things. Similarly, it seems strange to Falstaff to chase after honor—which is but breath, and is more easily and pleasantly recovered in a pub than on a battle-

field. It would seem even stranger to see someone reading for eight hours—what can they be after? Certainly our first experiences of desire grow out of the body; thinking seems entirely distinct from that sort of thing. (Descartes will later make much of this.) It is no surprise that rhetoricians taking up the defense of physical pleasure will call philosophers disembodied. For some, like Descartes, this seems true, but of others, like Socrates, it is merely the reversing mirror of the penning he performs (knowingly and for a cathartic purpose). To what purpose would one make this error of interpretation? This misprision?¹⁹

It would take more than a book to lay out the full course of permutations and peregrinations eros takes in the Platonic dialogues, as this already long excursus about its restriction and expansion among the parts of the soul in *Republic* indicates. However, if we accept the arithmetization of the aims of eros, a dialectical outline of permutations of order in the soul is possible with geometric exactness and arithmetical completeness, as already proven. This ordering allows some *intelligible* considerations of why a certain story about, or involving, desire is told in one circumstance to one character and another story told to another. There will be an uncountable variety of occlusions and flickers of clarity as all these forms of desire light up the world each soul experiences, but there are, according to algebra and geometry, six forms worth speaking of, since there are three main aims, or types, of eros. If all three are active in every soul (as must be the case for men—and women too), mathematics tells us there are six basic ways to order one's loves, though an infinite number of more detailed weavings are possible.

So while the place and understanding of eros in *Republic* is a much debated question, which seems even more difficult in the ninth book when it looks like every part of the soul is an eros, I hold that rather than treat one character as erotic, another thumotic, the more exacting question is “what is the order of eros in each soul?” Our geometry allows quite distinctive answers, and while it is unlikely that the geometric perfections of the previous chapter are ever instantiated in life, they are still an aid for understanding the visible—the “real life” activities and answers of various regimes. Thus Glaucon may be seen as strongly erotic in all three parts. Socrates picks him to go out of Piraeus because (as the chariot in *Phaedrus*) it is a strong eros with strong *thymos* that can be best guided to heaven to see the sights there. The less thumotic (like Adeimantus) need more goading, the more epithymetic (like Polemarchus) need more discipline from the thumotic before they will be able to listen. Someone who has both horses naturally studly (like Glaucon) only needs a well-trained guiding charioteer to practice driving with him. The construction of *Republic*, then, has to be considered as more widely curative than any mere philosophy or text in philosophy: for those who don't have their *thymos* strong enough yet—a goad (Adeimantus); for those whose Eros is named Poly—a bridle (Glaucon and Polemarchus); for those whose

thymos runs near to outrage (Glaucon, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus)—a bridle and master horseman as well.

One piece of evidence that the characters within the dialogue undergo a catharsis in the course of the dialogue is the kind of adjustments Socrates *has to make*, and then *is able to make*, in the course of it, weaving their interruptions and catharses into his journey up the road out of Piraeus, out of the cave of cultural seeming and mimetic desire, into understanding. So, from having to pen desire quite strictly, aided by one of the strongest and most universal of cultural conventions (against necrophilia), Socrates is eventually able to speak of desire, and see its nature, everywhere.

Socrates-Glaucon

Socrates himself has not achieved the highest ideal regime—how could he when Athens has not, when these friends have not, and no human being is self-sufficient? Only if there is a solitary man who needs not and relates not to other *anthrōpoi* could that one achieve perfection by himself. Socrates knows there cannot be such a one—but something divine must have happened to him: he has seen what the most ideal regime is; he sets out to describe it (369–372)—the city on the heaven’s hill: simple, healthy, just and pious. In it, as many scholars notice, *thymos* seems inactive;²⁰ this is correct, as our psychic geometry predicts. Even before he has occasion to begin that description for anyone, he is *aiming to become* simple, healthy, just and pious himself (but not by himself): he goes down to Piraeus with Glaucon to pray to the goddess and to see how the festival is being run. He is, then, practicing piety (spending his leisure in praise of the goddess); he goes down to pray; he practices piety with/in the larger community of Athens in life, and in communion with Glaucon particularly in *Republic*. As the dialogue begins he is bringing the piety of Piraeus out of the cave of cultural acclamation, up to investigation in the light of the good, whereby alone is true piety visible. Even so can all cultural practices be brought under investigation by philosophizing in the light of the good: he desires to do this for its own sake, seeing it is good—whether it praises his own or not. He is trying to bring Glaucon up into this consideration, perhaps because Glaucon is nearest already to a good regime of soul, or, what I think most likely, because he is the easiest to move toward perfection.²¹

Glaucon has many desires; among them, he desires honor, but what he thinks is honorable is what he has come to honor through mimesis—“what is customary” (372d), those things everyone who does not suffer hardship and heavy labor, everyone who is not a mere animal enjoys. Socrates’ single remark to him on the road regards what the Athenians do for “honor to the goddess” as no better than the Thracians (327a–b)—as if honor were not merely a social construction, differently constructed in different polities, *as if*

there might be a principle which can weigh honor that all cities and souls might agree on, an ideal honor each city and soul could judge and be judged by. If the only thing that keeps Glaucon in his culture cave is the desire to be looked up to, to be honored, then this thought must loosen that chain greatly: this is all that needs to be broken for such a one to rise up. *This* honor would be something worth knowing about, and, if possible, reaching for above all other honors.

As this evaluation Socrates proffers is about suitable homage to the goddess, it is really a question about piety more than it is a question about human honor. However, if this remark works on Glaucon, then for a moment he becomes a timocrat without a definite city, without a habitual hook to hang his word on; a timocrat considering whether there might be a more universal principle for discerning honor than “what is customary”—whether in Thrace or Athens. A question both ostensibly and really about piety thus disarms the timocrat of his habitual culturally defined measure—which Glaucon has already shown himself willing to risk death to win. These chains of social construction, into which a timocrat is raised up, are more easily slipped because the issue is not directly about the honors *he* seeks or has won, but is about honor paid to the goddess—which, unlike the tyrant, the timocrat still recognizes as naturally higher than things subject to his will—and even his imperial city. Glaucon’s spirited manliness must be inspired by such a vision of honor—one that allows of *universal* recognition (real persuasion rather than cultural seeming, cf. 357a); and his mind must wonder at what this could be. A new passion has a place to break forth in his soul. Polemarchus catches up and aborts its birth.

We can see Socrates’ soul operating somewhere between the best regime and the aristocratic, for *in him* it is desire following immediately upon his knowledge of (and desire to know better and practice further) what piety is that brings him to Piraeus—he wishes “to pray and to see how the festival would be accomplished,” *poiêsousin*, 327a) and we see that he opens up *for Glaucon*, in this first scene, a way to the aristocratic consideration of honor from the more timocratic understanding usual to him (and in which he has already been measured to glory—368a). But the further journey is interrupted. The difference between Socrates and Glaucon at this point might be seen in the consideration that, for Socrates, true honor *must be* measured under piety in order to be measured wisely, (so, first of all, desire to honor the goddess, not to win it for oneself). Honor must also be measured under a wiser justice than measuring honor merely by volume of acclamation (492b) as a timocrat in any polis lower than aristocracy would do. Athens is such a lower polis. Socrates’ movement is entirely outside the cave, even though he goes back down to Piraeus. Working oppositely from the devolutions of book 8, Socrates is trying to lead Glaucon *up* to the middle position between them. The middle between the divine regime (R/D/S) Socrates is *acting in accord*

with (though I do not know that we can say he *is* that) and Glaucon's more timocratic activity and being (S/R/D) is the aristocracy (R/S/D).

So, while I agree with Mark McPherran that the first sentence of *Republic* announces "a theological work as well as a political and moral one;" I think he is mistaken in his consideration that piety comes to "name nothing other than justice-in-the-soul" and is "no longer to count . . . as a cardinal virtue."²² Besides his opening acts of piety, Socrates begins his defense of justice precisely because it would be "impious" not to come to her aid (368b)—not that it would be unjust (though it would also be that). Piety motivates his defense of justice. Further, his recognition of the Good as that by which alone the mind can know whatever it knows and that which makes all that is knowable both be and be knowable is a confession of piety that Augustine, for one, would clearly recognize (cf. *Conf* 10.24.35–10.27.38, 10.40.65); it is a recognition of something that not only *exceeds* human justice and knowledge but also *makes them* (as well as everything else) *be*. Precisely in his mention of this excess Glaucon is struck (again) into wonder, and Socrates demands from him a holy silence (*Euphêmei*, 509a)—the opposite is blasphemy. His interlocutors, however, have not yet considered justice adequately enough by itself to be prepared for piety, since they consider justice a mere means—to power, honor, greater pleasures, or at least protection from harm; nor is it plausible that these could see justice as the way to, the *ratio cognoscendi* of, something even higher than the human ends—piety. At present, they merely imagine justice, echo cave pieties; though Glaucon (perhaps) is able to feel the tug of the real. Maybe tomorrow they will be ready to honor the God from choice and knowledge rather than being charmed into a mimesis of piety by Socrates' Bendic liturgy—or their city's Piraeon practices. Socrates is already practicing that virtue—and speaks it. Always.

Socrates confesses in several places to being moved by piety, is visibly enacting it in going down to Piraeus to pray, and in carrying out the assigned argument. Piety seems, however, just beyond, or at the limit of what can be discussed with these interlocutors: it appears at the end of Socrates' book 1 argument with Thrasymachus—

And the gods, too, my friend, are just?

"Let it be," he said.

Then the unjust man will also be the enemy to the gods, Thrasymachus, and the just man a friend.

"Feast yourself nobly on the argument." (352a–b)

—like an untouched dessert. There is "something divine" in the brothers of which they are unaware, but Socrates seems to see (368a). He considers the city's laws regarding piety "greatest, fairest and *first*" (427b) but naming them last, says no more about them. All this indicates that he is moved by the

human being's most proper love—for the unchanging Good (by which reason is able to enlighten desire); but his interlocutors are far from that passion or understanding, and perhaps, insofar as he must repeat the purification to himself, he may not yet be entirely stably conformed to that most ideal regime, but must step down (regularly?) into the purificatory charm of the story he tells. Piety is thus the virtue the dialogue *enacts* in recollecting the place and work and coming to be of all other virtues. We must practice virtue before we have it. We can think of Socrates then as either somewhere between aristocracy and the finer regime, or as turning from the finer arrangement (R/D/S) toward the aristocratic one (R/S/D) in the face of the interruptions of desire, which both among his interlocutors and due to their mimetic arousal of similarly named heads in himself, requires spirit to come to the aid of reason to keep them in check.

If Glaucon is starting as someone more timocratic²³ than the Polemarchus who brings them all together, his quick affirmation of Socrates' book 2 addition to his request for relish—many kinds of many of them—is surely the confession of someone who easily surrenders to a very democratic regime of soul. He seems as strongly drawn to flute girls and fine desserts as honors. If, as previously argued, he rises up at the beginning of book 8 to see the “still finer regime,” he has clearly, by the end of the evening, come out of the timocratic culture cave into something more aristocratic, and the fire of desire for wisdom's more complete rule has ignited in his soul. With constant purification, we may hope for his growth into “the still higher form.” Glaucon, then, covers the most psychic ground in the dialogue; this invisible truth has a visible measure—he has more lines than anyone except Socrates. As our diagram shows, he started at or perhaps somewhere above timocracy, was being taken higher by Socrates' question, but then fell into democracy at the instigation of Polemarchus and the desires crowding around, further strengthened by the spirited argument against justice by Thrasymachus (one so spirited as to try to shout down reason). He then returns to conclude near enough to Socrates to see where Socrates was originally heading, of which he had no inkling before the evening's discussion.

Adeimantus-Polemarchus

Polemarchus and Adeimantus were seen in the previous chapter as more closely related to the democratic and the oligarchic souls respectively, and we have already discussed something of Adeimantus' plutonic blindness. About this we must now say more. He is walking with the democratic Polemarchus, indicating a kind of symbiosis between the oligarch and the democrat, a symbiosis which *must be the case* in an oligarchic society since the oligarchs are in need of more liberally desiring citizens in order to offer them injections of silver to spend on their more consumptive and consuming de-

sires (555c–556a). Still, Adeimantus must himself be turned toward something higher than the purely oligarchic character for several reasons: he comes to his brother's aid by offering the face-saving suggestion of the horse race, and in the opening salvo of book 2; he, too, already has a name for valor, something contrary to the true oligarch's order.

Still, Adeimantus incorrectly (according to Socrates) saw his brother as the one referred to as the harshly timocratic type when taking over the argument from him at 548d, which would seem to indicate he is not thoroughly familiar with the higher type. Perhaps what he says reveals something of what Glaucon *was*—before this evening's cathartic ritual started. And then, Glaucon ceases answering as the discussion moves from the timocratic society to the timocratic man—why? Does he begin a long period of introspection about his own timocracy; seeing how that city is, does he intimately and immediately know the man? Does the shock of self-recognition stop his speech here? Socrates points out that Glaucon has more subtlety and flexibility, and less brutality toward inferiors—as if Socrates is joining Glaucon in looking at timocracy, theatricalizing it, and telling him—you're better than that. Adeimantus' inaccuracy about his brother's soul exhibits itself as something significantly worse in the originating interchange about the coming to be of oligarchy (the type nearest his own):

“How the change occurs is surely obvious even to a blind man.”

“How?” (550d)

This reads as a syllogism: the one who answers is *worse off* than the blind. Adeimantus' already discussed inability to distinguish, or to set out any examples of, the necessary (and not) desires in this discussion affirms that he is in quite a dark position—and not just about *t'aphrodisia*. This blindness is *why* Socrates describes the next few souls in terms of desire, rather than the more strictly geometrical, eidetically defined, psychological outlines determined in the previous chapter. Being worse off than the blind is thus precisely exhibited in him: he still has reason (the eye), but is not able to see any *eidōs*. Adeimantus is not yet close enough to the door of the cave to follow such exacting *dianoia* as geometry sets out. The fire of desire blinds him; perhaps he should stop hanging out with Polemarchus. He feels everything as related to desire, weighable.

Though he might speak in the later parts of the dialogue as a proper oligarch, he must earlier have been, as our diagram shows, somewhat higher than the oligarchic character, and even in his return to that more stolid regime (due to going out for a walk in a more rural area with Polemarchus?—563d) Adeimantus has not entirely displaced reason, and in fact would like to know about those desires that are necessary and not (so that he may calculate the most monetarily efficient cuts)—and even more about those unlawful and

absolutely dangerous desires taken up in the beginning of Nine. He can't, however, see it for himself. Socrates therefore tells a tale about those souls which aims precisely at Adeimantus' blindness: he tells about the oligarchic soul and every soul further down in terms of what the desires look to be doing. Desire blocks reason in all those lower forms. The *mathematically exact* distinctions are precisely what the oligarch is incapable of seeing, due to the largeness of desire and his own fear of loss. He can, however, sort of *feel* the seeming difference (necessary/not), which shows that he is *like and related to* the more dianoetically exacting analysis of oligarchy already given.

Socrates is, by making the distinctions among desire for Adeimantus, creating some distance, and allowing some light to shine on the fissures Adeimantus can palpate, but not distinctly see, among his own desires. His agreements with Socrates about the desires are, at the same time, the beginning of his own more particular cathartic process; he is being weaned precisely by bringing reason more and more to bear: in order to be a good servant it first must actually *know*. So that Socrates' *telling about* the oligarch's soul does not *explicitly* follow the geometry we have set out as underlying *Republic's* ordering of regimes is true. However, the way he tells about the regimes has a *psyche*-ological and pharmacological purpose for his interlocutor: Adeimantus. Socrates speaks to Adeimantus, close to the D/R/S order, in accord with his particular incapacity. He must, after Socrates' explanation, try to understand necessity; some time after that he will be able to know the psychic-structural reason for the blindness he suffered. Socrates' telling about the desires of the last three souls is a sort of noble lie: the *truth* about their souls is unseeable because of Reason's occlusion(s). Though Adeimantus may *act* more temperately than his brother (in this sense he is closer to virtue), it will take longer to free him into true virtue—he is not an originating risk taker, though he will stand beside his brother. Reason needs to walk over desire, thus allowing it to make *real* distinctions among desires; to do so spirit must again be roused over his desires as well, so that reason's desire—as dangerous to increase as to poverty—can be spurred on in a soul structure trained to lean otherwise.

Socrates rightly has no interest in presenting a thinking substance's Platonic theory of regimes of soul to us, for he is attempting to cure interlocutors like Adeimantus. However, what he knows about the types of souls and their derangements *underlies* what he says to each (cf. *Phaed* 266a, 271d–272a). It is not possible that what each can see is the truth of the matter.²⁴ Therefore it is nonsensical to lay out a demonstration about the structure of soul; the truest demonstration will be ineffective to one whose vision is blindered. The speech must be framed such that the souls it addresses can see or feel some part of, or something like, the truth, and—if possible—begin to turn out of the weird gymnastic posture their earlier mimeses and practices have twisted

them into. If we are to read *Plato*, it must be *through* noticing both the disease of soul an interlocutor has and how what Socrates says attempts to cure it, for he only teaches one soul at a time—the one he knows he is talking to. Socrates does not know he is talking to us (and he isn't), but Plato does know—and he knows we are polymorphous too.

When Adeimantus seconds Glaucon's argument in book 2, he complains about justice not being praised "by itself" but merely for its reputation, which produces "an inexhaustible store of goods that they say the gods give" (363a). This is not the complaint of a soul frozen into oligarchy. The oligarch would not complain here, but *invest*, as Cephalus is off doing out in the courtyard (if he is not already enjoying his eternal reward). This complaint shows that Adeimantus *wants* justice to be worth more than what it can buy, but he is *not able to see* that or how it is so; he wants to know a measure more noble than purchasing power—which is the one he has been talked sick by—in fact, so sick it is all he seems to know. But he cannot see such a thing, he only feels something is not right with that orientation. He is in danger of settling into something between timocracy and oligarchy, but he feels dissatisfied. The more perfect (or perfected, as in finished off, like Cephalus) a plutocrat is, the harder he is to move; lack of spirit gives such a one a certain stolidity, and he is afraid of many desires.²⁵ The oligarchic soul may act in a way that is *more like* justice, temperance or wisdom—he certainly wouldn't go to war for cheesecake—but the more oligarchic he is the harder he will be to move to true virtue.²⁶

We argued earlier that Adeimantus might achieve, in book 8, the position originally occupied by his brother; the dialogue then needs to restart there for him. Adeimantus, from the beginning however, is not quite as spiritedly randy for the things considered fine and conventionally worthy as his brother was at 372e; being more oligarchic, his trouble will not be requiring a wide variety of couches, courtesans and cakes, but whether we should say sex is necessary or not (559c5). He did echo his brother's complaint about happiness and "having stuff"—including mistresses—to an extent in beginning book 4, but it did not seem quite so difficult to quiet his desires as it was to quiet his brother's. It won't be quite restarting the dialogue over if Socrates goes down to Pireaus to look for him tomorrow; maybe Socrates need only start with the city of necessity again—Adeimantus had had no complaints with that beginning. In fact, all his answers had been "certainly," "most certainly," and "of course" until Socrates said that "the city of utmost necessity would be made of four or five" which only "appears so" according to Adeimantus (369c–e). When Socrates continues growing the city, Adeimantus' certainty returns. Perhaps he is *more in touch with human insufficiency* than his more erotic and spirited brother—that would certainly be true of the oligarchic son of the timocrat *vis-a-vis* the timocrat himself (553b–c). Adeimantus would, it seems, be willing to look for justice in that original smallest

city, or—certainly—in the somewhat larger one engaging in trade with other cities for things their hard-scrabble island might not produce (370e–371b).

Adeimantus also seems to be rather more easily drawn to fall in with whoever he is around than a real oligarch—he comes up the road with Polemarchus; he demands an argument for justice with his brother; he voices Polemarchus' concern about sharing the women. Alone with Socrates he might be most agreeable; democracy seems a bad suburban dream to him (563d), his desires are not as multifarious, or as demanding—he needs to be reminded about sex, for instance; and his spirit is only aroused, it seems, by mimesis of his brother, voicing the strong recall for a defense of justice against Thrasymachus. The “better stories” he agrees are necessary for the young seem purification enough for him; but he *needs* to be with his brother in order to be sparked beyond them—to philosophical consideration of the truth, rather than mere *pistis* in a “said to be” better *eikōn*. While agreeable, he would not, it seems, become philosophical without the “sweet intercourse” of our small polity, which includes souls more spirited than his. The first requirement for philosophy is a courage to stand out from the stolidity of convention and the mimetic; to wonder and to question; Glaucon is the best candidate. Still, Adeimantus seems to end the dialogue in a slightly higher position than he holds originally—he has been brought to feel more clearly the blindness of his mostly oligarchic regimen, though he perhaps still imagines himself to be a philosopher king because he can behave more like one than his brother. He has heard of a mathematical education that may seem rather extreme, as well as of some dialectical considerations which can free him, if he practices: how does one distinguish the necessary? What shall we say about sex? To become clear on this he has to move beyond even the regime directed by spirit. The most stolid character, he moves least through the discussion.

Polemarchus, while his opening tendency toward tyranny is undeniable (so our diagram has him begin just above that regime), makes it a democratic, vote-counting sort of tyranny: “do you see how many of us there are?” (327c). He would be the polemarch of a democracy then: the majority whip: having the votes, he forces the issue. That he both defends his father (ct. 574b) and concerns himself with his inheritance (331d, 568e) opens the wide range of behaviors which exist on that portion of the line between the beginnings of tyranny and his father's more oligarchic and conservative life. He too advances somewhat higher; his last interruption, while not so rude as in *Republic's* first scene, is still expressive of the appetitive youth, wondering still about exactly how the women will be shared. However, his participation in the dialogue has taken him from one who *orders*, threatens force, and requires we “bear in mind that we won't listen” to counterarguments (327bc), to one who *whispers a request* for further details about the argument (if not exactly further argument, cf. 561b–c). The new vote he calls for requires

further *reasoning*, not merely feeding the mouth of the majority. Of course it is still desire—Aphrodite in particular it seems—which is motivating his input. His spirit is not so strongly demanding as at first, so we must see that his state of soul has improved significantly during the evening's purification, and with his purification the community becomes better too. Thus does the taming of desire within one soul aid everyone in the city—as Socratic justice would predict. As a result of soothing and calming *him*, desire is no longer running the small *community* as it wills, but *willingly undergoes the policing of a son of the best*. This relation is much closer to the temperance of the aristocratic soul (where desire agrees that reason should rule) than the democrat possesses in his original form. Polemarchus may not yet see, know, and truly possess that temperance, but he is clearly practicing it. Thus virtue begins.

These democratic types are hard to pin down, but we might explain Polemarchus' improving behavior as a mimetic effect of having his and everyone else's attention held for so long by this string of reasonable speeches. His numerous desires have had little practice and less instigation; his attention has been charmed into the circle around Socrates. He still speaks for the desires, but his rate of rotation has certainly been attenuated from that achieved by the usual willful distraction democratic souls practice as if their principle. Even if he has only been pretending to be occupied with philosophy thus far (cf. 461d), this relatively long-lasting pretense has had the predictable mimetic effect. He is aided further by the fact that numerous other desires have *not* been satisfied: eating, drinking and horse racing, for example. They seem to have suffered eclipse; perhaps they have been put to sleep by the argument, as Aphrodite might be bored away by five years of intense mathematical study as preparation for a short golden wedding. There is, apparently, such a thing as too much foreplay.

Thrasymachus

Thrasymachus is already in Piraeus, in the house of Cephalus; this signifies he is the most like the dead, the most like a stalagmite in a cave, the most darkened soul. He is also somewhat older than Polemarchus and his friends: he has been practicing his delusions longer—though not as long as Cephalus; not so much as to be dead in them. He has empirical reasons set out in defense of his *eikôn* of justice. He is not quite frozen into tyranny; he is definitely thumotic, but still has democratic elements within him: others restrain him from taking over the discussion (336b); he wishes for good reputation among the many gathered at the house (338a); he can be embarrassed (350d)—but a true tyrant would not care what the sheep think. Spirit is ruling, but that he wishes to be flattered (337c), to *show* as the stronger not merely *be* it confesses that there yet remains something besides his own will

being done that he desires; he is not entirely separated from others into utter madness. This presence of a third, not merely one interlocutor (Socrates) upon whom he practices the master-slave dialectic, is a presence opened because of the fact that the language they speak belongs to neither of them, thus *shows* both of them to all others, and in doing so works to make him tractable. Socrates says that they have become friends halfway through the dialogue (498d), and though Thrasymachus continues to demand, his last demand is for reasonable speech, and he makes it look as if the election of that course has been unanimous (as indeed it has been). We must regard his soul as arriving somewhere above tyranny, then—at least moving into something more democratic: “consider this a resolution approved by all of us” (450a).²⁷ Perhaps he is now like Polemachus’ majority whip first appearance, or—what I think is more likely—even higher, insofar as he is aiming for the “real gold” discoverable only through *logos* (450b), which Polemarchus originally was not willing to listen to.

This last noted claim of his—that they are looking for something of *real* value—makes us consider that perhaps the extreme spiritedness he exercised in book 1 has been brought around (as suggested above with Glaucon) to consider what *true* honor or victory would be—for that good he wanted from the first he realizes is something about which he does *not want to be mistaken*: the homage (or obedient fear) of the sheep, their praise, may no longer be sufficient for him. He has seen *there is a question* about measuring honor, perhaps even a question about what victory really is, and it would be wise to get this question answered as exactly as possible—and not from sheep. If we think that he has come all the way up to at least wanting a true timocracy, we would be seeing again that one soul can be more easily raised to virtue than some other souls which seem to be behaviorally closer to it. Thrasymachus could be ending higher than Adeimantus. The desiring soul needs to have much of its orientation penned, the less spirited need a spur, but the already highly spirited only need to be slowed down to take reasonable deliberation about the proper direction.²⁸ Thrasymachus is slowed, in book 1, by the rather stunning implication that perhaps the art he thought he had is self-destructive (351a–352b). He is still on the road, or back on it, at the end of the dialogue; he is not yet a piece of cave furniture. He has (at least) escaped the mad demanding of book 1 (336b–d).

Even one such as he was, *by watching* the discussion among the brothers—who began by defending his thesis in the strongest possible way—escapes his *mania* and begins to “imitate the man who’s willing to discuss and consider the truth” (539c). The brothers’ presentation, with its wonderfully powerful arguments, must have pleased him; that was also an aid in taming him: *his own* was polished up, but it was not set there *by him*, and it is not (as in book 1) he who is at the personal stake and answering or defeated. It is only an image—an *eikôn*, a statue, a poem; but it is *thaumastos*—and

especially so to him. The theatricalisation of his position by the brothers might rouse some of the same passions he had exhibited earlier, but it arouses them a step away from himself—the *eikôn* is like his own, but it is not himself or set up by himself; what it suffers, he mimetically—not directly—undergoes. The brothers' presentation provides him a detachment that mirrors their own disengagement. Like Plato's brothers, he can now be "committed to the argument, but not the views under scrutiny"—for it is not he who is under scrutiny.²⁹ It seems, in his last words, that he is doing more than merely imitating an interest in philosophy—and he is, for *his own* is at stake; he is not, like a democrat, merely pretending. Plato's mimesis leads us into the same dance or song. Our hypothesis then—that Socrates plays between the unspoken-of best regime of soul and that called aristocratic; Glaucon ending between the aristocratic (the regime built for him particularly—427d—as a cure) and the timocratic; Adeimantus existing between the timocrat and the oligarch; Polemarchus moving between the lower democrat and the oligarch; and finally, Thrasymachus moving somewhere above tyranny—has considerable textual plausibility, and our explication of the regimes each travels through fits appropriately with the changes we see in their speech and action. Thus a noetic and dianoetic science allows us to see among the shadows thereof (the historical world) what is *really* operating in the movement of those shadows: the actions of the characters are the result of the organization of their loves.

THE ORIGINAL (DE?)VOLUTION: R/D/S TO R/S/D

Why does the best man go down into the cave? Why does Socrates go back to Pireaus?

If Socrates is nearest of all to the divine regime of health, we should explain his going down not as the consequence of fear generated by the *ad baculum* of Polemarchus (327c), and certainly not as due to the plausible mimetic arousal of spirit aiming to answer the threat of Polemarchus with its own extremity—particularly against the boy who (if a slave) has perhaps committed a capital offence. There is no evidence for either. Nor can we consider it as the compulsion of the law such as he says would be necessary (for Glaucon) and plausible in the aristocratic city (519e–520b), for in a democracy the philosopher comes to be "spontaneously," and Athens' treatment of Socrates makes pretty clear that he is there "against the will of the regime" (520b). Rather, we should think of Socrates as motivated by reason and desire together; not that the motive of reason is merely pragmatism about the threatening fisticuffs, or his desire one of keeping his nose in place, but rather *he knows what his fellow citizens need*, and that he is the one who on this holy day can do the good to them that they most need, and he recognizes

that no one is self-sufficient. His *desire is thereby aroused* and follows immediately upon his knowledge, unforced by *thymos*—or Polemarchus; he can see, however, that *thymos* is likely going to be necessary to go down into the Piraeus (where anything might happen) with these threatening characters. Moreover, though Athens has not brought up this philosopher for his “use in binding the city together” (520a), that *is* his god-ordained—and *natural*—position among *anthropoi*, none of whom (including himself) are self-sufficient, but whose need for each other is natural and permanent. He knows this: the city of man needs the philosopher king. It is, then, pious, wise, courageous, temperate and just for Socrates to go down. What kind of soul would desire otherwise, or do otherwise? But when going down there, what does one need to be?

The regime laid out in *Republic* is not the best, but the second best regime, and it is indicative of (though not itself a stage in) the way of decline which Socrates maps out completely and rigorously in book 8—as if its underpinning were an iterative equation: each result providing the input for the next solution until, like the predictions of the second law of thermodynamics, polis and soul reach the stage of maximum entropy, and chaos comes again.³⁰ But while the latter forms of regime are real *devolutions*, this first going down of the soul by Socrates (from R/D/S to R/S/D) cannot be thought of as exactly that kind of thing, for it is necessary and good in every societal regime other than the City of God, or, for people who prefer Greek, the islands of the blest.³¹ If Socrates is, as I have argued, somewhat above the regime *kallipolis* instantiates—for he aims at something better than the curative *kallipolis* from the beginning of his political story, then his purposed going down can be seen as a change of regime in his soul—down toward the *kallipolic* geometry. Out of love Socrates transforms his own soul from one approaching the divine ideal (R/D/S) back toward the best human soul (R/S/D)—the aristocratic soul constructed in the largest part of the night’s discussion. This change in Socrates is not out of duty, nor would the soul type which makes such a change call the act supererogatory, for the absolute best soul’s constitution, acting out of desire aroused by reason’s vision of the good, is losing nothing of its desire, and nothing of itself. The change required of this soul, when Socrates turns to go back down to Piraeus—to the aristocratic regime—is also *a change he desires*. Or, perhaps he does not change his soul structure, but merely his way of acting. Thus, perhaps, a regime surpassingly glorious *must* sojourn, hidden, as a stranger among the impious, until it obtain, by virtue of its excellence, final victory and lasting peace.³²

Or perhaps he is better pictured not as changing his order, or really being one or the other, but as essentially being a Janus like soul, just as the noble lies he tells must have that structure. Socrates himself then is the cure; Socrates is the noble lie, which faces both ways. *Plato’s poetry produces an*

impossible soul—depending on how we turn it, or where we are coming from, it looks like a different face. *Republic*, which is spoken entirely from Socrates' mouth, is that Janus we need to come through to the other side of. The one face (R/S/D) he *turns toward* a world in which he will have to face down wild beasts, huge waves, the shifting factions and gangs of democratic passions, as well as tyrants. And being naturally mimetic himself, he knows that to go there is dangerous even for him. It looks like he changes himself—but not to something worse; the other face is always oriented to the blessed R/D/S order even as he acts more like the aristocrat—as is good and necessary considering his change of direction on the road out of Piraeus. Plato places Socrates permanently on that road, where he meets whom he meets. Few of us are coming from heaven, I bet; most (particularly undergraduates who unknowingly sign up for a course where this book is assigned) are but momentarily out of Piraeus, and have every intention of going back down to cheer what is cheered for and enjoy what is enjoyed.

Further, Socrates' change of direction, or difference of face, is itself good for everyone. If “the man who seems to be, and is, good” is a friend (334e), then Socrates goes down in order to be the friend—to Glaucon first, and to the others too, as they require. *Philia* (a *philia* born of truth) is his motive *for this turn*. The turn is the act of the more divine regime—a regime which gives birth to love out of wisdom and piety. Plato, creating this mimesis of the true friend, is also doing good to all. Socrates, turning, enters upon “a great work, and an arduous;” the good to be achieved is all the more arduous because of all the varieties of good which speak; they must be brought to order. This interpretation of *Republic* is, then, a friend to both Plato and the truth—indeed how could one ever be the first without being the second? That would be madness. So I agree with Ferrari that “Socrates offers the brothers an alternative to the corrosive aspect of quietism, its retreat from the social world. . . , yet preserves its positive aspect—its focus on the politics of the soul—even as he pursues an ideal that can reconnect the brothers to the prospect of kingship.”³³ But Socrates goes even further than this; he offers hope of a city in which no human being need be king, for all will be interdependently united in “sweet intercourse and hymning the gods” in every word and deed. To achieve this more divine *telos* the best man will turn himself to go back down until all are released into that true polity. And one must be a philosopher king in order to go back down and hold one's own soul safely there.

The other face is forever oriented to the city on heaven's hill—what Acropolis is to be the *reminder* of (presuming one is not a timocrat, for whom it is a reminder of Athenian hegemony, or an oligarch, for whom it is the repository of Athens' wealth, or a democrat, who is probably doing something else than looking uphill, since he has a moral repugnancy to things not being on the same level, or the tyrant who sees it as something to rob and

rule over or from). If Socrates, like his noble lies, faces two ways at once, he would be something like the round beings invented by Aristophanes at the *Symposium*. Unlike those round beings, however, he is pious, where they wished to challenge the gods; Socrates need not have his being split in two (*Symp* 190b–191b). *Those* round beings had the souls of tyrants—expecting to give orders to the gods, to win victory over them. This soul aims at their service (*Ap* 22a). Socrates is either an original man—unfallen into impiety and so unpunished—or one who has been cured, by love, and rewelded. This kind of being does have two faces. But can a *soul* really be a Janus? It must have one order or another. Very well then: this Janus picture, too, is a fiction.³⁴ Perhaps the better image was supplied by Alcibiades—that Satyric off-putting exterior has within something of divine beauty (*Symp* 215b–217a). In *Republic* the oft complained of harsh discipline of the philosopher king hides the more divine regime to which every pious soul tends. The human soul's true nature (and *telos*) is the divinely ordered, unspoken of regime, the beauty of which put the would-be king, Alcibiades, into a sacred rage—and left him entirely ashamed of what he actually was. Such responses might both be expected on seeing someone 5,832 times superior, if the one could measure so exactly. The four worse regimes are delusions; the aristocratic regime built up in *Republic* is the illusion—the noble lie—which will bring us back to being properly measured men, from being so much less (though, of course, being democratic, we think all of us are already men, just different—that is symptomatic). In any case, this story helps to purify each other type of soul who participates in the dialogue; we may have to live in this cure, this story, for a long time. We find that it works on all those who do not leave it enraged, as Thrasymachus attempted early on (344d).

There is a further parallelism between Socrates, who turns himself to go back down, and Plato, who turns to making fictions, and it returns us to the issue of illusion and the kinds of lying we discussed in chapter 2. Most precisely, this self-transformation or duality in Socrates, which is neither a devolution nor an admission of original inadequacy on his part, brings us back to one of *Republic's* opening problems regarding lies—would a god change himself, or lie? We argued then that the answer Adeimantus should have given was “yes.” Our reading of the geometries of regime and of the characters as on the road between regimes opens a way, in the case of Socrates, to begin to both know and build an image of a change that is not a devolution, nor yet an improvement *tout court*. Our geometry of soul regimes allows us to present, in the case of Socrates changing his direction on the road out of Piraeus, an intelligible image of the theological agreement between Adeimantus and Socrates in book 2—and what it should have led to. There they agreed that “the god and what belongs to the god are in every way in the best condition;” further, if he were to change at all, “he would transform himself” (381b); it seems most pious to agree with them thus far. The

gods could not be transformed by some other being; the subjection of divinity to the power of another is the tyrant's dream, and it is false. *Socrates'* direction could be changed by Polemarchus and his crowd—he is not a god and they could carry him off, or he might fall victim to human mimetism—but he *is not* so transformed; rather, he changes direction himself. The theological agreement about *the god* not being able *to be transformed* led Socrates to ask what transformation the god himself might make, and with Socrates offering the forced choice of better or worse (381b), Adeimantus admits “if he is altered at all” it must be to something worse, which it is “impossible” for anyone “either god or human being” to “willingly” undergo (381b–c).

We can now reconsider this argument, given what we have said about the number and relation of regimes and the place of the characters between them. Among human souls we have noted that the sixth form of soul is perfect but can only truly exist within the society of the blessed isles, as Augustine—that happy Platonist—recognizes in describing the passions of the souls in the city of God. The aristocratic form, on the other hand, is the perfection required amid the imperfections of every human society: each of these two ideal forms is *perfect in its place*. Therefore the alteration we can picture Socrates *willingly* undertakes on the road is not toward the worse, but to what is perfect in the unfolding situation. Similarly then, the divine beings within the society of the divine would not, in their own society, change, nor have any use for lies and other *pharmaka*; but if such a one willingly came into a less perfect society of men he would change himself and this change would still not be to anything worse. Therefore this “first devolution” not only can be willed, *it is and must be desired* and willed by god and *by the most perfect* human being in order to produce the aristocratic regime of soul in his fellow citizens. And this is the only way to act piously and justly, and the only way to really be able to turn one's face into the madhouse and go into it to do well to those friends who are mad. Though we do not know much about them (382d, cf. 427c), perhaps such a thing is possible for the gods as well: being the best, one such could willingly change himself without becoming worse; or perhaps the god who cares has two faces. Becoming a swan or a bull is unlikely to be helpful to human beings; becoming the aristocratic human being would be.

Say, then, that the soul of Socrates is like a noble lie: it is bifrons. He himself knows and aims to become that kind of soul which will be at home in the islands of the blest; to some degree, he already is this being. But he also knows himself not to be there most of the time—perhaps only on those occasions, at the public liturgies, when he can engage in *theoria* concerning the gods. He is, rather, on—and purposefully turning further into—that part of the map where it says “here be monsters” and *that* place requires the aristocratic soul (cf. 496c–d).³⁵ He also knows that the divine soul will go

down into the world where *thymos* is absolutely necessary (as it is not on those blessed isles); that perfect soul thereby *transforms itself out of love* into what is required for its friends, its fellow citizens, all those whose *real human good* is to achieve the blessed isles, where he, too, aims to arrive. He not only knows this, but does it. *Republic* is the journey of that transformation, by reading it we are mimetically shaped to a similar transformation. Each time we take up and read we choose to go back down to Piraeus, to the cave, and we are repeating this transformative liturgy—in both directions, with all the other regimes of soul—all ours—calling out to us on the way down, and we are turned and carried out, following the voice of Socrates, to gaze from the city we have rebuilt within us (the aristocratic) towards that city which is our true home (the divine, “still better” regime). We find ourselves back again on the road, outside of Piraeus and the cave, gazing at the city on the hill above us, a city for which the Acropolis of Athens, new and complete in Socrates’ day, can only stand as an *eikōn* and a mimesis in stone, for the truth of the human soul and our community cannot be seen by the eyes, but only by a more divine power working with us and within us.

In reading *Republic*, then, we discover that Socrates is, in speaking to himself, speaking to us, and we imitate his speech to us ourselves, until we too become bifrons, we too—“now and here”—find ourselves on the road which our more purified desire wishes to follow to its true end; still and again, knowing we cannot remain there yet we turn to go back down—until some god releases us from our duty in this city. For our true city can only exist when all other human souls have also achieved this healthy regime—since none of us is self-sufficient;³⁶ until such time as that divine society is achieved, the aristocratic regime is noble lie, *pharmakon*, and “really” best. *Republic* is, then, the daily liturgy of the human soul, our necessary catharsis—or we are going somewhere else, and it is not a place. As Parmenides said, “the other road is not.” Only the road the goddess shows is real—but human beings are two headed she adds.³⁷

All the other devolutions then, involve stories about their regime which take the form of *ignoble* lies; they bear badly; they are *agenos*: they are illusions leading further into delusion. Each of them is a more delusional state than the one preceding: one after another each regime “purges” or “purifies” itself of the virtues the best soul would have, and it does so by accepting the story—a verbal lie that leads into delusion—about a different god as king in the soul: civic homage, wealth, freedom and equality (monotheism is insufficiently pluralist for democracy), victory (or, my will). Hayden Ausland gives a particularly apropos outline of how each regime produces less and less virtue.³⁸ He argues that each city in the devolutions of book 8 purges a “virtue”; so, from the four cardinal virtues of the aristocracy, we purge wisdom and are left with the “courage” of timocracy; subtracting that “courage,” there remains the “temperance” of oligarchy; purifying our-

selves of oligarchic temperance, we are left with the “justice” of the democracy, and subtracting democracy’s minimal justice of equality, we achieve the perfect injustice of tyranny. It also looks to be the case that every “lower” virtue still held by the degenerate regimes further degenerates with the next purging—as we saw with temperance in chapter 5. Similarly with timocratic “justice,” which still gives each his due, but “his due” is measured by strength and victory, not wisdom as in aristocracy, and yet not as incompletely as the democrat measures justice: to unequals, equally. Ausland’s analysis shows how the mimesis of any corrupt regime’s primary virtue corrupts practices that affect not only that corrupted virtue, but systematically corrupts each other virtue too; each city’s stories lead further down into the cave even as they mouth the words of virtue (the true measure of which they have not seen).

Ausland’s story can only be improved in one way, namely by pointing out that the prime virtue of the best city is piety; its *being* is a holiness which exceeds but includes the wisdom of the aristocracy. Socrates does not speak of this virtue as present in the aristocratic city to his interlocutors, but he does openly admit that aristocratic city’s “greatest, finest and first laws” (427b) are precisely those oriented toward the divine; he admitted as well that his own defense of justice was called up by a piety of which he never speaks (368b). This highest and first virtue moves Socrates to begin his long argument: Piety is love arising immediately from vision of the good. “The *ne plus ultra* of man’s destiny is assimilation to the nature and likeness of the divine Being. . . . This positive view of *katharsis*, as assimilation [*aphomoiôsis*] to goodness” requires that *katharsis* be “more than learning, more than the clarification of the mind to itself.”³⁹ That positive *katharsis* is being performed by *Republic* on us, by Socrates on his interlocutors at the feast of Bendis; other poems and politics, other sorts of mimesis, work otherwise. This piety includes all the virtues the lower cities have illusory versions of; for no virtue is true except that which knows and loves its source of being in the excessiveness of the Good itself.

The *bifrons* soul of Socrates can be completely distinguished from the *factionalism* within the lower souls (e.g., the oligarch 554d) since both agree entirely on what must be done—or what face must be shown. In no soul below the aristocratic does a total agreement of parts *in act* occur; thus the two best souls not only agree intramurally about what must be done, but they also agree with each other *in act*. So, while the healthy city spends its leisure practicing piety and wisdom (hymning the gods and sweet intercourse, 372b) thereby binding all of the citizens together (*re-ligare*) in its practices, the aristocratic city is known by its leaders’ wisdom, which allows justice to flourish in the city, and all of the citizens to participate in it (agreeing about who should rule, 431e)—by mimesis (and law) if not by thought. We should understand that Socrates, arriving at the conclusion of aristocracy *on his way*

up, eschews making “the greatest, fairest and first of the laws” which have to do precisely with the practices of piety (427b) not because such laws are merely redundant or, even less, unnecessary, but because it is not yet possible to discuss such matters with those for whom justice is not yet clearly visible and for whom it has not been shown to be clearly good for its own sake. They are still only on the way up. If one is not yet able to see clearly in the sunlight, or is not yet in the sunlight, looking directly at the sun is contraindicated or impossible. That the community of interlocutors comes to these laws (about piety) *last* shows their direction of approach: headasswards, or from below. From the point of view of an aristocratic regime *necessary* would be exactly the right word for such religious laws, but in the best soul piety *is not only desired*—rather than forced or policed (necessary)—but also is that soul’s very life activity. Here, piety is *the erotic necessity* of the soul: what the Good shows Reason immediately arouses the soul’s love. The aristocratic regime is not yet perfected in holiness, for some of its necessities feel like constraints (certainly they do if one is coming into it from a lower regime, as the brothers and Polemarchus); still, all the purely human and natural virtues belong to it. Unlike the other devolutions, in which the virtues are serially purged, there is no purging of piety in the aristocratic city; there is, rather, a holy silence about it (569a)—as if this soul being spoken to—Glaucón’s—is not quite ready; and it isn’t. Even Socrates, where he is, cannot give the proper *logos* since he cannot yet give himself wholly over to praise of god, though that is the regime he aims for. His soul cannot give itself over to this entirely because we are all not there yet—and no one is self-sufficient. Or—it can and it can’t. He gives himself over while, and by, going down. But to hymn the divine divinely when one’s fellows are incapable of hearing in that range is neither pious, nor wise, nor just. Though Socrates *concludes* the curative city with the religious laws, he calls them *first* because this is his own first principle: piety. We come to it *last* in *kallipolis* because we are approaching from cave-ish regimes. From piety all other virtues flow down, as any science from its first principles. “If it would come to be, it would make plain [that] the others are merely human, but this one really God’s” (497c).

If, in fact, this *more geometrico* sorting of regimes and characters is Plato’s idea, and his mathematical arguments and education give every indication of intuiting such mathematical underpinnings to reality as we have argued for, then there is really only one eternally stable city. His mathematized music myth (546a–547b) confesses just that: so often (and so far) as our music falls from harmony with the eternal spheres, so often and so far (the Muses say) shall human regimes of soul and city fall by degrees from disharmony to faction, to war, and to chaos. Each his own tyrant. The one stable city is made of souls in which desire arises only as a result of knowledge of the truth of things, and is not the self-moving power it seems to claim to be;

such a soul would not be without passion, but because its desires arise rightly, all its passions would be right.⁴⁰ Man gives himself over to the divinity as opposed to the delusion of taking divinity upon his humanity. The unheard sixth is that of the Isles of the Blest; we may hope to dwell there eventually (540b), but this perfection is not perfectly available here. Love that is true submits to be shaped by the truth of things, so while facing the dangers and mimetic temptations within every worldly regime requires a spirit directly allied with reason to achieve the difficult good, this same will to know and to be submissive to the truth will dictate that the spirited part of the soul in the perfect regime must itself be willing to go under, as Nietzsche might put it, before that good at which desire is rightly aimed.⁴¹ The most perfect geometry—R/D/S—exhibits this necessary humility. We might picture this as a man who is “whipped, . . . racked, . . . bound, . . . [has] both his eyes burned out, and at the end, when he has undergone every kind of evil, he’ll be impaled” (361e, 362a), yet he not only turns toward this fate *and bears it* (as the aristocrat also will), but he *embraces* it: a humiliation to which one gives one’s entire assent.⁴²

Is such a story possible? If it is, there must be a regime that bears it. That is what it is to be holy—to willingly suffer all things for the sake of and as a sign of the presence of that good which humanity as a whole must come to worship and participate in. There is no other peace.

SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM OF CITY/SOUL REGIMES

The usual explanation of the number and structure of regimes opens a rift in the great analogy between city and soul, and considers that Plato’s fable arrives—at its highest point—in contradiction. Glaucon’s objection to the perceived injustice of forcing the philosophers back into the cave, it is argued, exhibits the tragic failure of Socrates’ “attempt to found a city in which every member’s duty was identical to his self-interest.”⁴³ Note how this vision arises from possessive individualism. According to the rule, each of the three primary forms of love—for wisdom, for honor, and for pleasures in things—takes its rightful place in each of the city’s three classes—guardian, auxiliary, craftsman. Each engages its love and the virtue associated with its love, the city’s good falls out from these autarchies. According to the complaint, Glaucon has been led to see a happier life than politics and its honors, a life which the guardians would desire but not be allowed to settle in, thus forcing them to live a worse life (519d). This contradiction between the life of contemplation, which the philosopher prefers, and the life of political activity, which the aristocratic city requires, shows that the “fair city, the goal of so many aspirations, now looks like a cave.”⁴⁴ If they go

back down out of justice, the just life is not the happiest for these, the best of men; thus, the entire argument now seems questionable.

Clearly this *complaint* imagines a better polity for the aristocratic soul: namely, the regime allowing continuous contemplation. Strangely, however, the scholars who make this complaint agree with Glaucon that the city Socrates set up as “true” and “healthy,” which engaged in “sweet intercourse” and “praise of the god” is insufficient. So, their complaint about *kallipolis* requires a higher regime *of city* than any spoken of, and the actually healthy city that was spoken of they consider not high enough to be human. Their complaint against *kallipolis*—it requires the philosopher to go down—requires a better regime of city (where he will not have to do that) *unless* they suffer from the delusion that the philosopher does not need a city, the possessive individualism rejected *en archê* by Socrates. The healthy city precisely answers this requirement: it had no politicians; citizen, seeing what good he could contribute, contributed; through mimesis their children came to be likewise. The large majority of scholars, rejecting health and finding *kallipolis* inadequate, have no suggestion for what this better regime could be, even though Socrates had set one out rather explicitly. So they think Plato has a problem.

Similarly, working from the other side of the analogy, since the complaint imagines a higher regime of city—suitable, they imply, for the philosopher who need not be king there—then there must be a regime of *soul* missing—either between timocracy and aristocracy (presumed highest), or (as Glaucon argues) above aristocracy. If the aristocratic philosopher, according to the complainants, does not really belong in *kallipolis*—for his life is one that “despises political rule” (521b)—then there must be a soul that *does* want to rule there. Either way, this complaint drives to the conclusion that the city-soul analogy breaks down; so, Socrates’ argument is not a demonstration from first principles, as he has been pretending, but merely a poem made without knowledge of the truth—and proven by this complaint to be of very inaccurate workmanship. This is unfair to Plato, Socrates and the truth; it is simply bad reading, finding its orientation in the delusion of possessive individualism, for such a reader must consider it possible for one human being—the philosopher—to live outside a city. This is false.

The very complaint reaffirms the geometry that we have been arguing for. The philosopher, they say, has a desire for something (contemplation of the good), which *kallipolis* does not allow because it needs him to be king. The clue in the complaint is that reason’s activity, in particular its activities in the education of book 7, has produced a desire—continued contemplation in the light of the good. This is precisely what our geometry (R-D-S) of the missing sixth and highest regime means. But reason in an embodied and mimetic creature can see other necessities than merely geometry, astronomy, and music, to say nothing of justice. It can see relations among parts of its own

soul; it can see what kinds of occlusion and blindness will be the result of what sorts of regime order; it can see the necessity of certain occlusions causing specific disturbances in soul and city. It *knows* the human soul is only one-third divine. Such knowledge can give birth to desire as well: not only the desire for oneself to escape those disturbances, but for *everyone* in one's city to do so. Considering Glaucon's mathematics correctly dissolves this entire problem; nor does the soul/city analogy lose its hold. If *Republic's* body did set forth the best city, then it would be truly tragic that the best would be unhappy in the best city. Since, however, there are six regimes, and the one built through most of *Republic* is not the best, one should not expect that it will be perfectly free of seemings, or of incomplete truths, of what seem to be tragedies or contradictions of a sort. From the point of view of country heaven, the *happiest* life on earth *will* look that way: less happy. It is necessary that it look so—for the Isles of the Blest are higher. *Kallipolis* is not the truly best; it is a noble lie—the noblest lie and *gennaïos* medicine, for it is the way in which we must be turned to be able to see the truth about ourselves and what is truly our best regime. Only then can “self-interest” hit the mark. The absolutely best soul, presuming *per impossibile* that he preexists as human and comes to earth, sees he must change himself, must keep his desire for the blessed life subservient to the good of our life together—not because that better life is not blessed, but because no truly human being can be blessed alone, and many of his brothers and sisters are mad.⁴⁵ He sees it is good to go down, seeing in the light of the good that it is necessary; he rouses his spirit and sets his face toward crucifixion. He embraces it.

The complaint reveals it contradicts Socrates' founding principle of the human city: no one is self-sufficient. It imagines such a one as the possessive individualist imagines—a solitary best, able to live as human alone, if not already actually living apart. Such a one perhaps *ought* to go down to rescue his putative brothers and sisters; though that they are brothers and sisters is merely putative, for he is a different kind of being than they (as Thrasymachus presumed). Glaucon's complaint imagines just the same kind of soul; one who has a better life *by himself*. Glaucon is not yet entirely cured of that delusion then; his complaint is symptomatic;⁴⁶ he does however recognize that the soul they have been educating has duties to his city—even if *he* may not need to be a part of it (as he is thinking). But even if Glaucon sees, through Socrates' argument about just commands to just men, that he ought to go back down, and even if his spirit is aroused to follow the honorable command of the city they have built, he has not—even in seeing there is a higher regime—understood that the higher soul is one which *must* and *loves* to go down; that one alone has seen who and what he is—not a Plotinian oversoul, or modern superhero, but a human being. He cannot *be* without the others; nor can they be human without him. The best soul sees this truth by the light of the good and it inspires his immediate love; he must go down

even if not raised in *kallipolis*—as none of us have been. Glaucon has been habituated (through the discussion) into regarding the city's good as that of which he must never let go; he sees he *ought* to go down.⁴⁷ Perhaps after practicing the required virtue for a long time he will see that what he had wished for—the solitary life of contemplation—is a delusion for such as he. His own present psychic disharmony at returning, and his perceptions of what the return is like, do not match what the return really is for a human being because he is still suffering from that delusion of possessive individualism of which he has been, and is being, cured of acting on. Thus he will certainly be “happier as a result [of returning], and would be less happy if [he] refused to return.”⁴⁸ The better life is the truer one, in which the whole city is being brought up (insofar as it can be) in and into “sweet intercourse and hymning the gods.”

The truly best soul and city present no such contradiction as Bloom and others complain of. For the lover of wisdom who knows that no one is self-sufficient, it will be a matter of personal psychology (where he is coming from) whether he goes back down out of an ordering necessity (as Socrates says to Glaucon, 519e–520a) or out of piety and *philia* (as I argue Socrates does); the former is human excellence (and the good city wisely requires such excellence via law), the other is more divine, motivated by piety, but both go back down. And there may be degrees between these algebraic points. Socrates' description of the healthy city made it clear in the person of Adeimantus (its first citizen, and his first answerer) that *they* all knew (i.e., saw in the light of the good) that no one was self-sufficient (H2), that *they* all knew (i.e., saw in the light of the good) that each had some natural talent or good that could contribute to the good of all the others (H3), and that as a result of this all necessities would turn out better and the city could more quickly turn to its preferred leisure—hymning the gods, sweet intercourse. So, even in their chosen productive activities in the healthy city the citizens are operating in the light of the good: this is how their labor is divided: each sees what he is good at that can contribute to the needs of his fellows; in this way their hymn to the good is not interrupted by their activity—banausic though it be. Their work is always a part of their praise song, an aspect of their sweet intercourse: their work is sacramental. The planets, they say, can hum and move at the same time, perhaps something similar is available to sublunary rational beings as well. In this way, *the truly best city does philosophize in all of its members*, and in aiming for this more divine result “even the philosopher who becomes king [in *kallipolis*] has a greater ambition than that [*viz.* being king].”⁴⁹ His ambition is that all participate together, and the cave is open along its entire width.

Further, whether what *Republic* constructs is a tragedy, or the best—even divine—comedy, cannot be decided by looking at the short view of one man's life (608c). The true and healthy philosopher king will know what “his

own city” *really* is, he will know that it doesn’t exist anywhere on earth (592a); his own city is not the aristocratic one, for he knows that is but a means and a medicine, a way to his own true city. He will also know that his own soul’s best regime is not available to him without the agreement and vision and love of absolutely all others for, and in, that true city. For without that agreement, that is, in every other city, *thymos* has significant work to do; it is a necessary motive of soul in conditions of imperfection, whether one’s own or others’—the necessary political passion. The true philosopher’s endeavor “is always toward the knowledge of the truth of things,” including himself and all other human beings, and through “consorting with reality he begets understanding and truth . . . and truly lives” (581b, 490b). Such a one will know that the aristocratic regime is the required and only way to the divine regime in which the white horse of desire follows immediately and only upon reason’s vision of the good, and the dark horse keeps pace with his companion. This is precisely why the most divine philosopher will go back to the cave—*out of love* rather than justice (if it any longer makes sense to distinguish these). Love for the Good which allows him both to be and to know, love for his own city—the true and healthy regime—which he wishes to see in the flesh, and in all flesh together; these lead him down the hill to whatever city the god deems right to bless with him (as Socrates was a blessing to Athens). For what is truly his own city can only come to be through his kingship in a city that is not yet his own, through his leading out of other souls to the truth about themselves. The philosopher kings, then, do not “lose what they have been longing for when, and because, they have finally acquired it;”⁵⁰ rather, they are finally cured of imagining themselves as that possessively individualist being who can achieve happiness apart from all others; seeing this truth about themselves and all others, being philosophers, they love it: the reality of what they most love can only be gained by going down, as Orpheus, to the cave.

If humans were self-sufficient it might be possible for one or another to even achieve this sixth level of soul perfection on his own, but that we are not such creatures was the *archê* of Socrates’ defense of justice (369b); therefore we will not achieve this perfection except as a community. That means we are all in this together; the human enterprise is the concern of each for all. For we are all not literally members of the same polity, but—as mutually dependent mimetic beings with *logos*—we are (though “practical” politics never recognizes it) “men who have the frame of mind that they will be reconciled and not always at war” (470e). This sharing of *logos* reminds us, even regarding those who have not the same regime of soul and are not of the same literal *polis*, that “it is not the work of the just man to harm either a friend, or anyone else” (335d). What we are in together is the transformation of souls to the wisdom and piety which Socrates exemplifies; the city of God is the city at which our nature aims, for this were we born as human beings.

Knowing this, the most perfect soul will love to return to the cave and bear its burdens; for he knows that his own good and the most perfect city's good are the same. We are not there yet, but that is our true regime, and worth every effort and danger; it alone is the true measure of all other loves. The aristocratic soul is the way, not the end. It is only through being guardians that we may become healthy, "and then, if ever, it may be given to man to become immortal" (*Symp* 212a). That would be, truly, to fare well.

NOTES

1. Perhaps, then, Plato is making a sort of structural joke about the argument in book 10 (597a–598d), by being already at the third remove. If we take *Republic* Ten's argument in the usual literal fashion, there is no necessary connection between Plato (the poet) and the truth (about either justice or what really happened on the first festival of Bendis). But if we look more carefully we see that "the man who uses" knows—even a musician, a flute player for instance (601e) could have knowledge! The truth about use is not reserved, in the third version of the "three removes" argument, to the god—as in the case of the single idea of couch; nor is the mimetic artist only below the maker when the thing being made is a flute—for a flutist directs the maker. So, let us suppose the mimetic artist knows how to use his art's tools. In fact, suppose he is master of his art, and never errs in its use. Then Plato might be able to make a Socratic dialogue which is truly Socratic; in it "Socrates" is not the character only, but *the dialogue* as a whole—which is what this poet makes. Of course, not every practitioner is a master; some may not *know* the purpose or right working of their art; they may be merely imitating—a process which at best precedes thought, preparing the way for it. Some, like certain sailors (488b) may say it is not teachable or even that there are no knowable grounds for judgment about arts. Perhaps they are postmodern politicians. I hope to publish further argument about these matters; see also my "Two Concepts of the Imagination," *Soundings* LXXXVIII, 1–2: 179–197.

2. The Athenian Stranger says that "there shall be 365 festival days without any omissions" in the new city (*Laws* 828b).

3. Compare *Critique of Judgment*, translated by Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 307–308.

4. The introduction pointed out the connection between modern politics and the artificial and intellectualist interpretation of mimesis vs. the ancient view of both as arising in human nature.

5. Cf. Nietzsche and his physiognomist or anthropologist; *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Problem of Socrates," §3: these observe Socrates from the outside. But representation is not mimesis.

6. It is hard for scholars not to fix the interlocutors precisely in relation to the regime types—rather than between them, as I will—though Blondell makes many interesting points about the characters, and their changes (or lack thereof) in the course of the dialogue in *The Play of Character*, particularly 174–199.

7. This is, I take it, the main point of Burger's "Thumotic Soul," though I disagree with significant parts of her argument. Spirit, in a way, mimics reason's dialectical separations, while at the same time occluding reason's ability to see by the light of the good.

8. Ferrari, *City and Soul*, chapter 3.

9. Compare John Cooper, "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (January 1984): 3–21, at 4; Cooper himself thinks Plato's view is "subtle and interesting."

10. Burger considers that "the obvious case of anger siding with desire is the lover who finds his unrequited love unfair" ("The Thumotic Soul," 165n24); but the judgment "unfair" seems to invoke some sort of calculation of right measure in giving and taking. The more obvious case of spirit siding with desire in *Republic* is Glaucon's earlier allowance that since

we have to go to war for our prostitutes and pastries, we have to go to war; let's not ask whether that's good or bad (373a–e). There is not even the hint of “unfairness” generating this alliance of spirit and desire. There are goods (says desire) that are difficult to get. Spirit is roused—we'll fight for it! Let's not consider judging the good of war; or: “bear in mind we won't listen” (327c).

11. Compare Blondell, *The Play of Character*, 62; Ferrari denies the necrophilia, but admits Leontius has made himself into a spectacle (“The Three Part Soul” in Ferrari, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, 182–184). Cooper calls the desire “ghoulish” (“Plato's Theory,” 9, 13) and “sordid” (15), as well as suggesting that it at least indicates a desire to attend “to the physical world independently of the discipline of reason” (11), rather like those ancient Deadheads who rent out their ears to every festival (475d). Rowe claims it is a distinctively medical pathology in *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing*, 171, 174n. Annas, considers it a shameful desire (*Introduction*, 127–128). Laurence Cooper considers spirit is rebelling “against the sight of human mortality” (“Beyond the Tri-partite Soul,” 365); Gerson that Leontius “recognizes that he wishes to gaze upon corpses and that this subject is alien to himself” in “A Note on Tripartition,” *Apeiron* 20, 1 (1987), 87. Necrophilia is another method of satisfaction modern societies have “drastically mutilated” for no very clear reason; another indication of a hyperactive super ego, no doubt (cf. *CD* 108f).

12. This same fate—becoming a warning sign—accrues to Hecuba in Euripides' eponymous play. I take it she is not to be imitated either, though some critics hold otherwise. For example, Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, *Anxiety Veiled: Euripides and the Traffic in Women* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993): 124, and my argument against this in *Love Song* 94–97. Perhaps drama can purify fear by presenting what we really ought to fear to become and making it utterly fearful.

13. This condemnation is not universally agreed to in the scholarship. Burger, for instance, considers that Leontius wishes to see justice done, but punitive justice “is in fact ugly and ignoble” (“Thumotic Soul,” 156). But the men are already dead; justice already done, so he can't be desiring to see it done. Nothing I know of in Greek culture would indicate punitive justice is ignoble, or that “the desire to see justice done thus becomes a source of shame” (Ibid.). Bloom considered Leontius was “fighting curiosity, a close kin of the desire to know” (*Republic*, 376). See n.11 reference to Deadheads—an equally curious bunch, though they don't (didn't) fight it.

14. Bloom, *Republic*, 376.

15. The mimetic arts must clear a space for this last arriving eros: philosophy is the greatest music (*megistê mousikê*, *Phaedo* 61a); philosophy is the queen of the muses.

16. See chapter 3. The laws made in that discussion (book 5) do have a mimetic effect that aims at something true: one must *earn the right to the pleasures* of reproduction by becoming someone who is a guardian of himself (and herself); only such could be a true parent.

17. In this explanation so far, as well as in what follows the reader will see that I agree with Roochnik, against many other critics, that the simplicity of book 4's tri-partite scheme suffers from an “inadequacy . . . that Plato fully understands, overcomes, and integrates into later stages of the *Republic*” (*Beautiful City*, 20). Roochnik also emphasizes the arithmetical character of Plato's argument about the soul, but does not come to the same conclusions about its use and success (among other things) as I do.

18. Here we can see Plato agreeing with the contemporary Freudian, Lacan, who might say that “there is no other language than the language of desire.” And surely the story of the Good would force us to recognize that all language is “faced with the inconsistency of an order that is not-All.” Even in this circumstance it is possible to distinguish among desires, as Socrates is doing, to shape the sense of language and desire toward an openness to the good, rather than fixating on the usual suspects (or even unusual ones). Even when all is desire, not all desires are equal; desire is no mere slurry of affect—or if it begins so, one may distinguish among seed crystals. See Bruno Bosteel's Introduction to Alain Badiou's *Wittgenstein's Anti-philosophy* (New York, Verso: 2011) for the discussion of Lacan (quotes from p. 51).

19. I am thinking here primarily of Nussbaum's discussion of Socrates' lack of eros and her defense of Alcibiades in *Fragility of Goodness*, 185–199. She is hardly the first, but her argu-

ment for the other side is most enticing; not operating on an eros that can be given visible bodily satisfaction is not the same thing as not having an eros.

20. Bloom (e.g.) says it is Glaucon's "manliness" which leads him to make his assault against the healthy city (*Republic*, 346); he also notes that Socrates is the kind of soul that "need not compete with other men" and seems happy with "no honor" (*Republic of Plato*, 347).

21. Compare the similar distinction between easiest to become courageous and closest to courage in *NE* 1116a 26–27, 1117a3–5. Bloom thinks Glaucon is most educable because of his intense desires (*Republic*, 345); Polemarchus should be evidence that this is not the right principle upon which to decide the issue of educability; the relation of the parts must be considered as well.

22. All quotations from McPherran, "The Gods and Piety of Plato's Republic," 84, 91, 90.

23. Socrates praises both brothers for their spirited defense of Thrasymachus' argument, comparing their efforts in discussion to those they have displayed on the battlefield. Glaucon must be more spirited, since he leads the attack—or defense. Leon Hardin Craig emphasizes Glaucon's spiritedness in *The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic* (Toronto: University Press, 1994), 5; so does Socrates (357a). Craig prefers to call Glaucon a nicocrat (victory lover) rather than timocrat (honor lover), 113; "he is perfectly willing to be an ascetic warrior-ruler; he is not willing to be an ascetic dirt farmer" (117).

24. As argued in chapter 1, the "truthfulness condition for participation in discourse" is impossible if there are deluded people in the space of public reason.

25. Bloom notes this encultured stolidity of Adeimantus' character (*Republic*, 342–343, 346).

26. Again we see the difference between those who *behave* in a manner like virtue and those who have something more *naturally like* the true virtue (who would, it seems, be more easily moved to develop the real virtue); *NE* 1116a27, 1117a3.

27. Bloom points out in a footnote *ad loc* how Thrasymachus' words (450a) echo both Socrates' democratically phrased resolution in scene one (328b) and the phrasing usually used in the assembly of Athens.

28. Aristotle hints that the spirited man is most easily led to the true virtue of courage in *NE* 3.8.

29. Blondell rightly argues that this is the position of the brothers—a "detached vehemence" (*The Play of Character*, 190); but their speech and action has an effect on the other interlocutors (notably Thrasymachus) too—this is what our Introduction called the second level of the argument. She also points out that this theatricalising takes Thrasymachus' "ego" off the line (195), but—more Socratically—we should say it releases his *thymos* from mimetic arousal to achieve victory at any cost—including the loss of humanity. Book 1's interaction shows that such souls *can't* be demonstrated to; they can only be corrected by a theatricalisation, a poem.

30. The first devolution given does not quite work this way, for the timocratic soul arises in a regime that is *not aristocratic* (549c) as explained in chapter 5's section on that devolution.

31. One should not make too much of this distinction between Plato's imagery and Augustine's; for Socrates says "a pattern is laid up in heaven for the man who wants to see and found a city within himself based on what he sees" (592b), and in *Statesman* the (divine?) stranger holds that the best *politeia* "must be set apart from all the others, as God is set apart from men" (303b). Earlier in the discussion he had told of a time when the god himself shepherded mankind (271e). The god is, then, not always separated from mankind—there was a society in which it was not so, and that society will come to be again—so he says. For this, the pious Socrates prepares himself—and his interlocutors—on the feast of Bendis.

32. Compare Augustine, *City of God*, 1, preface.

33. Ferrari, *City and Soul*, 80.

34. That is to say, Socrates was not himself of two natures—divine and human.

35. So the aristocratic soul would be the best "really" possible regime of soul and possible by divine dispensation in any political regime, but there is another order more devoutly to be wished, which would not have its struggles, but would not live among us as we are.

36. So, *Republic*, far from suggesting that Socrates "has been wasting his time talking to just anyone he happens to meet" (Blondell, *The Play of Character*, 221), proves that Socrates is the sort of character I am defending—the more divine type, whose love is universal.

37. See Diels-Kranz fragments B 2 and B 6; Socrates, earlier in his life, praised Parmenides' poetry, but did not think much of Zeno's transformation of it into philosophic argument (*Parm* 128a–b, cf. *Theaet* 183e); Socrates holds the opposite of the contemporary evaluation as voiced by Jonathan Barnes in *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 155: "It is hard to excuse Parmenides' choice of verse as a medium for his philosophy."

38. Ausland generously shared "The Decline of Political Virtue" with me before its publication. He had much earlier outlined it to me, in a discussion of a version of the previous chapter, at the International Society for Neo-Platonic Studies in Quebec.

39. Cushman, *Therapeia*, 57–58.

40. Compare Augustine, *City of God* 14.9: *Metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque, et quia rectus est amor eorum, istas omnes affectiones rectas habent.*

41. That Socrates is very near this regime is indicated by his response to a Thrasymachan threat: he *deserves to suffer to learn* from the man who knows; this he is willing and able to pay (337d).

42. In his final sermon, Fr. Paneloux says that belief in God requires precisely this, not mere acceptance, nor humility. See Albert Camus, *The Plague*, translated by Stuart Gilbert (New York: Random House, 1991).

43. Bloom, *Republic*, 407; Stanley Rosen more recently reiterates this point his *Plato's Republic*, 23; their common source is undoubtedly Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 124. A good summary of the problem and proposed solutions can be found in Nicholas D. Smith's "Return to the Cave," in McPherran, ed., *Plato's Republic: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 84–103. Roochnik has come to the similar conclusion that "despite requiring philosophy in order to come into being, Kallipolis is not itself philosophical, for its essential thrust is to constrain and repress the erotic impulse from which philosophy originates" (*Beautiful City*, 76). My position is that kallipolis is a regime set up for the katharsis of eros (and the drama, *Republic*, mimetically induces that process), so it is a regime which is "on the way" to a more divine perfection, a regime which aims to bring its citizens to the point where the legal regime withers away and the divine regime joined under love of the good arises.

44. Bloom, *Republic*, 408.

45. Damian Caluori tells a similar story based on Plotinus in "Reason and Necessity: The Descent of the Philosopher-Kings," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 40 (Summer 2011): 7–27. But if Socrates' first principle of city building is true—there are no human beings without cities—the Plotinian idea of a preexistent human soul is impossible (unless it *is* all of us).

46. There is, then an "epistemic fault" (see Smith, "Return to the Cave:" 90, 95–97) in those *compelled* to return: they do not yet see themselves entirely clearly.

47. Caluori makes use of a distinction between must and ought, "Reason and Necessity," 22–24.

48. Nicholas Smith complains that most attempts to answer the problem of the return deny this Platonic requirement; see "Return to the Cave:" 87–91.

49. Contrary to Ferrari, (*City and Soul*, 90), "the city at its best supports the philosophic class; but except in this sense, the city does not philosophize." In this Ferrari agrees with most others. The quotation in the text is from page 88, but Ferrari means it differently than I do—for he seems to mean the philosopher's ambition lies outside every city.

50. Thus Caluori, "Reason and Necessity," 25.

Coda and Prelude

The Liturgical Catharsis of Republic

It's very easy to understand that it is possible and how: we say that this custom, sufficiently sanctified, will enslave every soul and persuade them with fear to adhere to the established laws. But it has been suggested now that it should not be expected to come to be even then.

—Plato, *Laws* (839c)

Certainly many are mad, in many ways.

—Plato, *Laws* (934d)

If we were thought incurable, he would call a glad farewell without giving any advice that concerned us.

—Plato, *Letter 5*

Republic began when a slightly mad group stopped the eminently sane man and invited him to participate in their version of the good—a party near where the night's horse race would be run. At the place where the party begins the old father gives a definition of justice which brings an imaginary madman to the door. They all agree it would not be right to tell this one the truth or return his weapons, and after further discussion the madman reveals himself as already inside the polis-like group. As the most forceful interlocutor, he brings the issue to its head: each city and each individual seeks all good for itself—achieving and keeping its own interests' (pleasure, honor, power, occasionally the pretense of wisdom, whatever) is the good. Instinctual satisfaction will do as a summary, so long as instinct is polymorphous; pack the bag with what you will. The strongest consider it madness to make any agreement to be just (359b), as that requires some sort of sharing, while

the less strong consider that they have need of a few friends to whom they owe good (332a), and the still weaker and more decrepit have decided they should agree to tell the truth and pay debts to all, as others agree to the same (331b–c). Let us not call any of this madness, but rather rational self-interest: the rational part measures one’s manhood to see how much self-interest one dares. There is something sheepish in the lower forms of “man,” while such (in)justice as Thrasymachus presents is “beautiful, mighty, and wise” when it measures its power correctly—and tragic when it errs. “Justice” is either the agreement of sheep, who have correctly measured their weakness and incapacity, or perhaps in Socrates’ case some sort of “high-minded innocence” (348c)—totally out of touch with the real world of real men. In a modern tongue: *Realpolitik*.

Plato’s brothers feel something is not quite right here, but despite the arguments Socrates gave in book 1, they cannot convince themselves of its falsity. They have some dis-ease about the issue; they are in need of a cure. Perhaps, as the brothers suggest in reinstating the argument, their whole culture is confused about what it wants to teach through its stories; they have been “talked deaf” (358c). Thrasymachus is considerably less uncertain. Either his theses about the individual and justice are true, and point the way to such happiness as is achievable (by men), or not. The sons of Ariston (including, we may consider, Plato) wish for their passions and their reasoning to be in full agreement, so they are in need of some catharsis, some purification. It is an auspicious day: a new festival is required; a new goddess is to be worshipped.

While in English the terms liturgy and liturgical are always connected to the religious, in Greek this was not necessarily the case—so they say. Outfitting a trireme, leading an embassy to another polis, or supporting a chorus were all examples of *leitourgia*, but only the last was directly related to a religious festival. *Leitourgia*, literally, meant to provide a public work at one’s own expense;¹ any public service including public service to the gods or in their honor could count. Perhaps all work for the sake of one’s city is liturgical, since it is an act answering to our non-self-sufficiency, an act recognizing our place beneath the gods; piety might suggest this. If each city’s laws are given by the gods (as all the interlocutors of *Laws* agree), then this distinction between meanings of liturgy dissolves. Then again, perhaps piety is not the motive. Then, as now, a great public service could bring one great honor—provided it was the kind of public service people appreciated. Socrates found that his own service to the oracle and the city was not that kind of liturgy (*Ap* 20e–23c), though he is, without using the word, claiming liturgical status for his activity in Athens. Why on earth would anyone do such a thing? At his own expense? Even to death?

We have seen his reward; Plato saw it too. Such experience should have led him to know “that one shouldn’t wish to be, but to seem” not only just,

but also a pious public servant (362a). But if we take *leitourgia* at its modern value—assuming its religious inflection, it would seem to be one of those things at which seeming would be, in the end, perfectly self-defeating: to wish to seem just may get one a long way—as Glaucon and Adeimantus argue in book 2—but to aim at *merely seeming pious* would require a hubristic impiety that causes one fear even to contemplate—unless, of course, piety is just a word (*flatus vocis*): there are no gods, *seeming pious* is a perfectly safe gig. And *one must pretend*, among the pious, to be so. Even if we understand the liturgical in its “secular” or nonreligious use as a public service, as a work coming from the council room of the polis, someone who considers that “no one is self-sufficient” (369b) and so knows that his own good is intrinsically part and parcel of the city’s good, could never *aim to seem* to do a public service that really was nothing of the sort but *only seemed* so. No one wants only the seeming good for himself and what he is intrinsically united to, yet that is what such a one would be aiming to produce. Nor could he remove himself entirely from his city, even if that city were mad and incapable of proper measure—for there are no human beings without cities. What then, in the name of piety, should a sane man do, and what can he hope to accomplish?

Further, and more directly apropos to our argument, if the best regime is beyond the grasp of human beings, shouldn’t one speak of Plato’s “treatment” for delusional democracy rather than his “cure”? What can a Platonic dialogue really hope to accomplish in treating mimetically induced sicknesses? Can the mimetic music of the *Republic* compete with the more powerful music of the theater of Dionysus? Or MTV, YouTube or whatever new social media frenzy is trending now? And if it cannot, why did Plato write dialogues instead of tragedies, comedies, or satyr plays? Why did he burn his tragedies, as the apocryphal stories go? The Athenian dramatic festivals took place in a sacred precinct, and centrally involved ephebes—youths on the verge of manhood—singing and dancing in choruses before the assembled city. This experience constituted a crucial part of the initiation of the ephebes into Athenian civic and religious practices and habits of feeling and thought, and was a high adjunct to, if not instrumental in their military training (because song and dance had to be executed precisely and in unison, as did the maneuvers of a hoplite phalanx, which some of the dances most probably imitated). In brief, these festivals were unique civic and religious events for which there is no analogue in our time; the soul-(de)forming power of these festivals, for adults as well as youths, is barely conceivable for modern readers—except of course that we have our own. By comparison, Plato’s philosophical dramas seem to offer only a weak sort of soul attunement and enchantment, to single individuals—or very small group—if, as thought, they must originally have been read aloud. Can the medicine of Plato’s written dialogues really hope even to treat—much less to cure—psychologi-

cal and political illnesses induced by such potent mimetic means, to say nothing of the mimetic infections of the assembly and the courts?²

Let us enlarge the problem: When Plato set up his academy, in a sacred grove outside the city, distant from the theatre, the political and the market precincts (and some ninety degrees from a line connecting these to Pireaus), he could escape the immediate mimetic influence of all those different sorts of crowds. One could expect a reading voice to be heard, a discussion to be undisturbed for as long as the interlocutors were willing to continue—as in *Republic*, with its tales within a tale, though not as in *Euthyphro*, or *Hippias Major*, where the interlocutors have important business they must shortly attend, whether they have come to the truth about their business or not. Is there any place on earth that is like this now? Our major universities are not set away from those places where

the many gathered together sit down in assemblies, . . . with a great deal of uproar [they] blame some of the things said or done, and praise others, both in excess, shouting and clapping; and besides, the rocks and the very place surrounding them echo and redouble the uproar of praise and blame. (492b)

Far from it; rather, it is most likely that such a place is at the very entrance or in the center of the once sacred precinct. At major universities these stadia and courts hold many more than the theatre of Dionysus; and many more can be affected by these liturgies than those attending the singular events of Athens—and certainly with no less volume. They are broadcast, and all are caught in the world wide web. Nor do we lack suitable Dionysiac accompaniments. What can a forty-five-minute class three times a week for ten weeks hope to accomplish in the direction of curing any mimetically encouraged madness in this kind of democracy?

For a character receiving an education contrary to theirs [that of the many] does not, has not, and will not become differently disposed toward virtue. . . . You should be well aware that, if anything should be saved and become as it ought to be in regimes in this kind of condition, it won't be bad if you say that a god's dispensation saved it. (492e–493a)

Can Plato really have hoped, then, to cure his city? Or even those souls who betook themselves to his academy? Can he have imagined that by writing he might set out a mimetic enchantment for any number of souls and cities? That he might pass a torch into the darkness and it could work from city to city, as Clytaemestra's fire beacons put a ring around the Aegean on the very night Troy fell (*Agamemnon* 280–315)? Even greater than that feat, can he have thought his Bendic torch might be passed into the utterly unknown darkness of the future, and bring adequate light to caves not yet imagined or invented? Can I be saying anything even approaching the truth if I consider

that Plato's dialogue might even now accomplish its work in a modern democracy? Could anyone think this *pharmakon* has not far exceeded its expiration date?

I suppose that Plato was a realist about regimes of city and of soul. Even for an ordinary disease, because a cure is available does not mean any body, soul, or city will be cured; especially if an Asclepian doctor prescribes, besides his medicine, a regimen avoiding Attic cakes and Corinthian girls as part of the requirements for cure. It is particularly the case that it is hard to even suggest a cure (much less sell one) to someone who does not think or feel that he is indisposed; and how many of the mad ever know they are mad? "What's especially difficult about being ignorant" in this way "is that you are content with yourself . . . [and] of course, you won't want what you don't think you need" (*Symp* 204a). How many of the deluded can even consider that their *opseôs kosmos* is, in fact, false? This is why he had to write dialogues, mimeses; he had to invent "some way to soothe and gently persuade him, while hiding from him that he is not in his right mind" (476e). He had to invent an *opseôs kosmos*,³ like enough both to the true *kosmos* and to that *kosmos* in which the deluded soul thinks he dwells. He could only invite, leave the doors open, *invent* doors into spiritual health, which might—perhaps even with the help of rumor—bring some into his pharmacy. And the pharmacy itself is designed to open out to the other *kosmos*—the real one, the one which *is* only because of the Good. Perhaps he knows his dispensary also needs some divine dispensation working through it and with it. I suppose he includes the story of Odysseus looking around for a new, more quiet life, to be an indication of how successful he thinks his own works would be (620c). There are all kinds of patterns of lives, books if you will, courses of study before choosing a life; in the mimetic theatre of the city they are not just lying around to be examined, but being thrust upon us all. The good one may lie around for a long time, but if you pick it up and read, and re-read. . . . It may be that such discussion with oneself "will take an entire life"; but if engaged in wholeheartedly, as Socrates does with himself and others, one comes to the end owing a cock to Asclepius (*Phaedo* 118a), for one has been kept healthy by the practice.⁴

Does he think he could cure a city? Can a city philosophize?⁵ Can a small group of interlocutors in a room at Polemarchus' house begin to be remade by philosophy? Our argument shows how even the worst off regime of soul, and even the silent in this discussion, have been participating through mimesis, and through this (at first) mimetic participation, growing an enjoyment (mimesis itself being naturally pleasant) in that seeking for truth and wisdom which is philosophy. Can a class become philosophical? Only through a proper mimesis can this begin. Plato's writing, then, affirms Socratic practice of caring for the citizens by trying to make each wiser (*Ap* 36c), one by one; though, by writing, more than one at a time can be reached. Indeed perhaps

an academy could be set up which would, through such writing and the mimesis it convokes around it, aid each individual out of his delusive cave, for his good as well as the city's—without which no human being has the good. A city is rightly called one city when it is bound together in both conception and practice of the good—"others ought to get bigger names, for each of them is very many cities" (422e–423a). So this practice Plato is having Socrates introduce on the first Bendidia *is forming a small city*, and insofar as this liturgical procession is forming among residents of Athens, it *is a functioning countercharm* within that ancient city—how far can this countercharm work? Is it likely that these will become rulers?—"That it is hard for it to come to be" is indubitable; "not, however, impossible" (502c). And it is at work even now: *Republic* is the act of Platonic statesmanship, Plato's piety. What city have you been in?

So, then, is it possible "that a multitude be philosophic?" (494a). Socrates, too, says no—under the condition that "the multitude" cannot "accept or believe that the fair itself, rather than the many fair things, or that anything itself, *is*, rather than the many particular things" (494a). The key matter here is not whether many or few can accept that the beautiful itself is, the key term is multitude (*plêthos*); so long as there is multitude, not individuals, there is no philosophy; so long as there is merely the mimetic, and mimetic mouthing, there is no real philosophy, only shadowy connection to truth—and no individuality or individuals either. Even to catechize about the good and to get the multitude to reecho it would be failure in this regard, though some might regard it as a political success, and in a way it would be that. But an individual might well come to see that the Good is, and is distinct from all of the many goods. Many such individuals might say there is a Good above all of the many goods, from which all the many goods come to be when they come to be, and which limits and orients each of them in their particular goodness. That many come to say this is not the same thing at all as saying the many say it, or the multitude does; the first is speech, the second only sounds like it—*doxomimêtikos, kai logois mimoumenoi*.⁶ The important matter is whether they are "speaking" as multitude, or speaking as individuals who accept the truth, who have come to know and feel what they are saying, and act accordingly; one could call this latter chorusing proper education (*Laws* 654a–e). And the fundamental principle each sees about the human good is that no one is self-sufficient; their very language confesses this in its every act. Nor is justice based on an individual and his or her rights, but on a recognition of communality in the one shared *kosmos*, and so *obligation*—and first of all an obligation to the Good itself.⁷ In this way we can rightly understand that the more pious way of understanding Plato's work is in accord with the statement of Socrates, quoted above: "if anything should be saved and become as it ought in regimes in this kind of condition, it won't be bad if you say that a god's dispensation saved it" (492e–493a). This liturgy,

then—*Republic*—is the way of formation into a city of such individuals. Not all are at the same point of spiritual, or soul, development—but all are *participating to the extent of their ability* in the city thus being formed through mimesis and logos. Thus does a whole city philosophize.

So Plato spends his time producing cathartic liturgical mimeses, which can be entered into from a wide variety of circumstances, by a wide variety of characters, many types of which appear within those mimeses. And entering them, as entering into *Republic*, begins again the cathartic practice, one which pulls each one away from the reechoing stones and into something very like thought—first they are shaped to rhyme with it, then they begin to think through the arguments and *aporiae* among these, and thought leads to the recognition: there is a Good above all the many goods, from which they all come to be, and under which only they can come to be known. Is philosophy the beginning of piety?

Or is piety the beginning of philosophy? This dialogue, at least, has its literal beginning in the fact that Socrates goes down to Pireaus to pray. Thus do Plato's mimetic works open one up to the work of the Good. One goes down to pray; one comes up into the light of the Good. No wonder, then, that under this influence even an Alcibiades might begin to feel that his life is "no better than the most miserable slave's" (*Symp* 215e). This kind of mimesis is not one that can merely be viewed, or cheered for, it is not the kind of action a mob can be carried by (like those in the theatre of Dionysus, or the courts, or the assembly, or . . .): this very fact is what allows it to open each up to the work it does. Like Socrates, Plato's mimeses can really only work, and really do only work, on one person at a time; as Socrates did at Polemarchus' house; as a teacher might in discussing *Republic* in a classroom—each one turning to answer or question when something touches her desire, or spirit, or sense of Bad Logic. Individuals only come out of the cave; the mimetic mob is the cave. Plato's cathartic liturgies are individuating—but not into possessive individualism; the mimesis of philosophizing, like a magnet under a table of iron filings, may induce a movement—but unlike mere iron filings, once this movement is begun in a human being it can be self-perpetuating in the individual filing as it were. Yet even this does not lead him to imagine autarchia and independence from sociality, but rather allows him to first come to know in what way he is not such, and can never be such. So, like Plato's similar image in *Ion*, Plato, the poet, is an intermediary—between the Good and us, as the poet is an intermediate between the Muses and audience (*Ion* 536b).⁸ As a Janus gate through which we go—in one direction or another. To use another image: this self-perpetuating fire can be begun (through the liturgy, by the Good itself) in anyone (cf. *Letter* 7, 344b)—the "cave is open across its entire width;" but then it is possible for there to be a city outside of the cave which spends its time in "sweet intercourse and praise of the god." It is a city in which each becomes a citizen of his and her

own accord with the good, helped through the work of all the others and aiding each of the others. Kant would call it the kingdom of ends; the republic in which each makes law for himself and all others at once.⁹ In its perfection, *all* this city's practices would be both sweet intercourse and praise, for they would know—even in their needful work—who depends on them, and how they themselves have come to be and to know, and to be citizens and know their citizenship. There are many who come to share this conception and practice; and they are sharing it still; a number of them have been named in the course of this book—even you, dear reader, you have been confessing your citizenship. This is the city we are building, and we are not building it alone, nor merely for a human lifetime.

NOTES

1. The *lēiton*, was the “council room” in Achaeon, equivalent to the Attic *prytaneion*; the root of the other half of the word is *ergon*—work, deed, action, making.

2. Almost the entirety of this paragraph was raised by an unnamed reader for The University of Chicago Press as a problem for the original version of this manuscript. I am grateful for the question.

3. *Poetics* 1449b 33. Thrasymachus' agreement with Socrates in book 1: “it appears so . . . according to your argument,” is a confession that Thrasymachus does not share the same *kosmos*. Such madness needs something besides mere intellectual demonstration to bring it back to the real world: it needs a noble lie, a poem as like the truth as possible for the mad to enter, live in, and care about for a time. Helping make the city through discussion himself—even so little as he does—draws Thrasymachus, through the *mimesis*, into becoming a differently organized soul. Thus Socrates makes a doorway to the real *kosmos* appear in the *opseōs kosmos* of the mad.

4. So I agree with John R. Wallach—*The Platonic Political Art: A Study of Critical Reason and Democracy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001)—that Plato did not think perfection *permanently* achievable, but “that the failure to conceptualize such perfection, . . . and to live in accord with that ideal as much as circumstances permitted, implanted the seeds of *stasis* and prevented his fellow Greeks from being as just as they could be” (29). Plato's mimetic liturgies are created as the way to continue in (or the way into) the conceptualization and practices we need. Wallach, too, presents an argument that Plato is providing “a cure of sorts” (25), which most scholars miss for a variety of reasons.

5. The universal answer to this question among scholars is “no.” Ferrari, in *City and Soul*, may be taken as exemplary, for while he accepts that “the city-soul correspondence is itself symmetrical . . . , there remains a way in which the *Republic* does . . . exalt the individual over society. . . . The city at its best supports its philosophical class; but except in this sense, the city does not philosophize. Only individual philosophers can do that” (89–90). The last sentence is true; the penultimate false.

6. See introduction, 5.

7. Here I must suggest again Simone Weil's single finished work of political philosophy, *The Need for Roots*. The first sentence reads, “the notion of obligations comes before that of rights, which is subordinate and relative to the former.” Thus, it follows, against Thrasymachus, Hobbes, Locke, etc: “a man, considered in isolation, only has duties” (3) and “a man left alone in the universe would have no rights whatever, but he would have obligations” (4).

8. Elsewhere I have argued that the action of the argument (and what is missing from it) in the *Ion* is a mimesis in which poetry and philosophy are understood to be necessarily concomitant practices; see “*Ion: Plato’s Defense of Poetry*,” in *Platonic Errors*.

9. Another poet calls it “The Republic of Conscience;” see Seamus Heaney, *The Haw Lantern* (New York: FSG, 1989): 12.

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I have generally used the translation listed first, though I have at times changed it to fit my sense of the original without so noting; all notations in the text according to the usual convention. For the original I have used either the listed Loeb edition or the version available on Perseus.

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