



# *Plato's Mythoi*

THE POLITICAL SOUL'S DRAMA BEYOND

Donald H. Roy

# Plato's Mythoi

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## The Political Soul's Drama Beyond

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# Preface

From 1970 to 1972 I studied at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, with emphasis on moral philosophy and the ancient Greek language. Many a day I trudged to the St. Andrews library to work on translating Plato's dialogues, especially Plato's *mythoi*, with the help of my trusty old *Liddell and Scott*. Disappointingly, the faculty of moral philosophy at St. Andrews at that time seemed more dedicated to understanding Plato and Aristotle in modern, British terms, "exemplifying a kind of British cultural imperialism in the form of a strictly dominant, analytical philosophy." British cultural imperialism now in the form of the strictly dominant, analytical philosophy. Nevertheless, this was a good, rigorous mental exercise for me, but I did not see how I could do justice to Plato under these foreign, anachronistic terms. Today, logocentric constructivism persists.

So, I left St. Andrews for Notre Dame and sometime thereafter I had a conversional turning point: why was I, in Aristotelian fashion, trying to categorize and classify Plato's *mythoi*, which in any case many others had already done? I was especially overcome by the disturbing dilemma of dealing with the artistry of Plato's *mythoi* on non-mythical, classificatory terms, no longer being true to the dynamic of *mythos* itself. What sort of interpretation would be true to the mythical, instead of conceptual categories of logical abstraction? At the same time, I was impressed by Paul Shorey and Friedrich Schleiermacher who contended that Plato's body of writings constituted a unity, a whole, which should not be chopped up by an analytical butcher who reduces Plato's life work to disparate parts, which aggregately are still less than the whole. Plato himself never lost sight of the whole, even while dialectically dissecting. That was when I chose to put the functioning of all Platonic *mythoi* in a continuum from the humblest to the most majestic (their status). Likewise, I discerned the resort to *mythos* in terms of a language

function, namely, simile, metaphor, image, and analogy. Is it possibly true (see Schelling) that originally language was metaphorical and analogical before it hardened down into the flat literal? What could I do to keep mythical the Platonic *mythoi* thus being true to the philosophical artist Plato, who certainly was not just using *mythoi* to embellish norms for the nonphilosophical *demos* (so many Straussians conclude)? Only lately have I realized it is truer to Plato to arrange Platonic *mythoi* in a cosmic revolving circle, with the *Republic* at the center. No longer is the *Timaeus* (and unfinished *Critias*) at the apex. If any one *mythos* were to take precedence outside the central *mythos* of the *Republic*, it would be the glimpsing, charioteer *mythos* in the *Phaedrus*.

Naturally, I read Professor Voegelin's *Order and History*, especially volume III on Plato and Aristotle. However, the seminar I took with Voegelin concentrated on Israel, learning how important a priority it was to go to the sources and let them speak. Originally, I did not follow a strictly Voegelinian exegesis of Plato, but I was indebted to his commitment to take philosophic *mythos* seriously on its own terms, even though philosophical *logos* advances beyond Greek mythopoeic cosmology. Recently, I returned to philosophical *mythos* and now choose to be even more indebted to Voegelin's exegesis outside *Order and History*. How rare to find him referenced and respected among philosophical commentators on the Platonic corpus.

Many are the dialectical tensions in Plato given polarities between *mythos* and *logos*, *nomos* and *physis*, the Greek *poleis* in turmoil versus the Kallipolis, order (*taxis*) versus disorder (*ataxis*), becoming and being, *techné/doxa* versus *epistémé/noesis*, sophist versus philosopher, traditional *mythos* versus philosophical *mythos*, and so on. Fundamentally, *mythoi* encapsulate the drama of the human soul in-between the bestial herebelow and the divine beyond.

# Introduction

Instead of directly and immediately examining the status and function of *mythos* in Plato, I will pursue an indirect and roundabout approach through metaphor and analogy (chapter 1) and the nature of *logos* in Plato's dialogues (chapter 2). A fundamental premise or assumption of this study is that Plato's *mythoi* cannot be read or understood outside of the context in which they occur. The action of Plato's dialogues includes the frequent use of metaphors and analogies, as well as the ubiquitous movement of *logos*. The whole of the Platonic dialogues can be understood as an interweaving<sup>1</sup> of metaphor, analogy, *logos*, and *mythos*. Besides not wanting to sacrifice this whole for one of its parts (such as *mythos*)<sup>2</sup>, the laying of this kind of groundwork before examining the Platonic *mythoi* rests on the assumption that metaphor and analogy function in a way similar to *mythos*. If this is true, metaphor and analogy may offer a more precise and narrow range of focus in which to confront some problems that otherwise might be ignored.

Everyone has agreed long ago that if investigations are to be properly worked out we ought to practice them on small and easier matters before attacking the very greatest. (*Sophist* 218c–d)

Would it be a bad thing if you and I first tried to see in another small and partial example (*paradeigmatos*) the nature of example in general, with the intention of transferring afterwards the same figurative method from lesser things to the most exalted eminence of the king. (*Statesman* 278e)

To begin with, there are problems of status that strongly influence how one will explore the functions of *mythos*. Especially the not unusual, contemporary philosophical dismissal of metaphor and analogy as solely literary or linguistic devices in themselves, thus lacking sound philosophical status, needs

to be questioned in order to confront the problem of status. Such objections to metaphor and analogy may be identical to those that are brought against the use of *mythos*.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, once the dimensions of metaphor and analogy are defined and understood, the next step will be to face the problems of interpretation or exegesis. This would require a contextual treatment of the limits of metaphor and analogy, since it may be that they, as well as *mythos*, do not stand alone. In this way, the opening chapter will not only arrive at conclusions that are crucial for the examination of Plato's *mythoi*, but also exemplify a method of exegesis relevant to my central examination of Plato's *mythoi*.

The second chapter on *logos* likewise will confront a prominent, contemporary philosophical understanding of Plato being first and foremost a rationalist or analytical logician.<sup>4</sup> The question that immediately will be raised is whether *logos* and *mythos* are complementary in function, rather than antithetical. By being complementary, not just a simple harmony or agreement is intended. Both *logos* and *mythos* may have a common end, being complementary insofar as they intend this end; they also may be radically distinct given the nature of their functions. We have to wonder about the casual dismissal of *mythos* as an ornament clothing the achievements of *logos*. Is it that *mythos* amounts to only a persuasive technique for the majority of men on the level of opinion (*doxa*), who lack the ability to join or to follow the movement of *logos*? *Mythos* for the *demos*. There may be some truth in this, but one of the consequences would be a complete devaluation of *mythos* to the philosopher's *logos*. At this point, we wonder whether this is true of all or only some of Plato's *mythoi*. There is no a priori basis for assuming that the relationship between *mythos* and *logos* is one of absolute superordination and subordination. In brief, these are the problems and questions that prevent a direct approach to the *mythoi* of Plato. It is hoped that these first two chapters will leave the reader thirsting for a direct examination of Plato's *mythoi*.

Chapter 3 will face the problem of defining *mythos* in such a way that the boundaries of *mythos* can be identified. This is a problem because some dialogues as a whole (e.g., *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*) function mythically, or as if *mythoi*. Furthermore, the non-mythical context, within which many *mythoi* occur, is exceedingly important for a proper understanding of how a particular *mythos* functions. Accordingly, a crucial turning point occurs in chapter 3, regarding how I will examine Platonic *mythoi* in their entirety. Rather than following what a majority of commentators on Plato's *mythoi* have done, namely, to classify the *mythoi* according to neat abstract categories (e.g., the etiological, eschatological, political, cosmological, etc.) a new approach is tendered: to order the *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus in terms

of a natural, dramatic continuity of experiences of the soul, all of which will inclusively comprehend the full, dynamic dimensions of *mythos*.

Just as Plato's dialogues should be considered as a unity, likewise I sought some way to understand his *mythoi* as a whole. Briefly, this natural continuity of experiences represents an ordering of the *mythoi* in terms of a developmental sequence starting with the rejection or reformation of traditional *mythos* and preceding from there to the experiences of recollection (*anamnesis*), conversion (*periagoge*), and ascent/descent, the judgment of souls, and the foundation of psychic, political, and cosmic order. This natural continuity or developmental sequence (which, of course, will be more elaborately defended in chapter 3) is the best possible way of understanding *mythos* in Plato on its own via media terms, without the imposition of external, abstract classifications. Consequently, chapters 4 and 5 interpretatively examine Plato's *mythoi* starting with recollection in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Phaedrus*; the cave image of the *Republic*; the erotic ascent in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*; the judgment *mythoi* in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*; and the analogical foundation of psychic, political, and cosmic order in the *Republic*, *Statesman*, and *Timaeus*. Throughout this interpretative treatment, the main concern is to uncover the indispensability of the resort to *mythos*, and the concomitant irreducibility of the mythical experience to anything other than that which is fundamentally mythical. Also, these chapters lead to a conclusion that will stress the important political action dimensions of *mythos*, which are harmonious with and complementary to philosophic contemplation, yet are not limited to or finally immersed in any all-consuming, contemplative withdrawal from the possibilities of political order and action. In summation, *mythos* and *logos* are understandable as the interrelated components of the means toward achieving political philosophy, the love of wisdom in a *polis*.

Throughout this text, I will persist in using *mythos* and *mythoi* respectfully for myth and myths. The intention is to signal that it is Greek *mythos*, especially Platonic philosophical *mythos* that is the matter under investigation.

## NOTES

1. See the *Statesman* (277aff. especially 279b) for Plato's use of the weaving metaphor/analogy. All translations, unless otherwise noted, come from the Loeb library editions.

2. My approach is in agreement with and analogous to Plato's own inquiry about virtues, that is, they can be understood only as parts of the whole of virtue itself. The particular virtues are not graspable and knowable abstracted from their essential and existential unity. The part/whole relationship is a fundamental paradox for Plato. To know the parts, one must know the whole, yet the whole is not comprehensible to

mere mortals! Questions of great significance are as follows: What is the relationship of *mythos* to the whole of philosophic endeavor? Is *mythos* itself a way of addressing the whole? See Hans-Georg Gadamer. *The Idea of Good in Platonic/Aristotelian Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 12ff., 83, 86.

3. In this respect it is worthwhile to consider the work of G. M. A. Grube in his *Plato's Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958). Not only are metaphors found to be of doubtful value (35, 70, 115), but also analogies are not discussed as analogies, art is considered to be of social and utilitarian value for Plato (179, 182, 200), and *mythos*, like metaphor, is an artifice for analysis (29, 71, 155, 169, 278–79).

4. Thus, Professor Sayre in his *Plato's Analytic Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 238 can write that it is the logical structure of Plato's dialogues and Plato's formal reasoning that outweigh his dramatic, stylistic genius. For Sayre, although Plato powerfully uses *mythos*, it is only an extraneous part of his achievements. *Mythos* in Plato is a matter of style, rhetorical usefulness, and drama, thus a flavoring, not the substance, for professional philosophers today. Professor Sayre has somewhat modified, but not changed, his strictly, analytical philosophy approach. See his *Plato's Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002). Sayre seemingly prefers the horticultural metaphor of the *Phaedrus* to the charioteer *mythos*. The horticultural garden metaphor fits well with Locke, the underlaborer, clearing the ground for the epistemology of modern science and logic.

## Chapter 1

# Metaphor and Analogy

Metaphor and analogy will be first examined by functionally defining their dimensions. The various ways that metaphors and analogies function will lead to their proper purpose and end. Secondly, the matter of the irreducibility or reducibility of metaphors and analogies will be considered by way of or through the problem of interpretation and exegesis. In order to understand the purpose and limits of any metaphor or analogy, some interpretation is necessary, but not an interpretation that would destroy the original and vital function of the metaphor and analogy, assuming there is one. In other words, why use metaphors and analogies at all, if their point can be made more directly by flat assertions or straight commentary? Not only is it questionable to reduce metaphors and analogies to something other than they are, but also it is futile to argue that metaphors and analogies are so irreducible as to defy examination and critical commentary. This would make metaphor and analogy objects of dogmatic reverence and worship.

A mean between these extremes will be sought. If found and justified, such a critical exegesis of metaphors and analogies naturally will lead to a consideration of the grounds on which we can judge the truth, truthfulness, or appropriateness of given metaphors and analogies. Can there be false or perverse metaphors and analogies? The reader is invited and advised to consider at each stage the way in which these questions of definition, irreducibility or reducibility, interpretation, and truth applied to metaphors and analogies have a propaedeutic function bearing on an examination of *mythos*.

In the context of Plato's dialogues, metaphor and analogy address the problem of likenesses and similarities. Metaphor and analogy, as pertaining to the domain of likenesses and similarities, fall in-between absolute differences on one side and identity or sameness on the other side. Metaphor and analogy dynamically function within this tensional in-betweenness (for Plato,



the *metaxy*<sup>1</sup> of human existence, see *Symposium* 202dff.). In one respect, we are to be cautioned against mistaking likenesses or resemblances for identity (*Republic* 476c–d). Also, we need to be conscious of the striking differences among things compared by metaphor and analogy. In this respect, all metaphors and analogies break down more or less. For example, how far can we say and what are the consequences of saying that knowledge is vision, or that the *techne* of the craftsman is comparable to the knowledge (*episteme*) of the philosopher, or that the *polis* is the *psyche* writ large? In some way, metaphor and analogy function betwixt similarities and differences, neither reducible to one or the other, insofar as they remain metaphorical and analogical.

Thus, metaphor and analogy fall under the category of likeness or similarity. In Plato, the terms designating likeness or similarity are *eikonologian*, *eikon*, *eiokenai*, and especially *homoiotes*. They occur much more frequently than *analogia*; the noun *metaphora* occurs not at all in Plato. This variety of terms is in agreement with Plato's frequent use of metaphors and analogies, without providing any strict terminological definition of what they have in common, or how they can be differentiated. In effect, we are advised to examine what Plato is doing—how metaphor and analogy actually function when used—rather than hoping to be told directly by Plato (as if he were writing in treatise form) what metaphors and analogies are and why they occur in speech/dialogue. However, let us avoid Plato for the moment, in order to take up the difficulties of defining the metaphorical and its relation to the “literal.” By this procedure, the reason for ultimately returning to Plato will be shown. Some, not all, *logos* Socratically precedes *mythos*.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF METAPHOR

Aristotle has provided us with a sound, initial basis for establishing a functional definition of metaphor that will also apply to analogy. Strictly speaking, *metaphora*<sup>2</sup> means a change, transference, or metamorphosis of a word in its ordinary use and meaning. Thus, in the *Poetics* (1457b–10) Aristotle asserts that metaphors give a thing, “a name that belongs to something else.” Formally, metaphor involves a “transference from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or a transference on the grounds of analogy.” It is Aristotle's linking of metaphor with analogy and simile that becomes the basis for attributing a “comparison view” of metaphor to Aristotle. There is a considerable amount of criticism of Aristotle<sup>3</sup> for having a too prosaic, canonical, underdeveloped, and static view of metaphor. On the contrary, as will be seen, Aristotle has a good and critical understanding of the vitality of metaphor, its epistemological functions, and its limits. Furthermore, it is the very primitiveness of Aristotle's definition of metaphor that is initially

important in clarifying the linguistic, psychic activity that engenders metaphor. Nevertheless, it appears that Aristotle gives metaphor a secondary function and meaning, rather than a primary (“full of gods”) function and meaning.

For Aristotle, metaphor (as well as analogy) initially plays off some comparison or resemblance between two or more things. This is not to deny that what first strikes us by a metaphor and thus what partly causes us to recognize a metaphor qua metaphor is the shock effect produced by juxtaposing things that otherwise contrast with and oppose each other.<sup>4</sup> In other words, when first confronted with a metaphor we realize that it means more than what it seems or appears to mean at face value. Nevertheless, if metaphors were not based on some comparison or similarity, the juxtaposition would result in absurdity.<sup>5</sup> Aristotle was correct when he understood that metaphor initially involves some commonly or conventionally understood resemblance, which makes possible an extension and transformation of meaning from one thing to another. Before going on to the transformational dimensions of metaphor, namely, the epiphoric (extensional) and diaphoric (intensional) dimensions,<sup>6</sup> the crucial matter of the phrase “some commonly or conventionally understood resemblance” must be examined.

It is quite common to find in the literature on metaphor<sup>7</sup> the polarization of the metaphorical and the literal. The usually unexamined dependence on that which is “literal” will be challenged as an improper beginning. The reason that few writers have questioned the assumptions of speaking about a rock-bottom, brute, simply-there literalness is that the literal is obviously rock-bottom, brute, and simply-there for all to observe readily and tangibly. However, to accept such a notion of the literal regarding those familiar physical objects around us is uninteresting and irrelevant in a treatment of metaphor. Why do we ever resort to metaphor, if we are only confronted with given physical objects? In this respect, Owen Barfield<sup>8</sup> cogently argues that to believe whatever can be expressed metaphorically can be also expressed literally is not consistent with believing that man’s first words only had a literal, material reference with the figurative arriving later. Does not the metaphorical and/or analogical occur first in the sense that in the beginning the whole world of experience is living and spirit-filled? In terms of some original perception and understanding of the world, it cannot be simply assumed that we first apprehend only discrete, atomistic, or elemental unrelated things. If we did, then why would we resort to such “mistakes” as metaphor and analogies. Something like a figurative, metaphorical, or analogical perception of things seems to be fundamental.<sup>9</sup> The question is whether (and why) later on we should reduce this to the literal.

Can one seriously assert that metaphor is only a language muddlement, implying that we should purify or reform our language to be consonant with simple literal reality?<sup>10</sup> The literalists are those who take as their starting point

the literal, believing that we first know the literal or that in the history of language the literal precedes the figurative. Therefore, they argue for the priority of the literal in philosophic discourse. Have not the literalists adopted a view of the world, alas, a metaphysics?<sup>11</sup> To put it differently, it is not a neutral, presuppositionless, non-metaphysical starting point to assume a basic, given literal reality. We need to query: Is the mind merely a passive receptacle of sense impressions relative to a physical object world? Are we to confine all our cognitive efforts to the narrow field of sensation? And, if one says that only a philosophic epistemology is at stake, that is, it is only a matter of what we can know given our sense impressions irrespective of the world as it really is, this is to assume, in effect, that the world is not knowable independent of us and is unintelligible and unstructured until we mentally construct it. It is one thing to recognize the contributions of human reason in coming to know the world and others. But it is a more radical argument (loaded with presuppositions) that the human mind constructs what can be known (thus nominalism and constructivism today).

What does the “literal” mean? On the one hand, is it formed or unformed sense-data? If there are simply unformed sense-data (e.g., “blotches of color”), then there is a serious question as to whether this, as opposed to gestalt configurations or formed, structured perceptions, characterizes our initial sense perceptions.<sup>12</sup> Given, for example, Snell’s finding,<sup>13</sup> the latter gestalt formations may have significant support. For my purposes, it is important to expose the alternatives and their unavoidable metaphysical consequences, rather than to speculate with any finality regarding the beginnings of language in children or in history.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, is the literal equatable with univocal conceptualizations? If this is the case, a considerable amount of explanation will be required to reveal the active mental processes of conceptualization. Concepts are not just literally given. Although they may develop from or refer to supposedly, literally observable, physical objects (as they are implicit in them), they nevertheless are an achievement of the mind judging, separating, and abstracting. In Barfield’s terms, concepts are not “born literal,” they are “acquired literal.”<sup>15</sup> When we do think of, or begin to conceptualize, about causes, relations, mental states, acts, and so forth, do we not naturally become metaphorical?<sup>16</sup> In other words, it may be that conceptualization is not exclusive of or antithetical to the resort to metaphors and analogies.

As a result of these ruminations, can we not abandon the term “literal” with all of its questionable assumptions and connotations? Instead, metaphor and analogy will be understood comparatively and contrastingly working off the common sense, traditional usage and conventional opinions that characterize peoples’ given or established perceptions about the world around them. It turns out this is the Socratic/Platonic and Aristotelian starting point for the

philosopher. To take serious note of this contextual basis of common, conventional opinion in no way precludes critical assessment. Rather it permits us to differentiate and to focus on two developmental possibilities that will burst forth from this original context of given, conventional opinion: (1) metaphor, analogy, and *mythos*; (2) critical *logos* and conceptualization. Can we suppose analogically that the literal is to the metaphorical as *logos* is to *mythos*? Such a misleading simplification (really an analogy gone wrong), if not an unfortunate assumption regarding the literal and *logos*, can be rejected along with the rejection of the term “literal.” It will be another matter to consider later whether *mythos* is entirely on the level of convention and opinion.

To recapitulate, the decision whether raw perception or brute facts are blotches and undifferentiated impressions or gestalt configurations potentially confuses the issue. It is not genetic derivation (how the first humans perceived the world, or how the child first perceives the world), but the constitution of meaning. The starting point will be the mind’s activity conceptualizing and metaphorizing (i.e., thinking of one thing in terms of another) in the presence of commonly understood sense impressions and opinions. This is not a neutral starting point (because there are no neutral starting points), and in no way does it foreclose critical examination of the possibility of an ordered or unordered, intelligible or unintelligible world of things and people (such that either God or Man is the measure). The implication is that conceptualizing and metaphorizing are not mutually exclusive mental activities, and the consideration of the relationship of *logos* and *mythos* in the next chapter will further bear this out.

How then does metaphor function? Consider Philip Wheelwright’s distinction between the epiphoric and diaphoric dimensions of metaphorical functioning, since this more comprehensively covers a similar distinction made by Coleridge (the primary and secondary imagination), C. S. Lewis<sup>17</sup> (magisterial and pupillary metaphors), Barfield<sup>18</sup> (two modes of consciousness) and Berggren<sup>19</sup> (the tension theory of metaphor). The epiphoric character of metaphor is its outreach and extension of meaning through comparison. Starting from what is readily understood or concretely known,<sup>20</sup> there is a movement instilled by comparison with something less well known or problematical (perhaps an object of wonder), which is that referent of the metaphor that has been called the “principle subject” (Max Black) or “tenor” (I. A. Richards).<sup>21</sup> Thus, for example, Plato will use the dream and waking metaphors (see *Republic* 476bff., 571ff., *Philebus* 65e, *Apology* 33c, *Crito* 44b, *Phaedo* 60e, *Theaetetus* 202ff., 277dff., *Symposium* 175e, and *Timaeus* 45e–46a, 71a–e) to depict and to illuminate the corresponding states of ignorance and knowledge, as well as the activity of going from ignorance to knowledge. In effect, hitherto unnoticed similarities are elicited by comparatively juxtaposing and assimilating radically different things. Aristotle understood this to

be “an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars” (*Poetics* 1459a5). For Plato, this was the dialectical process of “collection,” whereby the One is discerned in the many. There is a real tension or interaction between ordinary understanding and perception, and the new perspective brought about by the metaphorical.

Whereas the epiphoric dimension of metaphor is extensional in meaning, it is the diaphoric activity of metaphor that is responsible for this tensional seeing or radical construing of one thing through another. New meaning is elicited (the word “created” is avoided on the grounds that one need not assert that the “new” has not antecedently existed,<sup>22</sup> although it may have not been known hitherto) by re-presenting diverse particulars in a new arrangement, synthesis, or unity. As T. S. Eliot put it: “When a poet’s mind is perfectly equipped for his work, it is consistently amalgamating disparate experiences; the ordinary man’s experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. . . . [Yet] in the mind of the poet these experiences are already forming new wholes.”<sup>23</sup> The new here is newly found meaning, not necessarily a constructed invention of the mind. Does the dreaming/waking and ignorance/knowledge juxtaposition bring about insights that would remain hidden and obscure without the diaphoric tension between these two referents? Both referents, the dreaming/waking and the ignorance/knowledge, undergo a transformation of meaning. For example, we ordinarily sharply distinguish between what occurs in dreams, as opposed to our waking experiences, but when dreaming/waking is metaphorically brought together with ignorance/knowledge, we are shocked into the realization that our waking life may be a dream, if we live in a state of ignorance and illusion. The ordinary, commonly understood boundaries of dreaming and waking are radically challenged and transformed. As Black indicates, the subsidiary subject of the metaphor dreaming/waking acts as a lens or filter through which the principal subject ignoring/knowing is to be viewed (more later about why going from nouns to verbs is extremely important in understanding Plato’s dialogues). New or emergent meaning exists and survives at the tensional intersection of these two referents. This is a compelling argument for the non-reducibility of metaphor—that is, keeping the metaphor alive.

In sum, a metaphor is achieved through epiphoric extension that contextualizes the conventionally understood and through diaphoric intension that pursues the understanding of one thing through another, thereby revealing new meaning. Along these lines Plato concretely tells us:

But now let us work out the inquiry in which we supposed that, if we found some larger thing that contained justice and viewed it there, we should more easily discover its nature in the individual man. And we agreed that this larger thing is the city, and so we constructed the best city in our power, well knowing

that in the good city it would of course be found. What, then, we thought we saw there we must refer back to the individual and, if it is confirmed, all will be well. But if something different manifests itself in the individual, we will return again to the state and test it there and it may be that, by examining them side by side and rubbing them against one another, as if it were from the fire sticks, we may cause the spark of justice to flash forth, and when it is thus revealed confirm it in our minds. (*Republic*, 434d–435a)<sup>24</sup>

In this passage, the *polis-psyche* analogy sparks insight or intuition, given the tensional, analogical relationship of *polis* and *psyche*. We start with what is commonly known and more easily identifiable (the *polis*) relating our discoveries to the experiences of the individual *psyche*. By interacting *polis* and *psyche*, sparks of insight or intuition will be generated. Is not the greatest justification for this contrasting of *polis* and *psyche* the recognition of the already existing and abiding tensional relationship between the two? It is left to the rational intelligible power of the mind (*logos* and *nous*) to confirm such generated insights or intuitions by critical commentary and exegesis.

Some metaphors may only be epiphoric, in which case they are at best magisterial metaphors (C. S. Lewis's distinction) of the primary imagination (Coleridge). A magisterial metaphor is a dispensable aid and possibly a heuristic device that better expresses and clarifies what we (qua knowers) already understand. It is a matter of appealing to the primary imagination, wherein the ordinary, habitual world is perceived and expressed. Such epiphoric metaphors are likely to become dead metaphors that no longer strike us to be tensionally alive. Many such dead metaphors have entered the English language. The epiphoric metaphor is a perception of resemblance among things, which engenders a mood of appreciation and reflection in others.<sup>25</sup> Conceptual development may even proceed as a result of such resemblances or analogies. Take the case of seeing, visualizing, being aware, and discriminating when applied to what we mean by having knowledge. The Greek terms *noesis* and *ideen* have their root meaning in verbs of seeing.<sup>26</sup>

But it is the diaphoric metaphor (which can, of course, include epiphoric characteristics) that reveals new, perhaps unexpected meaning. The secondary imagination, which is that of the poet, involves not just an appreciation or recognition of resemblances, but a forging of resemblances such that a synthetic unity results through imaginative activity. Thus, the poet's creative mood is characterized by inspiration and possession, even when the poet may not even know what she/he says. However, especially for Plato, the great poet brings critical reflection (*logos*) to bear on his inspirations, if they are to be more than just wind eggs (*Theaetetus* 210b). The end result is the pupillary metaphor, which is a unique, dominant fusion of converging things that we cannot humanly rise above.<sup>27</sup> This kind of metaphor remains vitally alive,

tensive, and irreducible. When inspiration grasps the hitherto unapprehended, and imagination relates it to the already known, then we have metaphor as an indispensable means for expressing meaning.<sup>28</sup> That which makes a metaphor alive and tensive, as opposed to a dead metaphor, is the perpetuation of the reciprocating, interacting tension between the common, ordinary, established meaning of the subsidiary subject or lens, such as dreaming/waking and its principal subject or form ignoring/knowing and ignorance/knowledge. The result is new meaning given the transformation of old meanings or associations.

A vital metaphor admits of abiding reflection, and continuous, repeated attempts to find a mode of expression or exegesis that draws out the implicit meaning.<sup>29</sup> With a dead metaphor (e.g., the fork of the road, the foot of the mountain), there is no longer any immediate recognition of an interaction between foot or fork and its extension to another, different kind of object. In fact, such metaphors are simply not diaphoric. There is no reciprocal transformation of meaning, but rather only an extension to another object. Furthermore, dead metaphors lack an “open texture,” which is to say a fluid texture creatively open to diverse possibilities of meaning and understanding. A live metaphor actively plays off established, prescribed meanings in order to disclose more fully what hitherto was only potential. Aristotle noted the liveliness of metaphor to its graphicness—that is, ability to represent things in a state of activity (*Rhetoric* 1411b22). The surprise effect of a metaphorical conjunction of diverse things succeeds in getting others to see and to think of and to actualize (act out) something as they may never have before.

Metaphors have various functions, not just a single function. The paid-*eutic* function of metaphor has already been mentioned in terms of going from what we commonly know well to that which is uncommon, hidden, and obscure. Likewise, the distinction between the magisterial and pupillary kinds of metaphor and analogy emphasizes two different kinds of *paideusis*. The magisterial metaphor is a dispensable crutch that a teacher might use to lead a pupil, whereas the pupillary metaphor addresses the human condition in which we are all pupils, unable to gain an insight outside or beyond the metaphor and its meaning *per se*. (For example, in Plato the craftsman/*techné* metaphor is dispensable and magisterial, whereas the *polis/psyche* analogy is pupillary and indispensable, as shall be shown below.) We realize (as did Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450a5) that one cannot simply learn the mastery of such pupillary metaphors from others. Such metaphors are the result of a kind of self-mastery and a sign of imaginative genius, because their function, in part, is to fill in language gaps (e.g., in the coining of words), when we apprehend the idea of something previously unclarified and perhaps hidden to us.

There is another function of metaphor that cannot be ignored, although this is not exclusively true of metaphor at its best. Some metaphors stylistically

and emotively will attract the attention of the hearer or reader in order to predispose her/him in a certain way to be responsive to, or persuaded by, certain similarities. In this case, metaphor would function at the service of some other objective. Nevertheless, to be tantalized by a metaphor can at least provoke valuable reflection. For example, Plato will depict Socrates variously as a gadfly, stingray, Silenus figure, and midwife. The various uses of the dream metaphor also are tantalizing.<sup>30</sup>

Metaphor is thus intimately related to an ontological experience and a corresponding imaginative activity, namely the bringing together in a synthesis previously disparate particulars, such that a new (in the sense of a never before known or expressed) whole emerges. Coleridge referred to this as an “ensemplastic”<sup>31</sup> function, by which new meanings emerge from combining, representing, or interconnecting experiences, images, actions, or thoughts. For example, we might consider the world as a whole to be God’s creation, while still being by participation God’s creatures. Or take the pictures of man that are respectively represented in Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, and Marx: the barnacled Glaucus in the *Republic*, the stripping of the souls in the *Gorgias*, the chained persons of the cave; the Augustinian experience of the new man via conversion; the alienated, chained humans in Rousseau and Marx; and the prediction of a transformation of human nature in Marx. The whole of the human condition is thus represented, albeit with radically different commentaries and consequences. Is not Wheelwright’s perception correct, when applied to these political philosophers and their understanding of the function of metaphor: “Particular things bulge with significance to the extent they participate in or coalesce with something more consubstantial than themselves.”<sup>32</sup>

The relationship of the whole and its parts is fraught with difficulties both mythically and dialectically, especially how the universal participates in the particular, and in what way the particular is representative of the universal. Since the whole is greater than its parts, metaphor tends to supervene, going beyond the interaction of its particular components. This is especially clear when encountering analogies, such as the central one in the *Republic*, namely, the *polis* is the soul writ large. At this point, when metaphors express some whole and have analogical proportions, we realize that their interpretation cannot be restricted to the mere sentence or sentences in which they occur. (Also, keep in mind that all of these functions of metaphor—the paideutic, the epistemological, the mimetic production of images, and the ontological experience of wholeness—may have applicability to the functions of philosophic *mythos*.) In sum, a metaphor is, or stimulates in others, a train of reflection culminating in an act of recognition, since it takes the complexity of particulars, ordinarily experienced as diverse,<sup>33</sup> and gathers them into a unity or synthesis.



The results of this functional examination of metaphor have a bearing on the way analogy is to be defined. We are led back to the treatment of likeness in Plato. Analogies like metaphors can be epiphoric (e.g., the wax block and aviary in the *Theaetetus* and the relation of the soul to the body paralleling the harmony between the lyre and its strings in the *Phaedo*), or diaphoric (e.g., the philosophic activities of Socrates on the model of midwifery in the *Theaetetus*). But even more important is the distinction between magisterial analogies (the *technē* analogy throughout Plato's dialogues) and pupillary analogies (the *polis* is the *psyche* writ large). Furthermore, the various functions attributed to metaphor can all be found in Plato in those places where the terms for likeness (*eikonologian*, *eikon*, *eiokenai*, *homoiotates*, and *analogia*) occur.

### THE PROBLEM OF LIKENESS AND DIFFERENCE: THE INTERPRETATION OF METAPHOR AND ANALOGY

Carefully note how critical Plato is when dealing with the problem of likeness. Just as metaphors may rely on images, likewise Plato understands *eikonologian* or figurative speech to be image-speaking (*Phaedrus* 267c, 269a). Such a rhetoric of images or likenesses is defined as a technique invented by sophists (e.g., Protagoras use of *mythos*, which will be considered in chapter 3). However, the sophists were defective in dialectics, the art of discussion by questioning and answering. This does not mean that Plato rejects all image-speaking to be contrary to dialectical inquiry; it only means that such images must be left open to critical discussion. The sophists proclaimed and justified their activities as being primarily paideutic. The problem of likeness involves the educational function of images. What can be taught by images? What kind of teaching resorts to analogical images? May not images point to or fail to point to the real and true originals?

A passage in the *Symposium* 215a–b (where all four terms, *eikon*, *eikonon*, *eiokenai* and *homoiotaton*, can be found covering likeness) reveals the problem that Alcibiades has in grasping “who” Socrates is. Who a person is may not be reducible to some whatness or essence. If we are to capture the dynamic, agent-actor, we will need to speak of her/him in language that is graphically alive, either metaphorically or analogically. Likewise, in the *Statesman* (297eff.) there is the problem of portraying kingly rulers, and consequently various images (the physician, the weaver, the ship's pilot, the slave or servant) are suggested. To a great extent this is a search for a type, namely the royal ruler, who is definable and knowable according to his/her proper function. Nevertheless (and ironically), it is well known that Plato offered to Socrates the title of being the only royal statesman of his time.

It is primarily through Plato's dialogues that analogically we catch a glimpse of this undefinable "who" named Socrates, this gadfly, midwife, sting ray, Silenus figure, and so on, which we noted earlier.

Metaphor and analogy in the sense of likeness also serve epistemological and ontological functions in Plato. In these respects, the philosophical problem of likeness exists at that intersection wherein our minds have kinship and affinity with reality. In the *Philebus* 65b, Plato asserts that "mind (*nous*) is either identical with truth or of all things most like it (*suggenesteron* and *homoiotaton*) and truest." Likeness thus falls in-between being and truth (ontologically) on the one hand and ignorance and knowledge (epistemologically) on the other hand. Plato has warned us about mistaking resemblances or likenesses for identity or sameness (*Republic* 476c–d). We resort to likenesses, be they metaphors or analogies, insofar as we find things participating or sharing in a common form, or in a common object of striving and aspiration (e.g., to be like the divine *Phaedrus* 253a–b; *Theaetetus* 176b, 176e–177a; *Phaedo* 86b). The relation of likeness covers the relation between (in the broad sense) the model or form and the thing modeled or formed.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Phaedrus* 262a–b, Plato asserts that the person who is truly skilled in the art of rhetoric becomes the philosopher, who knows the reality of things such that she/he can lead his/her hearers (*psychagoge*) from one thing to another by the use of intervening resemblances. She/he will at the same time avoid deception (either self-deception and/or the deception of others) by truly knowing the similarities and dissimilarities of things, as well as great and small degrees of likeness. Only by knowing the truth or reality of things (the originals) can we discover and truly speak about likenesses (*Phaedrus* 273d).<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, there is the difficult epistemological and ontological problem of differentiating mere appearances from substantial relations of likeness (*Sophist* 236b–237b). Being misled by appearances (*fantasmata*) and confusing likeness and unlikeness is the source of falsehood. However, both dialectic (*Republic* 524c–525b) and recollection (*Phaedo* 74a) begin with the awareness of such *aporias*. If there were no such possible differentiation, then we could state with assurance that for Plato either extreme Heracliteanism (there is nothing but flux) or static monism (Parmenides) would be the only alternatives. In addition, we could not distinguish between dream states and waking states.

Although metaphors and analogies present two cases of speaking in likenesses, they are not wholly identical. Metaphors, in contrast to analogies, are more likely to have a local, narrower range of reference than analogies. A philosopher's metaphor may have a broad reference (e.g., the many military and legal metaphors in Kant's writings), but this tends to be mainly a descriptive characterization of a philosopher's work. An analogy, however, tends to address a larger whole, such as an overriding philosophic problem

(e.g., the *polis-psyche* analogy, or the systematic use of organic or mechanical analogies). Analogies may become models or paradigms. While metaphors tend to attribute properties, qualities, or effects strewn along the way, analogies tend to define fundamental structural relations between their analogates.

The mode or style of presentation likewise differs between metaphor and analogy: metaphors stylistically present a direct identification and/or attributive naming (e.g., Socrates is a gadfly; ignorance is a state of dreaming), whereas analogies expose formal likenesses of relations, not just a mere likeness (e.g., vision : sun :: *noesis* : God; or dreaming : waking :: ignorance : knowledge).<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, with analogies the fourth term may be understood as an unknown or hidden factor. The point of the analogy is to make meaning known via a parallel with something else ordinarily known and having similar relations. Metaphors have the same function, but analogies usually specifically require you to make discriminations according to structural relations between terms or pairs of terms. Consequently, philosophers are more likely to resort to analogies in order to avoid a misleading, conjoining identity of analogates.

Notice, however, that there is a reciprocity between analogies and metaphors. One can move back and forth between ignorance likened to dreaming and the more exacting analogical interrelation, dreaming : waking :: ignorance : knowledge. Analogies are directed toward clarification and argumentation. Metaphors are poetically left more open to diverse nuances. We tend to take or leave metaphors; analogies tend to be debatable, since we question whether there are disanalogies that impair their scope and relevance.

With Plato, many of the distinctions between metaphor and analogy lose their force. In Plato, most metaphors do not have just local meaning or consequences. For example, the vision metaphor has definite consequences for Plato's epistemology<sup>37</sup> and ontology, and thus reappears in analogical form when we say vision is to the sun as *noesis* is to the Good. However, Plato does use the term "analogy" in two ways, both of which extend to more than merely *metaphora*. First, Plato inherited from the pre-Socratics the use of *analogia* as a mathematical proportion (see *Timaeus* 56c, *Statesman* 257b, and *Epinomis* 990c). Secondly, *analogia* is used with mathematical overtones to speak of the harmonious and unifying proportions of the cosmos (*Timeaus* 31c, 32c, 69b), or to delineate ontic-epistemic proportional relations. Therefore, opinion is to becoming as knowledge is to being; or intellection is to opinion as knowledge is to trust and thought is to imagination (*Republic* 534a). What is at stake is the proportional relationship between a model and its copy at a third remove (see *Republic* 508c, 511e and *Timaeus* 29c). Analogies can be understood "according to a due *logos*" or "leading up to, on the way to *logos*,"<sup>38</sup> be it via a mathematical proportion (an equality of ratios), or be it through a philosophical grounding (giving a rational, defensible account, *logos*).

In practice, Plato does not try to mathematize either the cosmos or knowledge. This would cause the :: sign to become an = sign. Mathematics is not an end, but a means toward (or mediation of) some end. (Plato's understanding of mathematics will be discussed later.) The same can be said of the function of analogy, which may also be the irreducible means to an end in itself, and not just a discordant means for some inferential or demonstrative end. An important question (to be discussed in the next chapter) is how the analogical (as well as the metaphorical) development of meaning interacts with Socratic dialectical argumentation. Or what does the *logos* in *ana logos* intend? If Plato's metaphors are primarily philosophical and not poetical, what then does Plato understand to be "philosophical"?

There are at least two passages in Plato's works that are extremely important for an understanding of "analogical thinking." In both cases (*Theaetetus* 185a–187a, especially 186a–c and *Republic* 523a–526c, especially 524d), the powers of the soul or mind are explored given the objects of sensation. What enables us to grasp what is common to our various sense organs (*Theaetetus* 185b–d)? If certain perceptions of opposites (e.g., of light and heavy, hard and soft, great and small) provoke reflection, because on the level of sense perception there is confusion and contradiction, what enables us to grasp and to distinguish the one or unity in the midst of the many (*Republic* 523c–525a)? The soul, in itself, alone, engaging in its power (*dynamis*) of relational/analogical thinking, noetically apprehends the essence of things "in their relations to one another, reflecting (*analogizomene*) within itself upon the past and present in relation to the future" (*Theaetetus* 186a–b). The existence of things opposite to one another needs to be compared and related by the soul itself, since this transcends sense perception. This is not an immediate apprehension, nor a quickly perfected operation: "reflection (*analogismata*) about these [opposites], with reference to their being and usefulness is acquired, if at all, with difficulty and slowly, through many troubles, in other words through education" (*Theaetetus* 186c). Knowledge is the process of reasoning directed to the apprehension of being and truth. However, note the nature of that which provokes such analogical thinking, namely, sense perceptions of opposites in themselves, variable, many in number, mobile over time and possibly contradictory on the level of appearance. Analogy and mathematics are the development of relations between such sense perceptions, and the tendency of the soul or mind toward discerning the common and the one.

It is not surprising (given the *Republic* 523a–526c) that mathematics educationally becomes the prime subject of study in the development of analogical thinking. Mathematics is intermediate between sensible objects of perception and the soul's apprehension of being and truth. In this intermediate area (*metaxy*), analogy and mathematics both work to save (not negate) sense phenomena. In all of this, the time dimension is doubly important: first,

because it will take time to develop the clarity and knowledge about sense perceptions in order to transcend them; second, because analogy is eminently fit in itself to work within the time dimension of past, present, and future without sacrificing either time or the timeless. This is the case, if there are some analogies that are indispensably and irreducibly a part of understanding human existence in the world.

In conclusion, there is at best only a difference of tendency between metaphor and analogy. Generally, all analogies are metaphorical, but not all metaphors are analogical. Metaphor understood in the sense of a transference or attribution from one thing to another has analogy as one of its variations, namely, an analogy of attribution and maybe a proportional analogy (Aristotle, not Plato, developed this distinction). Hence, analogy is more demanding and requires more command. Analogy (*ana logos*) seeks its ground (*logos*) or basis and does not tend to be just descriptive and expository as does metaphor. Yet, in Plato, metaphor and analogy may be reciprocal, and certainly both may have an abundance of discursive, delimiting development around them, which is to say that they are related in some way to Plato's "philosophical" endeavors.<sup>39</sup> Thus, an exegesis of metaphor and analogy necessitates close focus and attention to their contexts. The importance of metaphor and analogy as ways of thinking is that they both have the function of interrelating the many and the one, the particular and the universal, and the human and the divine.

How do we interpret a metaphor and an analogy? Does interpretation once begun mean that metaphors and analogies are reducible to something other than they are and thus may be in themselves dispensable? It was indicated above that metaphors and analogies begin from within a context of diverse possibilities springing from a commonsensical, conventionally understood background (*doxa*). They are not restricted to the sentence in which they occur, nor are they to be abstracted from their meaning-loaded context. Even though metaphors and analogies open up the possibilities of diverse meanings and diverse interpretations, they have a purpose or intended meaning which oftentimes a dialogic thinker such as Plato will try to enjoy and possibly demarcate in order to avoid confusion and improper understanding.

At this point, it can be argued that the effort of exegesis in itself does not mean that metaphors and analogies can be reduced to flat assertions or prosaic paraphrases. If reduction is attempted, what is damaged or lost is the power (*dynamis*) of the metaphor and analogy to stress certain priorities and to act as an insightful, enlightening, essential means for forwarding meaning and knowledge. Metaphors and analogies cause cognitive rearrangements. Take E. E. Cummings's metaphorical one-liner: "Cambridge ladies live in furnished souls." The play of reflection thus sparked is not reducible to case-study or opinion-polling methods of external testing.<sup>40</sup> Any such reduction would remove the humor, the graphic quality (as opposed to the quantitative

measurableness) of the metaphor. Given such an urge to reduce this metaphor, the first ghost that would have to be dispelled is “souls.” As explained above, the meaning residing in the tensive interaction between lens and focus, the principal and subsidiary subjects, would be lost. In short, keep metaphor and analogy alive, dynamic, and flourishing. Do not kill the enjoyment (e.g., “the joke”) by trying to explain it away.

Besides the interpretative attempt to reduce metaphor and analogy to that which is non-metaphorical and non-analogical, there are two other extreme alternatives: (1) an anything-goes-free-association as a response to metaphor; and (2) the attribution of a mystic purity of ineffableness characterizing metaphor and analogy. While the reductionists or literalists would destroy the metaphorical tension in the interest of their material-empirical conception of philosophy, on the other hand, purists (romanticists) would attach to metaphor an aura of sanctity that would prohibit anything but the verbal repetition of the metaphor/analogy in its context. It is doubtful that any philosophic/reflective, Platonic artist of metaphor would be inclined to demand such catechismal devotion. Regarding “free association,” this tells us more about the person doing the interpretation and his/her lack of good sensibility regarding license (some postmodernists?), than it does with what is being interpreted. Both these extremes can be prudently avoided.

There is clear evidence that Plato himself encountered and rejected the extremes of reductionism and purism. In the *Phaedrus* (229b–230a), Socrates refuses to reduce, in the fashionable way that sophists treat *mythoi*, such as the story of Boreas’ rape of Orithyia. The sophists try to give a rational explanation of mythical accounts under the assumption that they are allegories or anthropomorphic projects of observed natural causes. The literal trumps the metaphorical. Socrates’s response is that he does not have the leisure time to investigate such unknowable things, when self-knowledge (am I a monster, a Boreas, or a divine creature?) is his most urgent endeavor. There is no limit to free association and the search for hidden allegorical meaning. For the sophists, applause and cleverness, not truth, are the criteria for successful acceptance of allegorical meaning. On the other hand, Ion (of the dialogue of the same name) is a spitting image of a purist. Ion is a Homeric rhapsode so completely carried away and possessed by his rhetorical inspirations that he does not know what he is saying, or at least is not able to account for or rationally defend his utterances. If questioned, Ion reverts to his previous state of self-glorious, rhapsodic possession.

### The *Techne* Analogy in Plato

In the treatment of two of Plato’s analogies, the magisterial analogy regarding the craftsman being to the philosopher as *techne* is to knowledge and the

pupillary analogy relating the order of the *polis* to the order of the *psyche*, the problems of exegesis need to be directly examined. It will be shown how certain commentators (e.g., Renford Bambrough and Allan Bloom) misread these analogies, because they have not consistently preserved their interactive, analogical character.

At issue is an essay on “Plato’s Political Analogies” by Renford Bambrough. For Bambrough, analogies, pictures, parallels, and metaphors reveal Plato’s way of arriving at and supporting certain doctrines in political philosophy. Yet, however plausible Plato’s political analogies may be, “if taken too seriously and pressed too far [they are] radically misleading as to the character of political thinking and political action and decision.”<sup>41</sup> From the outset Bambrough registers opposition to Plato’s political “doctrines (as Bambrough calls them), and it will become clear in due course why Plato’s analogies are a threat to modern liberal, individualist, democratic thought.”<sup>42</sup> We can rightly ask: are analogies doctrinal and canonical, or are not they really “open texture,” tensional, and dialectical in conjunction with Plato’s highly critical *logos*?

In the very first paragraph, Bambrough specifically begins to analyze Plato’s most characteristic analogy between that of ethics and politics being analogous to the arts and crafts, and then forgets that analogy is analogous. This is to fail to understand that there are likenesses and differences here, and the latter may even outweigh the former.<sup>43</sup>

Justice seemed to him [Plato] to be a *techne* like medicine, mathematics, music, or agriculture. [not like a *techne*, but a *techne* like . . .] Plato consistently maintains that the true statesman must be thought of as the possessor of the knowledge of good and evil, an expert physician of the soul whose prescriptions for spiritually diseased man and cities carry with them an absolute and unchallengeable authority.<sup>44</sup>

Bambrough does not discern the mediating and transforming function of Plato’s analogies. Rather they are said to “conform” to the certainty and accuracy of mathematical paradigms. As a result, Bambrough has identified Plato’s philosopher-king with the craftsman, who is an infallible expert and specialist in the product she/he makes. But does Plato ever establish or even attempt to put forth such a ready-made, incontrovertible political technocrat? Is politics for Plato a matter of making, rather than acting?<sup>45</sup> Does Bambrough discern the difference?

In no way does Bambrough attempt to see the tension involved with the use of metaphors and analogies, and the irony of Socrates who wonders out loud why there is not a craft of politics, by which citizens can be trained as easily and unproblematically as shoemakers. Why is there no technical knowledge amassed so that statesmen can be educated and produced like statues or muscular, athletic bodies? (In the last two sentences terms have purposely been

used such as education and training, *techne* and *episteme*, citizen and craftsman, all of which quite possibly are not simply equitable at all.) It is by no means clear and convincing that the point of Socratic questioning is either to establish doctrines or to bring about concrete, practical, political solutions.

The *techne* analogy<sup>46</sup> raises some difficult, yet unavoidable, questions, if one intends to be serious about the nature of politics and ethics. Can virtue be taught? Is politics a science or an art? Is the political based on convention and art (*techne*)? Or is politics ultimately according to nature (e.g., the nature of the human soul as a standard)? Can a philosopher become king? Is the philosopher comparable to a specialist, a technician plying a trade, or does the royal architectonic art of politics somehow transcend and subsume the narrower trades of craftsman? Does the statesman serve the populace in the same way that the slave serves his master and the craftsman serves users?

Bambrough assumes that he can give a neutral, logical analysis of Plato's political analogies without taking the trouble to consider the provocative and problematic dimensions and limits of analogical thinking per se. That is to say, Bambrough readily identifies the nature of the navigator's skills with that of the ruler's art. It is Bambrough who absolutizes Plato's dialogic deliberation, not Plato. Call it the Sir Karl Popper effect.

Why does the *techne* analogy occur throughout many of Plato's dialogues? Primarily, it is a magisterial kind of analogy or metaphor, inducing one's conversants to discern the nature and status of politics and ethics vis-à-vis the commonly understood, familiar occupations of the craftsman. But as pointed out earlier, the tensional and paradoxical quality of metaphor or analogy exists when the ordinary established understanding is construed in a way no longer ordinary or commonplace. As a result, a duality of references occurs in this effort to advance paideutically from common recognition to uncommon insight into the nature of whatever is under inquiry. With this development of new meaning an analogy or metaphor reaches its transcending limit, having transcended the commonly understood. In fact, the analogy or metaphor may now break down, or no longer fit, if improper parallels or associations are forced upon it. No longer does one have an analogy or metaphor, if there is an imposed identity (absolute doctrine) at the points of interaction.

Bambrough succeeds in drawing improper parallels or identifications regarding the ship of state parable, by contending that Plato attributes to political rulers "knowledge of an absolute and universally correct set of ultimate political objectives or . . . a special skill at selecting such objectives."<sup>47</sup> Bambrough, on the contrary, asserts there is no such body of infallible knowledge as to ultimate political objectives. Thus, Plato's ship of state analogy is artfully interpreted against Plato: the navigator (ruler) does not decide destinations (ends), but only the route and course (means); passengers (the populace) decide where they want to go. Yet it would be incorrect to say that Plato is



unaware of the desires of the passengers (populace). Does not the master of the ship “bigger and burlier than any of the crew, but a little deaf and short-sighted and no less deficient in seamanship” (*Republic* 488a–b) represent the *demos*? It is the master who is plied and stupefied with drink by the sailors (sophists), who claim to be navigators because of their cleverness in being able to persuade and cajole the titular master of the ship. No wonder why philosophers (because of sophists) have such bad reputations. The sophists who appear to be philosophers, claim to know that which they do not actually know. In effect, sophists and philosophers contest each other over the desires of the populace. Only the philosopher is prudently concerned with the limits of demotic desires, rather than stirring up and manipulating these desires.

Bambrough even carries the stakes a step further: Plato’s philosophers have no claim to rule, because there is nothing (no truth, no common good, no ultimates) that they can reflect upon any better than anyone else. In effect, this is the argument of Protagoras and the normless man: man is the utterly relative measure in Bambrough’s world. For Bambrough, the royal art of the statesman is but a name devised by Plato to obscure the fact that there is no skill that can determine what end ought or ought not to be pursued. There is no *techne* that is other than instrumental—that is, there is no *techne* that is prescriptive.<sup>48</sup> Otherwise, Bambrough alleges that we would be confusing logically different roles found in ethics and politics on one hand and science and mathematics on the other. Yes, indeed, if Plato were a modern philosopher.

Bambrough is aware that the *techne* analogy between the physician and ruler does involve the transformation of *techne* into science (*episteme*). But Bambrough’s understanding of “science” can be questioned. A science for Bambrough, like that of medicine, has agreed upon standards regarding health and disease. It is based on experimentation, diagnosis, and experience, as well as the existence of conclusive tests that can adjudicate a dispute. Nevertheless, one has to wonder how conclusive medicine and navigation (as it involves the heavens) have been over the centuries. Bambrough believes that politics and ethics have radical and interminable disagreements inherent in their subject matter (oughts), especially as they concern ends and not only means. But why cannot the same thing be said about what constitutes health and disease, the stars and the planets? And are there not sciences about ends that have political and ethical relevance? But Bambrough has accepted the Humean duality of facts and values, without the slightest rational argumentation. Plato’s dialectical mode of philosophizing does not contrive some false and illusory termination to moral and political discourse. Such disputes are meaningful, since they require some commitment to pursue (*zetema*) an elaboration of our common end, the Good. And yes, qua humans, we always fall short, but never stop trying.

Does Plato ever forget that the ruler like the craftsman serves in some way the user or the patron? A cursory reading of Book I of the *Republic* and the *Statesman* would prove Bambrough wrong. The whole question involves the nature of service or *therapeia*, and this in turn depends on the kind of art involved: (1) arts of possession and conquest; (2) arts that make or produce by imitation; (3) the therapeutic arts that preserve, correct, or prevent; and (4) the arts that command or direct and are the controlling arts most subject to corruption. Statesmanship properly is confined to the last two kinds of art. The first two kinds of arts do not exclude statesmanship, but will alone tend to be utilitarian, pursuing their own particular skills and knowledge. The navigator seeks to discover the structure of the earth and the heavenly bodies, or if this is too hopeful, at least the navigator is dependent upon such knowledge. Likewise, political rule, if not philosophic rule, presupposes knowledge of some kind in order for these arts to be properly regulated. This is why the therapy of the physician and the piloting of the navigator are analogous, not identical, to the statesman. The politically therapeutic art (preventing and correcting care or service) is that of establishing laws that educate citizens and properly order subordinate arts in terms of their status and function in the *polis*. As for the ruler in his/her capacity as commander or director, similar to the navigator she/he is dependent upon dialectical investigation of things as they are, if there is to be rational, political guidance. If the arts are not to degenerate into mere techniques, or self-serving preoccupations, they will be oriented toward philosophy (its truth and first principles).

The *techne* analogy has been useful as a starting point to astound others by the ironical gap between the technical expertise of artisans and the lack of a defined, educable *praxis* for politicians or statesman. On the other hand, everyone thinks they are qualified to be decision-making citizens, if not rulers or leaders, but not everyone thinks they are skilled enough to be navigators. That Socrates asks what *techne* can be attributed to the ruler or statesman qua leader is not in any way a claim that this is even a proper question, especially if we are to think only in terms of some technical, specialized expertise, which would be solely the business of the leader. In fact, there may be no training or instilling of a *techne* applicable to political leadership, in the same fashion as one is told or shown how to make something. Bambrough, interestingly enough, is aware of the distinction between knowing how (skill) and knowing that (knowledge), when this distinction is revealed in the parable of the ship. What Bambrough fails to acknowledge is that insofar as a statesman combines both science (*episteme*) and *theoria*, the *techne* analogy breaks down, or is transcended, precisely because theory and science (in Plato's understanding) comprehend and are hierarchically superordinate to skill and practice (*praxis*).

The paradox of the *techne* analogy is understood at that point where one has to disassociate statesmanship from the producing crafts (because only

now is its menial, low, slavish status revealed), even though it was such crafts that enabled one to begin to understand the function of the master craftsman, the statesman, who in the end transcends all such lower *technai*. Although the navigator is no menial craftsman, nevertheless the philosopher is comparable to the navigator because of the fact that existing regimes disparage such experts. Bambrough's misinterpretation is the result of removing and isolating the ship of state analogy from the whole context of the *techne* analogy in Plato's dialogues. In sum, Bambrough's reductionist mode fails to see beyond the transparency of the *techne* analogy.

It is precisely John Wild's synthetic chapter on *techne* in Plato that avoids this error. Wild points out that *techne* for Plato undergoes a transformation of meaning, such that it would be improper for us to understand *techne* as merely skill, art, or technique.<sup>49</sup> *Techne* comes to mean knowledge and science (*episteme*) as well. This is the analogical or metaphorical function of extending meaning. Political governance analogous to the governance of the navigator does involve skill and knowledge, but it is a royal *techne*, which is different from that of the navigator in four respects. First, the way it is learned is by education, not by training—that is, it is not instilled or handed down, but is a process of insight and discovery that depends as much on the nature of the learner as it does on the teacher. It is the art of turning around (*periagoge*), not of producing sight (*Republic* 518d). It comes through acting and not through being acted upon or by being produced.

Second, the result is not a neutral instrument or technique capable of being acquired and wielded by persons of good as well as evil intentions. Rather it requires a perception and enactment of the common good, if it is not to be self-destructive and if it is to be perfective of the functions of citizens. Third, it is an architectonic or master art, which as it comprehends the whole orders all other arts beneath it by directing them to their proper end, the common good. It is not the craft of a specialist who performs his/her narrow functions, minding his/her own business, oblivious of the other arts. The ruler's master art does not imply the expertise of a dabbling, dilettantish polymath, which would be sophistry. There must be an analogical reciprocity and continuity between the various arts, if there is to be an ordering of the parts that comprise the whole. The exemplary statesman tries to comprehend this analogical whole.

Fourth, in the *Phaedrus* (248d–e), the craftsmen along with the farmers are ranked seventh after poets and before demagogues and sophists. Of course, the philosopher or lover of beauty is ranked first, and the lawful king or warlike ruler is second. This alone should lead one to be skeptical about the simple comparability of the many *technai* from statesman to mathematician to navigator and to artisans. All of them are imitators, thus “artists,” but they are not of equal status.<sup>50</sup> The *techne* of the statesman is of

a different order when we raise the question: who and what does the statesman serve?

There is internal evidence in the *Republic* that *techne* in its petty and menial (i.e., its technical sense) is transcended. First of all, all the arts differ depending on what they are for the sake of, or what they serve and the benefits that accrue from them (*Republic* 346a–347a). The practice of an art will depend on the nature of the person. Thus, we can understand how *techne* can involve, not only the pursuit of lesser ends, but also the pursuit of comprehensive knowledge for its own sake. Any art can degenerate into a mere technique, and this is concomitant with a loss of measure or standards, which rationally control and direct the humbler arts. Plato certainly wants to preserve the interaction of theory and practice, which is to say that an art truly “is knowledge growing out into actions.”<sup>51</sup> The reason why *techne* is transcended is that no art is for itself, but always for something else. For Plato, the *techne* analogy is substantively appropriate to perform its analogical function of going beyond, transcending. The royal *techne* analogically leads us to consider the common good as the ultimate end and standard of statesmanship. In truth, we can never know the common good beforehand in order to propose and carry out specific political decisions and actions. We need to energize the dialectical *logos* to address the inherent contingencies of political life.

However, there is a problem as regards the transcending of *techne*. Does the royal art of the statesman represent such a transcendence, which in turn can order all the subordinate arts to their proper end, or does money, the wage-earning art, become the architectonic art that all other arts have in common? Will rulers rule for the sake of money and the honor gained thereby (oligarchy and timocracy)? Would the gentleperson, who is by definition the magnanimous person, find money to be the just reward of her/his services for the sake of others?

The guardian class of the *Republic* will own nothing and will not hoard gold. Those guardians fit to be philosopher-kings will not even desire political rule. But this raises an additional question: Is the philosopher tempted to forego the responsibility of serving others, on the grounds that she/he has the best nature (like a god/goddess) to serve her/himself and to exist self-sufficiently? Is *techne* so transcended that it is obliterated by a regime of contemplators, who never do anything for the sake of anyone else? This would be the opposite extreme of the city of pigs, which is the perfect community of artisans in which each member properly serves her/his body alone. Thus, we would have two regimes representing the perfect extremes of health of soul and health of body. (When we consider the *Statesman mythos*, we will wonder whether the age of Zeus and the age of Chronos respectively parallel these two “perfect” regimes.) Although either of these regimes may be desirable, neither seems perfectly fulfilling by itself in this world.

In the same way Socrates begins a discussion presenting the city of artisan pigs for consideration, similarly the discussion leading to philosophical contemplation will have to be concerned with the participatory, analogical appropriateness of craftsmanship and philosophy. With a warning Socrates explains:

I set apart and distinguish . . . the lovers of spectacles and the arts, and men of action, and separate from them again those with whom our argument is concerned and who alone deserve the appellation of philosopher or lovers of wisdom. . . . The lovers of sounds and sights delight in beautiful tones and colors and shapes and in everything that art fashions out of these, but their thought is incapable of apprehending and taking delight in the nature of the beautiful in itself. . . . He, then who believes in beautiful things, but neither believes in beauty in itself, nor is able to follow when someone tries to guide him to the knowledge of it—do you think his life is a dream or a waking? Just consider. Is not the dream state, whether the man is asleep or awake, just this—the mistaking of resemblance for identity? (*Republic* 476a–c)

Those who mistake resemblances for identity settle for a low estimation of political living, cut off from the dynamic participation (metaphorically, analogically, and mythically) in something more that is the basis for and the function of metaphors, analogies, and *mythoi*. There are also those who make another kind of mistaken identity. Those lovers of wisdom who escape the cave of active political life and its spectacles unjustly refuse to return to the cave, and too readily assume that their soul-perfection is complete.

In effect, the analogy of the philosopher and the craftsman has its liabilities as well as its advantages; in some respects, it is a great misfortune that they resemble each other, because it leads some people (dreamers) to mistake a resemblance for an identity. Whereas the arts can be so mechanical that they mutilate the souls of persons through vulgar occupations (*Republic* 495d), it is also paradoxically true that the arts and sciences have the power to lead persons to participate in the contemplation of the highest and best realities (*Republic* 532c). On the other hand, the transcending of *techne* by the philosopher does not radically cut off the philosopher from human existence and political action, as if she/he were now identical with divine wisdom and had no further concerns and obligations. The tensional nature of the *techne* analogy lives on, unreduced and not doctrinized.

If the *techne* analogy is to be understood to be primarily magisterial, because we are paideutically led eventually to think of the statesman acquiring a royal *techne* that is no longer comparable or thinkable on the same plane as the subordinate *techne*, the same cannot be said of the analogy of the individual soul to the *polis*. Often it is repeated to live outside the *polis*

is to be a god or to be a beast. Plato acknowledges no situation in this life wherein the lover of wisdom pursuing the divine could be identified with a god. Certainly, the bestiality of humans needs no proof or evidence. The *polis* as man's soul writ large is an analogy that is pupillary and indispensably characteristic of the common human condition of persons being political by nature. But not a "human nature" in the sense of something absolutely given, fixed, and defined. The directing tendencies and intentions of human natures are witnessed by the very use of metaphors, analogies, and *mythoi* revealing that we cannot possess direct, immediate, absolute awareness and knowledge of the Good, the one, the unity of the whole, and so on. We are all seekers, searchers, inquirers, pursuers, lovers, albeit our ends may differ and our achievements may be greater or lesser. In this respect, the analogical and metaphorical tension never diminishes, as long as one remains true to human experience (*pathos*).

The resort to such an analogy that the *polis* is the soul writ large is as much a treatment of this specific analogy as it is a revelation and justification of what analogy at its best is in itself. Socrates' introductory remarks preceding the development of the *polis-psyche* analogy, and the three great imagistic analogies, the sun, divided line and cave, bear witness to this. The situation or context in these two instances is quite different from those places where the *techne* analogy appears. Socrates resorts to comparisons with shoemakers, craftsman, and artisans when he seeks to gain concessions from an interlocuter via the aporetic, question–answer method. The *techne* analogy is more primitive in function, more restrictive in scope, and not elicited as a comprehensive response to a major difficulty at hand. It is an in-process concession, which is not indicative of either an experience underlying the human condition or a hardened, indispensable doctrine. Thus, the *techne* analogy is heuristic and dispensable.

### **The *Polis-Psyche* Analogy**

It is precisely the function of the *polis-psyche* analogy (along with the sun, divided line, and cave) to confront the greatest challenges made upon Socrates. No longer is it a matter of magisterial metaphor and analogy, which at best prepares the way for pupillary metaphors and analogies. No, we are now all pupils alike before the abiding tension of the *polis* and individual *psyche*.

The awful paradox prefacing these analogies that strain toward the Good is that the greatest study and the greatest knowledge require the utmost clarity and the greatest precision (*Republic* 504b–507a). This is incomparable to what is demanded when political rulers are thought of as merely craftsmen or artisans, and therefore indifferent toward the highest reaches. If there is

anything that we would prefer to know the reality of, rather than just its semblance or appearance, it is the idea of the Good. Yet, Socrates admits that no one, including himself, has knowledge of the nature of the Good, even though we all pursue it for its own sake. Furthermore, Socrates will only speak of what seems to be the offspring of the Good, and what is most nearly its likeness (*Republic* 506e). The Good is beyond (*epekeina*, *Republic* 509b) truth, knowledge, and being. How can the Good be beyond being without not being at all? The “being” (*ousias*) here is of creation, an offspring. The Good can only be spoken of analogically, and no analogies will definitively and finally satisfy the longings of our soul. It is not surprising that the analogy between the sun and the Good “breaks down,” when the latter is not an object of knowledge in the way that the sun is an object of vision.<sup>52</sup> Still, the sun was for Plato the closest visible, representative symbol of the ineffable and the indefinable, the radiating beyond (*epekeina*) and its transcending origin and cause.

Regarding the context of the *polis-psyche* analogy, it is introduced by Socrates when he is confronted with the arguments powerfully expressed (but not espoused) by Glaucon and Adeimantus that injustice is preferable to justice. The inquiry into the nature of injustice and justice will require keen vision. It is as if we were called upon first to read small letters at a distance, and then realized that these same small letters were written elsewhere on a larger surface (*Republic* 368d). Thus, justice might be more easily seen (i.e., apprehended) in *poleis* than in individuals. The adopted procedure will be to move back and forth between “the likeness of the greater [*poleis*] in the form [*idea*] of the lesser [individuals]” (*Republic* 369a).

Why is this analogical method appropriate? First of all, justice commonly implies the relationship of one person to another, and refers to a whole, a common good, greater than the sum of its parts. It is not simply the relationship of a person to him/herself, although certain persons may strive to be self-sufficient wholes. It is the latter that is uncommon, extraordinary, and unlikely. It requires a consideration of the order of a man’s *psyche*, and a depth psychology that is by no means obvious. But order is commonly perceived as something external in the cosmos, or in the constitutional political association, the *polis*. Thus, the proper starting point (one of the functions of metaphor and analogy) is with that which is readily available and understandable. This is true even for the most extraordinary philosophic persons, who like everyone else are fittingly born, habituated, and act in some *polis* or community.

Secondly, it is not unrealistic to suppose that the character of a regime will reflect the character of its citizens, and from this likelihood the function of this analogy will be to extend and interrelate the meaning of justice in the *polis* with that of justice in the individual. The internal development of justice in the souls of persons will be developed through this interrelationship.

There is the potential for continual tension (if not incompatibility) between the just *polis* and the just person. Bloom's interpretative essay on Plato's *Republic* purposely exaggerates the uneasiness between these two analogates.<sup>53</sup> This analogy will have limits beyond which the justice in and among some persons may still be realizable, when justice in the *polis* is not further possible. Both the existential imperfection and intractableness of regimes, and the inevitably transpolitical dimensions of human striving (i.e., the love of wisdom) break through the limits of the *polis-psyche* analogy.

Let us now attend to Bloom's account of the *polis-psyche* analogy to determine (1) whether Plato is guilty of forging an identity between the two, and confusing the model (*polis*) with the thing modeled (individual *psyche*)<sup>54</sup>—as such this could mean a totalitarian outcome; and (2) whether Plato presents a tenuous, possibly misleading, analogy given the philosopher's private pursuit of self-perfection, contrary to the public demands of the *polis* (Bloom's conclusion).

Bloom has not written a commentary, but instead an interpretation. We must be wary of the provocative, polarizing dichotomies that he uses for interpretative reasons: soul versus body; rulers versus ruled; philosophers versus citizens; and nature (*physis*) versus art or convention (*nomos*). Although there is much to be revealed by exaggerating the exclusivity of these terms, as if solely dichotomous, they are in actuality found to be coterminous. Thus, there is a continuity (i.e., no necessary discontinuity or conflict) between them. For example, proper care of the body leads to education of the soul; all rulers were once among the ruled; the philosopher will not be able to exist qua philosopher, nor be nurtured and habituated except as a citizen of a *polis*, no matter how much the philosopher transcends the *polis*; and convention may imitate nature. Nevertheless, there is no denying the tension between these polarities, insofar as they make different demands and elicit different commitments. Does this mean, as Bloom seems to be contending, that persuasive arguments for being a good citizen will “forget,” exclude, and “suppress,” what is required to be a good man or philosopher?<sup>55</sup> At one point, Bloom seems to recognize continuity: “The guardian who is totally devoted to the common good is the prototype of the philosopher who is devoted to knowing the good”<sup>56</sup> However, the guardian has already achieved a kind of transpolitical status. He is a noble dog unconcerned with his own needs and happiness. The most radical disjuncture is between the erotic striving of the philosopher, who wants to know the first causes of all things, and the citizens who just need food, desire wealth and possessions, and then calculate the means thereto. Since a city does not erotically philosophize or reproduce, “in this sense a city cannot be properly compared to a man.”<sup>57</sup> Yet a city can be representative of its erotic persons who reproduce and philosophize. Bloom does not deny this; however, to make persons completely political is



to suppress or distort their erotic experiences according to Bloom. The philosopher is a sort of special exception to the laws and conventions of the city, in that she/he does not share their moral limits. Intellectual virtue and moral virtue part ways.<sup>58</sup> Philosophic *eros* is shameless.

Bloom has reached these (tentative?) conclusions by, on one hand, completely identifying and, on the other hand, absolutely separating city and individual (*psyche*). Is this the proper way to understand the functions of an analogy? For example, Bloom reasons that justice in the city means everyone minding his/her own business and achieving the greatest self-sufficiency. Yet the philosophic ruler will ensure that the function of every person is such in order to serve the common good of the whole. But if the just person (or the philosopher) performs her/his own function, which also is to strive for his/her own self-sufficient good, this, in effect, will be exclusive of the city. For Bloom,<sup>59</sup> the paradoxical result of this *polis-psyche* analogy is that the good, just, philosophic person will not be the good citizen any longer. The true philosopher (unlike Socrates? but look at what happened to Socrates within the Athenian *polis*, which he, the best citizen, refused to leave) will not accept the necessary limits (imperfections) of the political, that is, the *polis*. It would appear that the *polis-psyche* analogy has been superseded and transcended in the same way that the *techne* analogy was.

Can the good person achieve perfection in isolation? The ever-abiding tension between the good person and the good citizen is another way of saying that the good person can only be such by failing to be identical to a good citizen conventionally defined. It is an analogy or similarity (not an identification or sameness) between the parts of the *polis* and their appropriate functions and the “parts” of the soul and their appropriate functions. A city will be composed of different kinds of persons influencing the character of its regime, while a person will self-determine his/her character according to the development of her/his potentialities, and according to that “part” of their soul that naturally predominates. Bloom is not unaware of this analogy, but believes that it is spurious because what the city punishes (offending desires), if punished in the souls of some persons (philosophers or potential philosophers), would be inhibiting in the development of these souls’ theoretical, contemplative capacities. This more likely is true in the worst of *poleis*, not the better ones.

However, it is clear that the potential and the actual philosophers do benefit from the great deprivations of the bodily desires that are, in fact, inflicted on the guardians in the best regime. Thus, Plato distinguishes between the doctor who may be better as a doctor for being sickly and having mildly, not irreparably, come into contact with all kinds of diseases, and the judge who will not have witnessed all sorts of evils, except for an experience of them late in life, when it is too late to cause character degeneration. Of course, the philosopher

has more in common with the judging of souls than the doctoring of bodies. The philosopher-judge would be beyond shame, not in the same way that the tyrant is, but only insofar as she/he has not internally participated in, nor is internally inclined to participate in, the shameful. The philosopher still would have a sense of shame without her/himself being shameful according to her/his nature. Is shame entirely defined by convention (*nomos*), as Bloom suggests? Are there no natural limits to philosophic *eros* based on a natural, ontic sense of shame (*aidos*, also means “awe” in Greek) before that which is greater than oneself?

Instead, the philosopher surpasses the city insofar as she/he is not simply and finally accountable before the bar of any particular city. The city natural to the philosopher is no particular city; yet the philosopher can be held accountable for respecting the tension between political and psychic existence, since both are natural to humans.

All of this leads to the question whether the philosopher can do without the city. (Bloom readily and correctly admits that the city cannot do without philosophy, albeit the demands of philosophy, such as the “communism” of the *Republic*, make it difficult for the city to tolerate it.) The question at stake is whether one should avow the “communism” Socrates portrays physically, simply as it is, or whether it should be seen as a discursive analogue for the communism of knowers (namely, the Academy at this time being founded by Plato). There are different consequences, as regards exegesis, depending on one’s univocal or analogical understanding of the *Republic*. Although the contemplative life in the realm of the ideas or universals is transpolitical, does this negate the city and permanently remove the philosopher from the city? Not only is it not possible to achieve in this life an eternal contemplation of the ideas, even if it is in the perfected nature and end (*telos*) of humans, but furthermore it is not possible to sever political existence and philosophy. Even the most private of philosophers thoroughly committed to a life of leisure cannot avoid the political basis, as well as the political repercussions, of their conversations (*logoi*). We live, share, and participate in a common existence that has a common end. Potentially, this is communicable to everyone who has the inner ability to reflect on the public grounds for being and acting. To live, to act, and to communicate is irreducibly political; to be politically involved does not necessarily mean to hold political office. Socrates’ life-long existence would exemplify this unavoidable political involvement (while refusing to be politically involved given the oligarchic corruption of Athens), as well as the natural human basis for political existence.

Bloom recognizes an enduring tension between philosophy and the *polis*, while at least recognizing some analogical tension and even mixture, balance, and continuity. Bloom still in other places uses the language of dualism and

dichotomous opposition, especially when he thinks Plato has identified city (*nomos*) and the nature of humans (*physis*). These two ways of understanding the relation of *polis* and *psyche* are logically exclusive. For Bloom it is the primitive, radical body-soul dualism (a questionable reading of Plato) that lies behind the *polis-psyche* dualism. These emphasized dualisms may be, for good reasons, Bloom's tentative way of exaggerating awful tensions, or they may be the result of reflecting on humans in the city from the extreme standpoint of what is thought to be humans' perfected nature and end, exclusive of the actual city and its *nomos*, and the body.

The alternative is not total devotion either to philosophy or to the city. Bloom rightly discerns that the three fantastic waves in the *Republic* reveal that no city deserves such total commitment. Thus, we should go outside the city for philosophic realization,<sup>60</sup> which Socrates does in the *Phaedrus*. But Plato knows what happens when everything is given over to philosophy. The ship of state parable shows how the navigator (philosopher) becomes isolated, how the sailors (sophists) claim to be navigators in their own right, and accordingly give philosophers a bad reputation. Can philosophers idly permit lesser citizens or corrupt ones to rule over them? This may not mean aspiring for political power, but it does require speaking and acting politically and prudentially to insure an open space for philosophers. And does not this withdrawal of the philosopher from the public life of politics threaten the philosophic way for philosophers themselves, as well as for potential philosophers, who consequently may also turn away from philosophy?

The argument against Bloom is that the polis-psyche analogy is not reducible or dispensable. This analogy is not just a matter of negative consequences but is definitive of the human political condition. The ship of state analogy itself is dispensable in two respects: (1) Plato could have spoken of shepherds and sheep, Zeus and the Olympian gods, and so on—that is, whatever would serve his limited purpose; and (2) the conflict between the *demos*, pseudo-philosophers or philodoxers and true philosophers need not have the political outcome of the repression or rejection of the true philosopher, if she/he does not have political power. The reason why the abiding tension between *psyche* and *polis* does not break down even when admitting the transpolitical dimensions of the philosopher's strivings, (and even when the philosopher is confronted with the political duty of risking his life in defense of this city), is that they both together comprehend the whole of our active participation in the *Lebenswelt* (being-in-the-world).

While the city is devoted to the heterogeneous, the particular, even the parochial, and while philosophy, in part, moves toward the contemplation of the universal and unitary (thought thinking itself), this does not necessarily prohibit their interaction and participation in one another. There is no tension without opposition and contrariety, engendering the experience of something

pulling in different directions. Analogical tension provokes the recognition of some significant similarity in dissimilarity, some continuity threatened by discontinuous rupture. There is no escape from some degree of *aporia* and angst. Furthermore, there can be vertical tension as well as horizontal tension—that is, a successful analogy need not require that *psyche* and *polis* be on the same par or level. Even the transpolitical dimensions of the *psyche* do not destroy the tensional continuity between *polis* and *psyche*, because both poles (the *praxis* of the political and the *theoria* of the soul) nourish one another. (Only after a full treatment of *mythos* in Plato can this argument against Bloom be given further discursive support.)

Bloom falsely works with the analogy of what a whole city can achieve versus what the whole, perfected philosophical man can strive for. The analogy is not primarily between two wholes, but between the parts of one whole, namely the *psyche* in the *polis*, the one whole of the *Lebenswelt*. First of all, it is questionable whether Bloom's philosopher is a perfect whole, rather than a perfected part (namely his *nous*). By definition, a purely noetic soul would be self-identical and self-sufficient, beyond striving, a veritable living god. As a consequence, such a philosopher would have no analogical relation with anything else herebelow. Secondly, if the striving of the philosopher is not equitable with noetic oneness and self-sufficiency, the other "parts" of the soul are integral in different ways to the perfection of a person's soul. They, in turn, require some analogical reference to other persons—that is, persons together in a *polis*. The unity or concord of the *polis* depends on various parts of the *polis* partaking in or understanding their relation as a part to the whole or the common good. Even the philosopher makes the best of the functions (*dynamis*) of the lower parts of the soul. The proper development and exercise of even the lower parts of the soul can be instigative of the development of the highest part of the soul. And does not the noetic part of one's soul thrive on the noetic part of another person's souls, via a symposia discussion, which constitutes a micro political relationship?

It seems that Bloom has endorsed contemplative (*theoria*) philosophic existence exclusive of the city, such that the city can only be seen and understood as a degrading, imprisoning cave. It is not surprising when Bloom declares that philosophy is a private activity having nothing to do with action in the city.<sup>61</sup> Nothing in the city is desirable in itself. Once one has radically, essentially disjoined the *polis* from the *psyche*, there is no way analogically to get them back together again. Humpty-Dumpty has had a great fall! In one sense, this may have been Plato's purpose: Bloom writes "the perfect city is revealed to be a perfect impossibility."<sup>62</sup> However, persons, including philosophers, existentially live in cities and even their contemplative life (which is a life of activity, not inaction) is exemplified in speech and in deed—that is, somewhat publicly and politically. Contrary to Bloom's interpretation,

Plato never portrays directly or indirectly a self-sufficient best person that actually exists in a non-public life. She/he would be a self-declared god, and by definition would be incommunicable. Neither Plato nor Bloom can speak about such a person. She/he is just as impossible as the perfect city. At this extreme point of identification, the *polis-psyche* analogy obviously dissolves in silence.

Even assuming such an end as the life of contemplation, persons do not live in, but are drawn to, this perfection. Metaphor and analogy (as well as *mythos*) speak to this drawing or pulling of persons who participate by seeking the end of their perfection, which is something other, more, and beyond. The status and function of analogy and metaphor will be decisively different depending upon whether they are reducible to an essentialistic identification with persons' perfected end (Bloom), or whether they rest upon existential dimensions of acting, interacting, inquiring, progressing, coming to understand, and so on. Only the concern for essences in existence preserves the irreducible, dynamic tendentiality of *psyche* and *polis*, nature and convention.<sup>63</sup>

Some mention already has been made in passing regarding the question: are metaphors and analogies appropriate or inappropriate, true or false? The temptation is to say both, and to argue that truth can be partly understood as fulfilling conditions of appropriateness and fittingness. An attempt at this point to answer this question fully is to beg the question of the relation of *mythos* to *logos*. Can we speak of true or false *mythoi* as we can of *logos*? It is commonly asserted (especially today) that "philosophical" or logical truth is precise, exact, certain, and does not admit of degrees or approximations in the way that criteria of appropriateness and fittingness do. On the other hand, appropriateness and fittingness commonly seem to connote a conventional or traditional, relative standard. Avoiding both of these extremes, the interchangeability of the truthful and the appropriate can be defended to be in agreement with the comparative use of *aletheia* found in Plato. Certainly, metaphors and analogies deal with conventional standards of appropriateness, but Plato is not beholden to them when they obscure or thwart that which is truer and more appropriate to experience. Especially in the instances where Plato speaks of true or right opinion, which is neither uncritically held prejudice, nor fully accounted for (*logos* based) knowledge, do we have proof of the flexibility of the term "true." In at least two instances (*Republic* 585b and *Gorgias* 527a) Plato uses the comparative "truer." In the *Republic* passage, Plato speaks of truer fullness regarding real being—that is, do food and drink, or opinions, or knowledge, or *nous* have a greater participation in pure being (*ousia*)? In the *Gorgias* (527a), a *mythos* is delivered by Socrates at the end of a lengthy conversation. Socrates asks whether anything better and truer could be found after all our searching. If so, we would have grounds for abandoning or reworking this *mythos*.

Only the position that metaphors and analogies are fully reducible would accommodate speaking about them as true or false in a strict logical fashion. The whole function of metaphor and analogy is to gain a greater penetration of insight; thus, insofar as they are irreducible, they will deal with matters of degree, approximation, and suitability. One of the criteria that makes metaphor and analogy appropriate or truthful is their insightfulness and openness to the matter under investigation. This does not foreclose the possibility that one analogy is better than another. Not only do metaphors and analogies need to be context controlled, in order not to be inappropriate and misleading, it is also required that they do not degenerate into identities or idols of the mind. The only way to decide on the appropriateness of such metaphors and analogies is to engage in the problems of speaking (*logos*), which is a dynamic, energetic passion for coming-to-know (not for static, encyclopedic information or dictionary knowledge or ideological righteousness).<sup>64</sup>

The suitability of metaphor and analogy will be determined according to whether they generate responsible or irresponsible actions or decisions. In an account of analogy given by Professor Burrell,<sup>65</sup> it is argued that there are no measures or standards for analogy. But if this were true, what would be the meaning of our judging, assessing, deciding, and aspiring, all of which underlie (according to Burrell) the functioning of analogy in our language? Granted that the standard or measure is not a defined rule or canon, or some common, univocal proposition revealed by formal analysis (which apparently is the only sense of “measure” allowed by Burrell). Nevertheless, whatever is perfective of our end, whatever is in the light of the Good, functions as our measure or standard guiding our purposive action. Burrell is not unaware of this kind of talk. Our end, whatever the Good is, is philosophically problematic—that is, “good” is used to mean diverse things. (Aristotle, of course, was aware of this problem; see *Nicomachian Ethics*, 1094aff.) Burrell is correct to indicate that analogies are context variable, and they resist fixed criteria for usage, which would make them reducible to generic expressions. Yet can we say, in Wittgensteinian fashion, that analogy is a style of language harnessing ambiguities?<sup>66</sup> Does not ambiguity suggest equivocation? Are “need” and “use” the only tests of analogy, when we employ analogies to illustrate and provoke insight and understanding?<sup>67</sup>

It is true that analogies reveal our capacity to judge and to discriminate in the presence of diversities (“diversities” is a far better descriptive term than “ambiguities”). Analogies do not stand alone as justifications, nor are they self-justifying. Yet one can compare the consequences of using one analogy instead of another. For example, take the bodily, material, and atomistic analogies descriptive of political persons, as opposed to the teleological consideration of these persons in Plato. Both have determinable consequences for

moral and political action, and consequently provide the grounds for accepting or rejecting them.

At best, Burrell speaks only of some judgment of appropriateness and some undefinable affinity in the human intellect for an appropriate ordering principle. But there are differently conceived orders dependent upon one's analogies, models, or paradigmatic images. These can be discussed and defended, or rejected, depending upon their dialectical (in Plato's sense) consequences. (This has an important bearing on what "*logos*" means to Plato, all of which will be considered in the next chapter.) In this way analogies are appropriate or not appropriate (e.g., my exegesis of *techne* had consequences contrary to Bambrough's article). Insofar as Burrell is led to reflect on that intentional act of consciousness that is the source for resorting to analogies (especially his chapter on Plato), he is going in the right direction of a measure or standard that is the end of human striving or intentionality. We are in search of an internal not external measure. However, Burrell's analysis of analogy is insufficient, when it leaves the status of analogy unfounded and without systematic warrant,<sup>68</sup> on the level of mere beliefs.<sup>69</sup> If analogy is based on assumptions and opinions, it becomes threateningly equivocal, subjective, or even ideological in potential. Nevertheless, there is much worthy of reflection when Burrell puts analogy in terms of what it shows and does (intends), not just what it says externally. We need to explore the "on the way to *logos* or *ana logos*" of analogy.

### Magisterial and Pupillary Metaphor and Analogy

The purpose of this chapter is to raise and to begin to answer some of the questions that inevitably are aroused when considering metaphors and analogies. Some kind of conclusion as to the status and function of metaphors and analogies is bound to throw light on the meaning behind a resort to myth and how myth functions. We found that both metaphor and analogy involve the drawing of likenesses in the presence of manifest differences, such as what Aristotle's "similar in dissimilars" discerned. However, some analogies attempt to reveal more precisely and rigorously the relational likeness between four terms; and etymologically *ana logos* implies a seeking of (or a means of moving toward) a fundamental ground (*logos*). The great danger when analyzing metaphor and analogy is to treat them as things or external expressions with which hearers or recipients must deal. It is not what metaphor and analogy are or how they appear to us that is crucial; rather we need to emphasize why persons resort to metaphors and analogies, and how they are meant to function. When metaphor and analogy are treated as object expressions, there is a strong tendency to reduce or nullify them. The whole use of analogies and metaphors by Plato belies this kind of treatment.

We have reached the conclusion that there are basically two kinds of metaphors and analogies: (1) the magisterial, which itself is dispensable, although a resort to them may remain indispensable;<sup>70</sup> such metaphors are an educational means of provoking some insight to achieve discursive participation with other persons; (2) the pupillary, which in itself is indispensable and irreducible; here we have the problem of diversity participating in oneness. Nevertheless, all metaphors and analogies require exegesis and reflection; they are meant to be and turn out to be in varying degrees thought-provoking. Through interpretation one arrives at their limits and such limits may confirm: (1) the irreducibility of some metaphors and analogies, which in no way inhibits the diversity of metaphors and analogies that speak to a common predicament; they are diverse because they are required, if one is to speak politically to different people in different ways; (2) the human condition of not being able to transcend the tensional in-betweenness of this-worldly existence, which is the point of origin and domain of activity for metaphors and analogies; and (3) the persistent recurrence of metaphor and analogy exposing perennial issues in political philosophy.

The common human predicament as regards coming-to-know is that we have to approach our inquiry regarding the Good, the beautiful, oneness, being, or God, indirectly analogously in the hope that a heightened awareness will be publicly, intersubjectively achieved.<sup>71</sup> Strict logical rightness or wrongness is irrelevant, and if demanded it signifies a failure to understand that the primary test of metaphor and analogy is a consciousness of their tensional duality in unity.<sup>72</sup> Metaphors and analogies point to more than a common predicament; there is also a common end that is not easily or even rigorously graspable by essentialistic definitions. Metaphors and analogies are not simply instrumental means of relative, useful worth; nor are they ends in themselves. Rather they are means integrally and indispensably partaking of ends in themselves. That is why they can respect the diversity of experience, while seeking a synthetic commonality or wholeness. The truthfulness of metaphors and analogies is innerly established,<sup>73</sup> and not a matter of some external, dictated rule or standard. By "the inner," it is meant the experiences of the human soul. Metaphors and analogies work through concrete objectifications such as images, symbols, stories of great deeds, and so on, in order to visualize and symbolize psychic dimensions.<sup>74</sup> In this respect, they always fall short, or they dangerously risk the fallacy of misplaced concreteness or idolatry. Should we then try to free ourselves of all metaphors and analogies by pursuing a philosophical *logos* so purified? Or does the way of *logos* require some proper and abiding functioning of metaphor and analogy? The nature of *logos*, dialectic, and their relation to the functioning of metaphors and analogies will be examined next. In the process, we will be moving toward an understanding of the relationship between *logos* and *mythos*.



Inssofar as all philosophy is epistemology and not more than this (being consumed by the question, how do we know at all?), then metaphor, analogy and *mythos* are dispensable tools. But if philosophy has ontological import (stung by the question, why is there anything, instead of nothing at all?),<sup>75</sup> then the best metaphors, analogies, and *mythoi* are indispensable and irreducible. In sum, on analogy with the poet (and Plato can be called a poet of *mythos*), we constantly return to and listen to the poem (*mythos*), including any interpretive, critical commentary (*logos*).

## NOTES

1. This term “*metaxy*” appears especially in Plato’s *Symposium* 202bff., *Philebus* 16cff., *Protagoras* 316d, *Republic* 346e, 408d, 410b, 416b, 417a, 497d, 498b, 526a, 529a, 527a, *Laws* 650d, 809b, 857c, 967a, and *Phaedrus* 240e, 277c. For Eric Voegelin, what might appear and be read as just a simple preposition or adverb becomes of monumental significance. See his *In Search of Order* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 10–11, 16, 26–31, 40, 53, 61, 72, 81, 89; also *Anamnesis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 103, 108, 112–15, 132, 138–39, 176; also *The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 11, 31, 175, 184–92, 216, 231, 237–38, 303–05, 308; also *Collected Works, Published Essays 1966-1985*, Volume 12 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 119, 188, 360. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 55 footnotes 18, 71, is aware of the tension and the in-between.

2. Aristotle first coined this term; the closest that Plato came is the verb, *metaphero*. See *Timaeus* 26c. One could say that Plato’s dialogues are “verbing,” while Aristotle’s treatises are “nounified.” But, alas, none of Aristotle’s dialogues are extant. Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good*, 3–4, 34, 114–15, 145 refers to Aristotle’s “conceptualization” of what Plato presents metaphorically and mythically. Gadamer himself unfortunately chooses Aristotle over Plato in regard to this language presentation. Thus, *mythos* is subordinated to *logos*. It is not that conceptualization and intentionality (subject-object analysis) is wrong, but rather that the symbolic and mythical luminosity of *mythos* is marginalized, if not lost.

3. Monroe Beardsley, “Metaphorical Twist,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* XXII (1962), 293–97, 302. Also, see Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Syracuse University Press, 1962), 37.

4. See Aristotle’s *Poetics* 1460bff.

5. Note the purposely used technique of absurdity in the satirical humor of Woody Allen, which one would not call metaphorical, despite its “shock value.”

6. See Philip Wheelwright, *Metaphor and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 70–91.

7. For example, J. Szrednicki, “On Metaphor,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1960), 231 and Monroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1958), 304, 307.

8. Owen Barfield, "The Meaning of the Word 'Literal'" in *Metaphor and Symbol*, ed., L. C. Knight and Basil Cottle (London: Butterworths Scientific Publications, 1960), 54.

9. See the persuasive lectures of F. W. J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (Albany: State University of New York, 2007). Also Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenology of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Dell, 1966), 7–12 contends that the ancients began naturally with life and were confronted with the problem of death, while moderns naturally begin with death (science and matter) and are troubled by life's outbreak and meaning.

10. For Max Muller's remark that "myth is the disease of language" see Richard Chase, *The Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 42–48.

11. Brian Wicker, *The Story-Shaped World* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), vii, 4.

12. Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (London: Faber and Faber, 1928), 17–29. Also, see Barfield, "The Meaning," 55, where Barfield calls the "literal" in itself the "material literal."

13. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York: Harpers, 1953), chapter 5.

14. See Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 6–92, 130–71. Barfield speaks of an original unity, which is figurative and pictorial, a unity that has not been differentiated and analyzed into parts by the *to logizein*. "The world, like Dionysus, is torn to pieces by pure intellect; but the poet is Zeus; he has the swallowed the heart of the world; and he can reproduce it as a living body." Barfield has much of importance to say about the relation of reason and poetry (*logos* and *mythos*) being dependent on a metaphysical outlook. See also C. S. Lewis, "Bluspels and Flalansferes," in *The Importance of Language*, ed., Max Black (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 37, who corrects Barfield by pointing out the distinction between derivation and meaning. The latter is the object of my inquiry. Recently, in the philosophy of science the presupposition of a literal "given" as the ultimate ground for scientific knowledge has been challenged. See John G. Gunnell, *Philosophy, Science, and Political Inquiry* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1975). No longer can we assume incorrigible brute facts of an observation language, independent of an interpretative theory that depends on some guiding model or paradigm. Perhaps models function like metaphors and analogies.

15. See Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 53ff.

16. Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 25–31.

17. Lewis, "Bluspels," 39ff.

18. Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 54ff.

19. Douglas Berggren, "Use and Abuse of Metaphor," *Review of Metaphysics* 16 (1962), 237–58, 450–72.

20. Max Black, "Metaphor," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* LV (1954–1955), 40ff. Also, see Wheelwright, *Metaphor*, 33ff. Black refers to this as the system of "associated commonplaces" and Wheelwright calls this a set of experiences, "steno-meanings."

21. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950).

22. This is contrary to the arguments of Black, "Metaphor," 37, Berggren, *Use and Abuse*, 242–43, and Wheelwright, *Metaphor*, 78. With Wheelwright, it is especially clear that his Heraclitean, humanistic perspectivalism, and his denial of ultimates and universals encourages a constructionist, as well as a relativistic, account. Furthermore, for all Wheelwright's emphasis on a presential reality and awareness that is not a representation or imaging, he eventually concedes that when the poet's experience is presential, his poetry is a mimesis or representation of his experience (129, 161). All three of these writers incorrectly fear reductionism, if they concede this point about antecedent existence. The same is true of Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutic," *New Literary History* 6 (1974), 101–03.

23. Wheelwright, *Metaphor*, 247.

24. The reader may have noted that the dialectical rocking Plato in the *Republic* resorts to both a micro and a macro analogy, truly an AC/DC, back and forth analogy between the soul (*psyche*) and the city (*polis*).

25. Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 103–05, 52–57.

26. See Snell, *Discovery*, 1–2, 13. Also David Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 58–60 points out the consequences of such root metaphors.

27. Lewis, "Bluspels," 40.

28. Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 141.

29. Ricoeur, "Metaphor," 105ff.

30. See Steven Tigner, "Plato's Philosophical Uses of the Dream Metaphor," *American Journal of Philology* XCI (1970), 204–12.

31. Wheelwright, *Metaphor*, 82.

32. Wheelwright, *Metaphor*, 168. See also Eric Voegelin, *Order and History III* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 198–99.

33. Ricoeur, "Metaphor," 99–101.

34. In this respect the term *homoiotatos* is most frequently used. See *Protagoras* 330b, *Republic* 369a, 472d, 529d, 555a–c; *Phaedrus* 250a–c, 253b, 273d; *Theaetetus* 144e, 176b–c, 177a; *Parmenides* 128e, 132d, 157a; *Timaeus* 30c, 42c, 90d; *Laws* 741a, 836e, 964d; *Critias* 107c–d.

35. There is no vicious circle here in that an image or likeness (via the use of metaphors and analogies) both lead to an understanding of true reality, and require some foreknown knowledge of true reality. A bridge, leap, and connection occur. The processes of discovery and justification can never be radically separated. We know somehow implicitly before (*anamnesis*) we know explicitly, thus "*nous*" is initially comparable to intuition. Analogies and metaphors both lead up to (namely, discover) and go down from (namely, justify) the truth of reality. An examination of the imagery of the cave and divided line supports this conclusion.

36. Perhaps the most brilliant analogy in the history of political theory is James Madison's analogy in *Federalist Paper* #10: air is to fire as liberty is to faction. Implicit in this analogy is the problem of modernity making liberty without qualification a first principle.

37. Burrell, *Analogy*, 50ff.

38. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *The Greek-English Lexicon* (8th revised edition, New York: American Book Company, 1929). “Ana” in Greek means upward, up on, above.

39. A question has been raised by James Anderson, “Analogy in Plato,” *Review of Metaphysics* 4 (1950), 111–28, whether Plato has explicit awareness of philosophical analogy—that is, whether Plato’s use of analogy is responsive to diversity in being as opposed to only formal differences. Without a recognition of diversity in being, then Plato’s analogies are reducible to philosophical essences or forms. Plato’s use of analogies and *mythoi* clearly acknowledge the diversity of being, insofar as analogy and *mythos* exemplify the problem of the participation of manyness in oneness. If so, Plato may be considered a forerunner of the Judaic-Christian God whose creation is in His image.

40. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 431.

41. Renford Bambrough, “Plato’s Political Analogies,” *Plato, Popper and Politics*, ed., Renford Bambrough (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 100.

42. Bambrough’s essay appears in a volume that is not terribly representative of “Plato’s friends.” And his modern liberal individualism is quite anachronistic regarding Plato.

43. See Augustine’s remarks about the differences overwhelming the likenesses in any creature/God analogy in Erich Przywara, *Analogy of Being*. Translated by John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014). Przywara repeatedly quotes Augustine so often that it appears to be a self-dissuasion to doctrinalize and literalize analogy. In any case, Przywara’s *Analogia Entis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2014) is the bible on analogy.

44. Bambrough, “Plato’s,” 100–01, 110.

45. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (New York: Doubleday, 1959) especially chapter 5 and 6 for this important distinction.

46. See Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good*, 23, 32, 35, 37, 46–49, 78–80, who clearly rejects the specialization of the craftsman to be Plato’s understanding of political *phronesis* and philosophy. You could say that Socrates *techne* is a powerful, provocative disanalogy.

47. Bambrough, “Plato’s,” 12.

48. Bambrough, “Plato’s,” 108.

49. John Wild, *Plato’s Theory of Man* (New York: Octagon Books, 1946), 61–76.

50. Also the problem of imitation (*mimesis*) is more complex and subtle than what its surface meaning seems to imply to us. There are many other terms in Plato’s dialogues (*eros*, mania, shame, dreaming, divination) that have dual (or to put it crudely, good-bad) meanings like *techne*. Everything depends on the direction or intentionality of the terms. For example, both the tyrant and the philosopher are erotic persons. *Mythos* too may have true or false intentions, depending on its appropriateness toward that end that perfects or diverts healthy souls.

51. Wild, *Plato’s*, 51, 52.

52. R. J. Fogelin, “Three Platonic ‘Analogies,’” *Philosophic Review* 80 (1971), 372. Note that there are two respects in which an analogy “breaks down”: (1) a magisterial analogy becomes dispensable once one has understood its meaning and can give an account of this meaning without the analogy; (2) when an indispensable

pupillary analogy can carry us no further, in that we are mortals, without the risk of misinterpretation through identification rather than participation. For example, if we try to define the Good univocally without remainder, the analogical nature of our understanding of the Good has broken down the human/divine boundary. The dangers of ideologically immanentizing the transcendental and eschatological help explain the horrors of the twentieth century. See Voegelin, *Order and History* 3, 362ff.

53. Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), see the Preface and his Interpretative Essay.

54. Colin Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962) reaches this conclusion.

55. Bloom, *Republic*, 371.

56. Bloom, *Republic*, 367, 376.

57. Bloom, *Republic*, 371.

58. Bloom, *Republic*, 376.

59. Bloom, *Republic*, 378–79.

60. Bloom, *Republic*, 389.

61. Bloom, *Republic*, 392, 403, 415. Not only Bloom is carried away by Plato's deep despair.

62. Bloom, *Republic*, 409. Yes, indeed, only a totalitarian impulse requiring great coercion would be in play to fail, after committing atrocities to try to succeed.

63. Burrell, *Analogy*, 51–53, 71–72, 82, 175, 206–07, 216.

64. Burrell, *Analogy*, 267.

65. Burrell, *Analogy*, 217–27.

66. Burrell, *Analogy*, 11.

67. Burrell, *Analogy*, 23.

68. Burrell, *Analogy*, 242.

69. Burrell, *Analogy*, 62, 65. Voegelin would challenge and disagree with Burrell, based on the distinction between intentionality (subject-object) analysis and noetic luminosity, a spiritual experience needing explanation.

70. Burrell, *Analogy*, 242. I am gratefully indebted to Burrell for this invaluable distinction.

71. Walker Percy, "Metaphor as Mistake," *Sewanee Review* 66 (1958), 92–95.

72. W. Bedell Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1936), 102.

73. Burrell, *Analogy*, 60, 228, 242–43.

74. Frederick Sontag, "Mythical Thought and Metaphysical Language," *Journal of Religion* 41 (1961), 109–17.

75. For Leibniz's query, see Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, 80–81, as well as *The Ecumenic Age*, 73–74.

## Chapter 2

# *Logos and Mythos in Plato's Dialogues*

Metaphor and analogy are a preparation for examining the status and function of *mythos* in Plato. What does it mean that philosophy is the love of wisdom?<sup>1</sup> If philosophy is primarily and essentially *logos*, then what is its relationship to *mythos*? The following series of questions bear upon the status of *mythos* vis-à-vis Plato's philosophical enterprise: What is the rudimentary meaning of *logos*? What does it mean to say that Socrates and Plato spent their life pursuing the *logos* of things? Is *logos* the goal of the quest, equitable with the object of knowledge, the forms or essences, which are the utmost precision humans can attain? Or does giving a *logos* signify finding only a means or a way (*methodos*) from ignorance or uncritical opinion to knowledge and wisdom? If *logos* is the goal or end rather than the means of achieving wisdom, then *mythos* is at best subordinate to *logos*. However, if *logos* is a means, then *mythos* also might be a complementary, but different, means to a common end for both. Finally, is there a connection between what is expressed in words and what is achieved in deeds? Specifically, does *logos* represent speech and *mythos* represent deeds and action? Would not the relativity, contingency, and precariousness of deeds and actions make *mythos* subordinate to *logos* being the certainty and perfection of reason? With these questions in mind, the aim of this chapter is to determine whether the full meaning of the philosopher's endeavor (*zetema*) includes or excludes *mythos*—that is, whether the differentiation of *logos* and *mythos* is complementary and harmonious or disconnected and diversionary, even antithetical, since such seemingly is the case for philosophy against poetry.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE TRIAL OF LOGOS

*Logos* can be rudimentarily defined as word, speech, story, conversation, or discussion. In earlier Greek usage, *mythos* is a tale or story used interchangeably with *logos* meaning “that which is or was said” or narrated.<sup>2</sup> This was the ordinary and traditional Greek understanding of *logos*, which Plato did not refrain from frequently employing. Gradually, however, *logos* came to mean more specifically giving a statement, argument, proposition, rational account, ground or basis, principle, and reason. Both the rudimentary definition and the later development of *logos* can be found in Plato’s dialogues with the added understanding that the ubiquitous use of *logos* almost always revolves around a problem or *aporia*, whether *logos* is discourse or *logos* is presenting a rational account or grounding. Thus, there remains the question regarding what giving a *logos* will amount to and where, if anywhere, it can eventually take us. There is no question that Socrates and Plato call to account all the various kinds of speaking regarding their possibilities on the journey toward wisdom.

Since there is practically no Platonic dialogue that is not a witness to the difficulties of giving a *logos*, only the major examples will be given of this abiding *aporia*. Frequently, this *aporia* will be experienced unexpectedly. The term *logos* will have already been used unproblematically a number of times early into a dialogue to mean no more than word, discussion, conversation, or speech.<sup>3</sup> But this quiet before the storm does not endure for long. For example, in the *Laches* (193e–198a) the discussion about courage reaches the point where our words (*logoi*) about courage can no longer make sense. Our words about courage do not agree with the way we would act courageously. Laches and Socrates are unable to lay hold of and stabilize in speech what courage is fundamentally in of itself.

Furthermore, Socrates refuses to let Laches abandon the discussion, as if it were enough for a military man like Laches to practice courage without knowing and saying what it is. Knowing through saying and realizing through doing are closely interrelated. Consequently, Socrates demands here (as well as elsewhere) that a man like Laches has the courage to continue (i.e., to overcome the shame of his ignorance) in the process of questioning and answering, all of which occurs via communion or participating in the discussion (*logos*). Otherwise the conversation in fact ends, since at this point no exchange or dialogue (as opposed to some monologue) mutually and resolutely continues. Likewise, in the *Charmides* (166d–e), in order to keep the discussion alive Socrates counsels Critias to relinquish the attitude that two persons, Socrates and Critias, are debating and trying to refute one another. Give your attention to the argument (*logos*) for its own sake and for its relation to the common good. On these terms, we decide whether our statements

can withstand the test of refutation. Thus, Socrates paradoxically personalizes the argument (*logos*) in order to depersonalize the conflict between the interlocutors. In this way, there can be a continuing participation in the direction and examination of the *logos*.

If *logos* means a dialogic participation in conversation, then there will be a further difficulty (likewise especially prominent given the sophistic practice of eristic and rhetoric) concerning the type of discourse that permits such a continuous interchange or cross-examination. In the *Protagoras*, this comes to a head over the issue of long and short speeches. Protagoras asks and gets permission from his audience to start off giving a long speech or fable (*mythos*). Following the fable, a regular exposition (*logos*) is appended (*Protagoras* 320c). Neither type of speech is amenable to short questions and answers, since they are more like rhetorical lectures found in books. Socrates ironically announces that he is spellbound by Protagoras' lengthy performance, albeit there is one "little" question that preoccupies Socrates. Consequently, Protagoras is asked to engage in a more pointed exposition (*logos*) of brief questions and answers. Protagoras acquiesces, although it is only a brief time before the problem arises regarding whether the argument (*logos*) is to be tested or just the personal skill of the two debaters (*Protagoras* 331c, 333c). It is Socrates' contention that to test the truth of an argument is necessarily to test one's soul with another soul. But to engage in a personal battle over who is superior is to avoid examining the truth of an argument. This accounts for Socrates' frequent ironic practice in this dialogue and in others of praising the wisdom or cleverness (*sophos*) of his interlocutors—that is, conceding the irrelevance of their supposed superiority, thereby conciliating their egos so that the discussion may go onward.

Protagoras prefers not to undergo any self-examination and would rather espouse whatever the populace applauds, given what they conventionally do and say. The moral inconstancy and relativism of the *demos* allows Protagoras the kind of sophistic flexibility that evades providing a serious basis for calling anything to account. Consequently, Protagoras skillfully resorts to a lengthy tirade against Socrates (*Protagoras* 334aff.). Again, Socrates necessarily responds that lengthy discourse is a dodge causing forgetfulness among its listeners and making it difficult to follow. But in order for Socrates to eventually succeed in returning to the dialogic mode of inquiry, he has to be physically forced to remain and to converse with Protagoras for an interval on Protagoras' own terms. In that interval Socrates ironically delivers the longest speech of the dialogue (praising the Spartans and Cretans for their brevity), which is a commentary on an excerpt from one of Simonides' poems. Of course, this is not acceptable as a standard of discourse. Rather it is an attempt to assuage Protagoras and to appease the crowd of listeners at this gathering. And more important, Socrates does enact through



self-dramatization for all to experience the unrewarding and futile consequences of that mode of discourse that pursues a lengthy interpretation of a poetical text without anyone questioning what is really meant. For Socrates, the best mode of discussion (*logos*) for gentlemen<sup>4</sup> (and this is obvious if there are any gentlemen present) is to converse directly with one another, without the intervention of poets who are absent and cannot be self-examined (*Protagoras* 348a).

Political or group force, shame, compromise, and Socratic coaxing dictate the character of discourse in the remainder of the *Protagoras* (see *Protagoras* 335d, 338b, 347b, 348c–e). When Protagoras is reluctant to answer the leading questions of Socrates, then Socrates carries on the dialogue with what most people, the *demos* or world at large, would likely say if they were to participate in questioning and answering (*Protagoras* 352d–238a). In this fashion of impersonating the *logos*, Socrates can attend to common opinions and conventional beliefs, as well as sophistic positions regarding virtue and vice, pleasure, and pain. It is not so much the result of this dialogue, which is a dramatic, ironic reversal whereby Socrates and Protagoras interchange their original positions about the teachability of virtue, but rather the interchange itself that marks the nature of *logos* as a participation, a giving and a taking, a common inquiry. If we become too eager for answers, results, conclusions and dogma, we are more likely to dismiss such aporetic or elenctic dialogues, such as the *Protagoras*, on the grounds that they are some earlier and less mature stage in Plato's development. Or worse, we could become distrustful and hateful of the *logos* (misology, *Phaedo* 88c–89a) that bears no consumable fruit. (Let us also be reminded of the city of pigs in the *Republic*, and all those who remain deep in the cave.)

Yet, to return to specifics, if we cannot define once and for all what can be known about the relationship between the virtues and how they comprise a whole, at least we know what does not count (as an account, *logos*)—that is, we know our own ignorance. Also, if becoming virtuous and acting virtuously require having knowledge about pleasure and pain and require an art of measurement, then virtue can be taught through this knowledge. At least, we would now know how we have to proceed and what we have to examine further. The whole conflict between Protagoras and Socrates is rightly grounded on the problem of what discourse or *logos* will be educative of virtue. At the center of the dialogue (namely, Simonides' text), the question of the easy or difficult attainability of virtue or goodness for persons is contingent upon whether god or man is the measure. With Protagoras, the case by which one acquires virtue is dependent on the majority (*demos*) and thus is dependent on conventions (*nomoi*) being the measure. This makes *logos* relatively the path of least resistance.

*Logos* is a means seeking an end (in this case virtue as a whole and goodness is sought), and the end functions as a measure of *logos* as a means. Interestingly, Socrates resorts to three different analogies in the process of seeking a *logos* to account for the interrelationship of the virtues, their distinctness, and their oneness (*Protagoras* 329dff.). The three analogies are the complete identity of the virtues differing only by name; the organic unity of the virtues like the parts of a face; and the substantial unity of parts such as in the case of pieces of gold. Protagoras chooses the second analogy but does not consistently abide by its consequences. Socrates argues strictly in terms of the first analogy. Friedlander<sup>5</sup> believes that Socrates purposefully uses this as a technique of “egregious fallacies,” in order to expose to the careful listener (reader) the difficulties of finding a quick solution to the problem at hand. Both analogies emphasizing identity and functional differentiation are required, if it is the case that virtue as a whole is analogically related—that is, the virtues are different in themselves, but also identical given their common end and realization.

Formally, we can conclude that analogies (*ana logos*) may occur in the *logos* process just at that point where the greatest difficulties arise. (Precisely, the difficulty is that X seems to be both X and not-X at the same time, or the same as itself and yet different.) Certainly, the famous analogies in the *Theaetetus* (e.g., the wax block and aviary) and in the *Statesman* (e.g., the shepherd) exemplify this. Also, Plato explicitly asserts that an impasse in the *logos* leads to the use of images or comparisons (see *Republic* 487e) such as the sun image, the divided line, and cave image. Some analogies may carry the *logos* only as far as they can go. Analogies may prove utterly unsatisfactory given the examination of their consequences or implications, including their inconsistency with what we already know to be true. Disanalogies may be more salient in order to serve the *paideutic*, midwifing elenchus of Socrates. In any case, we realize that analogies are involved with the undertaking of the *logos*, which seeks an account or grounding that is rationally consistent and fully examined regarding consequences and implications.

A number of important questions remain. In the *Protagoras* a formal distinction between *logos* and *mythos* is maintained. Do not the negative remarks of Socrates regarding Protagoras' use of *mythos* and *logos*, as well as the interlude when Simonides' text is discussed, indicate that the philosopher's most serious concern is for a *logos* free of *mythos* and poetry? Also, should not a ban on all long speeches (of the kind that a Protagoras would deliver) mean the exclusion of *mythos* from philosophical inquiry? Can we accept Protagoras' *mythos* as a Platonic *mythos*, or is it fundamentally anti-Platonic? Does it reveal anything to us about the way Plato's *mythoi* function in other dialogues? Except for the last two questions, which primarily and

substantively will be considered in the next chapter, these questions need to be dealt with now.

Regarding the *Protagoras*, only partial answers can be given to these questions that bear on the relation of *mythos* and *logos*, since this is only one context in which the *mythos/logos* problem arises. More important, this is a situation in which Protagoras, not Socrates, promotes the *mythos/logos* distinction (*Protagoras* 320c, 324d–e). In other words, we would at least want to know what Socrates explicitly states and does in other situations where he himself acknowledges this differentiation. Only in this way could the *Protagoras* be judged according to its representativeness. It may be that there is a time and place for *mythos* within the philosophic enterprise, but Protagoras may have improperly proceeded in this regard. Actually, there is a significant amount of evidence that Protagoras considered *mythos* and *logos* to be differentiated only in terms of their respective indirectness and directness. Poetry, mystical rites, soothsaying, music, and all the other ancient, sophistic arts, according to Protagoras, were only outer coverings or disguises enabling great men to avoid the hostility of the multitude (*Protagoras* 316c–317c). Protagoras believes that he can proceed by directly and publicly admitting that he is a sophist and educator. Therefore, the *mythos* that Protagoras delivers is an apparatus<sup>6</sup> (or *Zeus ex machina*) that is uncovered for what it is by the *logos* or exposition that Protagoras delivers following his *mythos*. Either way, *mythos* or *logos*, Protagoras can easily say the same thing. As Friedlander argues,<sup>7</sup> the use of *mythos* or *logos* is arbitrary for Protagoras. It would seem that Protagoras' understanding of *mythos* is reductionist or merely utilitarian regarding any principles of interpretation. Outside of possible stylistic advantages for persuasion and for political caution, Protagoras does not differentiate *mythos* and *logos* in regard to any proper functions they may distinctly have.

As for Socrates' response to Protagoras' arbitrary distinction between *mythos* and *logos*, notice that Socrates is critical of both speeches, since they do not meet the standards of a careful and precise *logos* proceeding via short questions and answers (*Protagoras* 329b). In fact, throughout the dialogue Protagoras is hard pressed to succeed in making distinctions or differentiations (see especially 331c–d and 349ff.) concerning the resemblances or likenesses (as opposed to the identity) between the various virtues. Protagoras' relativism inhibits, if not prohibits, an awareness of the oneness or unity of the diverse virtues, besides their obvious distinctiveness. Finally, one wonders whether Protagoras knows the basic difference between a *mythos* and a *logos*, as well as how they might be united in a common end.

Since Socrates' ironically long-winded speech is forced from him by circumstances, it is difficult to decide whether it contains some substantive content relative to the dialogue, or whether it is only a *reductio ad absurdum* of

poetic interpretation. It may be both simultaneously. Certainly, long speeches tend to impress upon their listeners an appearance of completeness; no further questions need be asked, if you can remember any.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Socrates' commentary on his own long speech denies any such resolution. At best Socrates' speech substantively indicates (irrespective of what Simonides may have intended, since this is an unanswerable and vain quest) that to become good or virtuous is difficult, whereas to be good is as impossible for humans as it is to be divine. *Mythos* is a long speech and may indeed have as one of its functions the interrelation of the human and the divine, and the consequent drawing of boundaries or limits in regard to ends that humans strive for. Within these limits, the *logos* can be reconsidered and can properly run its course<sup>9</sup> to completion (i.e., with all the consequences, one hopes, considered) in regard to the difficult problem of the teachability of virtue, which is a means of becoming good. Socrates' objection to poetry is in terms of its use by sophists to argue at length and arbitrarily about the undeterminable. Gentlemen do not discourse in a fashion that prevents thorough examination of an argument (*logos*), since, in effect, this distracts from the caring for one's soul. Is it in the nature of poetry to cancel itself out and thwart the process of the *logos*, because of the multiple interpretations that flow from it. But can poetry (and *mythos* likewise<sup>10</sup>) be more carefully, logistically used in conjunction with the strictures of *logos*?

The following negative conclusions are possible given the *Protagoras*. Certainly, long poetic speeches cannot stand alone, unexamined or unexamined. Nor should they be used at the beginning of a discussion, since this would tend to camouflage difficult questions and problems. Yet, even Socrates' long speech serves as more than a mere negative reminder to the listener. In content (but not in form, since it does not clearly provoke specific questions for consideration) a number of significant points (realistically speaking they are paradoxical) are put before us: no man willingly does evil; all persons strive to become good; deprivation of knowledge makes for evil; and the *polis* is founded on right (*dike*) and friendship (*philia*). These statements are like truisms, but are more vital than truisms, when your partners in discussion do not acknowledge and reflect on them. If this is the case, the possibilities of discourse are radically endangered. Nevertheless, all of these generic statements need to undergo critical clarification, exploration, and possible defense—that is, *logos*. That they do not in this situation only proves Socrates' point that long speeches tend to make people forgetful and uncritical. The consequences of acting out such understandings is severely modified in this dialogue; Socrates says he has a pressing engagement elsewhere.

Oddly enough, the correct form of discourse that follows in the *Protagoras* is accompanied by a content, namely hedonism, which only in a qualified manner can be attributed to Socrates/Plato. (Previously we had an apparently

unSocratic form with a Socratic content; now we have a Socratic form with an apparently unSocratic content. The ironic and paradoxical reversals in the *Protagoras* are legion.) The *Protagoras* is not an argument or *logos* in favor of hedonism, rather it is a challenge to those who would reduce their activities to a quantified calculus of pleasure and pain. (This reminds us of the supposedly contented city of pigs in the *Republic*.) Socrates wants his audience and the *demos* to realize that even their art of measurement of pleasure and pain does not rest on pleasure and pain, but rather on a knowledge of what is beneficial or good given the consequences of human's natural urge to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. In other words, there will be all kinds of pleasures and pains that are not simply or equally good or bad. Some pains, such as the *aporia* of Socratic *logos*, will be conducive to greater, lasting pleasure, if one can come to know through such suffering. And not all pleasures are equally rewarding. Consequently, one is led to consider that there is some norm or standard of knowledge beyond mere animal pleasure and pain that human beings naturally seek to establish (even if unaware of it) according to their way of life. Certainly, this "art of measurement" is analogous to another art, mathematics, and requires much more critical elaboration regarding what kind of precision or knowledge can be had in ethical matters.

To take a form of argument that failed Protagoras given its content (the courageous are bold, but the bold are not necessarily courageous), Socrates may have been suggesting that the good is pleasurable, but the pleasurable is not necessarily good. (Thus, another ironic reversal.) Although this helps clarify the relationship between pleasure and good, it does not help us to know the Good; rather we only know a consequential, concomitant aspect of it. In conclusion, in the *Protagoras* (as well as in the *Apology* and the *Symposium*) we encounter the problem of long speeches directly antithetical to the *logos* process of questioning and answering. At present, we are concerned only with *logos* in the form of a trial (*agon*), both in terms of the argument before us and the persons involved.

In other dialogues, there are further examples of a primitive meaning of *logos* expanding into serious predicaments (*aporias*). Although a common rudimentary meaning of *logoi* is words and names, in the *Phaedo* (76d–e) and the *Sophist* (218c), *logoi* are not restricted to words that are merely accepted on conventional grounds. Nor is giving *logoi* an act simply of giving names. In Socrates' attempted proof of the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, an affinity is drawn between the soul and the eternal essences—beauty, goodness, and so on. Without such essences (*ousiai*), the *logos* would have to be abandoned as desolate. The frequent allusion (*Meno* 98a–b; *Gorgias* 508e–509a; *Laches* 194c) to tying down and stabilizing opinions or beliefs via *logos* (argument) reveals that the *logos* does have its ground and is grounded in immovable ideas or essences. However, it would be grossly

misleading if it were thought that one needs only posit a theory of forms to solve all our “*logos*” problems. It is true that *logos* seeks its ground in the forms, but we still have to partake in *logos* to discover its grounding in the forms. One’s conclusions should not preclude one’s way of reaching them. If there is a divine *logos*, our human *logos* has such an end, that being the object of our striving, not some immediate, final possession (dogma).

In the *Euthydemus* (286aff.) giving a *logos* at first is equatable with giving a description of a thing. The question thus becomes: how would it be possible to deliver a false *logos*, if this were to mean that we were describing nothing? Either one speaks the truth or one speaks not at all. Although the origins of this argument are sophistic, nevertheless there is a serious philosophical difficulty here, namely, to clarify how it is possible to speak falsely. The *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* respectively address this problem on the level of perception and on the level of reasoning (*logos*). All of this occurs within the larger problem of *logos* that distinguishes knowledge from opinion. Furthermore, the knowledge sought not only is not just a matter of naming or describing characteristics or attributes, but also is not a positing of neat, formulaic definitions. The *Meno* stands as the best witness against these inadequate possibilities.

All of this is summed up in the difficulty behind asking “what is?” Meno typifies the kind of respondent who thinks this query is meant to be productive of either a swarm of descriptive examples<sup>11</sup>, or the enunciating of pithy, takeaway, capsule-like definitions. Neither alternative, *logos* as enumeration or *logos* as formula, are discursively open to ongoing argumentation. As in the *Protagoras*, the *aporia* centers around the problem of the one (*eidōs*) that runs through the many or various virtues (*Meno* 72b–c, 74a). If the *logos* is to be complete, knowledge of the whole is required. One could not truly know a part without knowing the whole (*Meno* 79c–d). Yet, paradoxically, can we humans ever know the whole in order to know the parts?

The crucial problem (involving many of Socrates’ interlocuters) is whether there is in actuality enough desire or inner urging to keep the inquiry (*zetēma*) going after a number of false starts and possibly ego-bruising exposures of personal ignorance. For Socrates, dialectical *logos* requires truthful answering and making use of whatever the respondent personally has to offer. Thus, from the beginning Socrates asks Meno to recollect what he has learned (either from Gorgias or otherwise). It is doubtful that Meno seriously wants to take up the endeavor of inquiry. And why should Meno try to find out what he does not know, if such an effort is in vain? How would one recognize what one does not know, if one does not know from the beginning what one is looking for? The paradox of the learner or the inquirer presents us with a formidable impasse regarding beginnings. But Meno personally has failed to abide by the strictures of dialectical *logos*. He asks questions when he should

be answering. He tries to dumbfound Socrates, when he should be trying to recollect (*anamnesis*) in order to overcome his own dumbfoundedness.

If there is any hope for any conversation or *logos* to continue, something (perhaps something different) will have to be said or done to break the impasse. What follows has been frequently called the *mythos* of recollection, although Plato never uses the term *mythos* here. Instead, Plato calls this passage about *anamnesis*, a *logos* (*Meno* 81a). Yet, Socrates introduces this account (*logos*) as if a *mythos*, namely, something heard long ago from priests and priestesses, who told of divine truth and beauty. Does this *logos* indicate a “personal narrative” of some kind, or is there a *logos* in some other sense that moves persons from opinion to knowledge? In other words, what criterion or criteria will be used to judge the significance of this *anamnesis* account? At this point, it seems that *mythos* and *logos* blend (intentionally?) and move in and out of one another.

### **LOGOS PROPER: FRUITION OR INTELLECTUAL DERAILMENT?**

The stage is now set for an examination of those dialogues that go beyond attention to the rudimentary problems (*aporias*) of *logos*, giving an account. From the *Meno* and *Phaedo* on through the *Republic* and *Theaetetus* to the *Sophist*, an understanding of what can be called “*logos* proper” comes into view. “*Logos* proper” means the power or process of reasoning (especially but not only logically) according to the forms or essences. The defining characteristics of *logos* proper are consistency, clarity, precision, and exactness, in effect, a stable, rational grounding. Such a *logos* proper survives the tests of argumentation. In sum, *logos* proper confronts the problems of epistemological grounds (the possibility of knowledge) by giving the necessary and sufficient grounds for knowledge. Professor Kenneth Sayre in his book *Plato’s Analytic Method* and in an unpublished paper, “*Logos, False Judgment, and the Grounds of Knowledge*” has single-mindedly pursued in the Platonic corpus such a *logos* proper in terms of the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. Within the light of his significant achievements, the question remains whether this forebodes a complete rupture of *logos* from *mythos*. Or is it the case that only analytically and abstractly (but not actually or ontologically) *logos* is separated from *mythos*?<sup>12</sup> An analytical distinction of *logos* proper from the wider understanding of *logos* (although quite valuable in itself, demonstrating that Plato is quite the logical master) may have serious deficiencies and drawbacks if taken in isolation and to extremes. There is no reason as of yet to contend (as Sayre does) that there is a development in the Platonic dialogues that analytically rends *logos* apart from its rudimentary

meaning, namely tale and speech, which would break the linking of *logos* with *mythos* at least concerning a common point of origination and at best in terms of its *dynamis* and *telos*.

For Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the starting point of philosophy (and this includes political philosophy as well) is common opinions and rudimentary understandings expressed by the citizens of a *polis* sharing the same language. This is the starting point of anyone's active participation in the political domain or in the world (see Aristotle's *Politics* 1253a9ff.). Philosophy and politics are conjoined on the grounds that the *logos* or speech of the philosopher is to, with, and among others. *Logos* is public and at least potentially open to others for examination. Thus, in the *Meno* (86c) Socrates offers a joint inquiry (*koine zetein*) with the recalcitrant sophist Meno. Politics is used here in the broad sense of that which is public and involves others, a community of friends you would wish. The argument is that even the most subtle and profound analyses of the philosopher will have public, political consequences, especially if they involve something as basic as what counts as proper and improper speech (*logos*).

From this beginning of political philosophy, there follows the movement of *logos* in the direction of reasoning, formulating concepts, and establishing arguments. Where does *mythos* stand in this activity of *logos*? Might not *mythos*, besides sharing a common origin with *logos*, also have a common (if not higher) end and a complementary function in striving toward that end? More specifically, the function of *logos* is to bridge the gap between opinion and knowledge. Does *mythos* have a similar function, or does *mythos* remain only at the level of belief and opinion? Finally, would it be a derailment of philosophy to pursue a purely analytical *logos* proper, if that were exclusively devoted to a method of logic?

An assessment of five major dialogues, the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist* is required in order to consider *logos* proper and the problem of passing from opinion (either true or false) to knowledge. Therefore, beginning with the *Meno*, let us examine whether *anamnesis* is an "apparently unsuccessful" and "unworkable"<sup>13</sup> sense of *logos* in Plato's development of an epistemology—that is, Plato's treatment of *logos* as a ground for acquiring knowledge beyond mere opinion. Another way of expressing the matter is to ask: does the recollecting *logos* only have a developmental linkage, later abandoned because abortive, with regard to Plato's increasingly refined understanding of *logos* in the *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*? Or is the recollecting *logos* such that it never can ultimately be abandoned, if *logos* or argumentation is to remain alive? Is the recollecting *logos* just a persuasive story really only relevant when dealing with sophistic types like Meno? One can (up to a point) agree with Sayre's commentary that the recollecting *logos* leaves much to be desired. The question before us



is whether it is proper to examine the recollecting *logos* in terms of a *logos* proper, or in terms of a *logos* account broadly including an enlivening story of the philosophical drama of a person's soul. Sayre chooses the former alternative. In doing so, can these arguments against the consistency or coherence of the recollecting *logos* be entirely accepted, or are they really limited or even misplaced?

## THE MENO

In Sayre's case, what is demanded of the recollecting *logos* is beyond the limited purpose of the *Meno* dialogue. You could say (at the least) that Sayre looks back (recollects) from the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* in retrospective anticipation. It is presupposed by Sayre that one can look at the Platonic dialogues developmentally in terms of stages in Plato's attempt to solve basic epistemological problems. Thus, the recollection *logos* is "unsuccessful, unworkable, and incoherent, and eventually rejected for more promising approaches" by Plato.<sup>14</sup> Since, from the very beginning, Sayre searches for "a sense of *logos* that will distinguish knowledge from true belief or judgment,"<sup>15</sup> the question is whether recollection can at all "convert true opinion into knowledge."<sup>16</sup> Yet this places unwarranted demands on the recollecting *logos*, as if some final, ultimate, and univocal knowledge is required. Sayre is more correct when he speaks of the problem of accounting for the possibility of knowledge, or how inquiry is possible. One could assert that Plato resorts to the recollecting *logos* to keep the possibility of searching and inquiring alive, not finalized.

Recollecting, in the case of the slave boy demonstration, is based on opinions that are stirred as if in a dream (*Meno* 85c–d). The slave boy is found to have true opinions about that which, namely mathematics, he knows nothing. When one visualizes what Socrates has the slave boy see via the use of diagrams in the sand, then it is possible to share with the slave boy the act of recognition and of discovery that occurs invisibly within the slave boy. A joint inquiry occurs between Socrates and the slave boy (also we are asked to join and to participate) such that nothing is taught, instilled, or contrived by Socrates. One of the problems of the vision metaphor used by Plato is that it can make learning appear identical to an act of vision that stresses immediate, direct awareness of something external. In point of fact, *anamnesis* in the *Meno* stresses an inward act of vision or recognition, which is in this case stimulated by the visible object of the diagram.<sup>17</sup> The slave boy has within him the insight or intuition to recognize not directly or immediately but gradually, through a process of trial and error examination, what can be truly held to be right opinion. Of course, the act of recognition once achieved

is instantaneously immediate and direct. The knowledge that we come to discover, unlike our isolated acts of vision, is not of particular, specific discrete things that have no relation to anything else.<sup>18</sup>

Meno's paradox begins to dissolve once we understand that what we already know is linked in some way to what is unknown to us.<sup>19</sup> We pursue this "unknown" whenever confronted with a gap or lack of connection in what we already know. There is a continuum of knowledge, and we commonly participate with others in the affinity (*Meno* 81d, *suggenous*) that our souls have with the forms or essences. In this way, the recollecting *logos* helps remove the futility of striving for knowledge we do not know. Of course, Meno can still persist in asking: how did we already know anything? How did we get knowledge in the first place? An answer to such ultimate questions regarding origins goes beyond any recollecting *logos* as a process of reasoning, and thus engenders recollecting in the sense of a mythical story about our preexistence. This mythical dimension of recollecting (for the sake of convenience and continuity only) will be considered in chapter 4.

Socrates bluntly and plainly asserts the function of the recollecting *logos*: searching and learning are wholly recollection (*Meno* 81d). There can be no inquiring without the ground or *logos* of recollection. The emphasis is on desiring, striving, endeavoring to recollect or to recover knowledge (*Meno* 85d–86b). Recollecting is verbal not a noun: an action not a state. To a great extent reflective and discursive thinking depend upon remembering or recollecting again what we are trying to know, as well as depending on analytical and logical skill. Herein lies our duty to inquire because the possibility of knowing remains open. Meno exemplifies the failure, the lack of courage, to continue the *logos*. The recollecting *logos* is a spur toward taking up *logos* proper, as well as the ground for the possibility of *logos* proper. But we must be careful not to overestimate the recollecting *logos*.

There is a key passage (*Meno* 98a) that has encouraged commentators like Sayre to overestimate recollection. The passage reads: "[true opinions] do not care to stay for long and run away from the human soul and thus are of no great value until one makes them fast with causal reasoning (*aitias logismoi*). And this process, friend Meno, is recollecting, as in our previous talk we agreed." Are we to conclude that recollecting by itself is the causal reasoning that converts true or right opinion into knowledge? Only if the process of recollecting is identical to the kind of lengthy cross-examining that occurs between Socrates and the slave boy. But no one act of recollecting in itself would be sufficient and final, although it may be a necessary condition of the way to knowledge, insofar as recollecting for Plato is connected with the possibility of some original noetic apprehension of the eternal forms. There is no reason to suspect that recollecting for Socrates/Plato serves as a kind of immediate insight into reality equitable with some

kind of self-evident substantive knowledge attainable by humans. One can distinguish, but not separate, recollecting as an act of recognition (immediate awareness) from recollecting as a searching and learning process to render a rational account (*logos*). Oddly enough, Sayre<sup>20</sup> recognizes both aspects of recollecting, but dismisses recollecting only in the first respect. Consequently, recollection for Sayre is only unidirectional (upward to first principles or the forms) and not bidirectional (downward to the determination of necessary and sufficient conditions). Would it be possible to carry out *logos* (as a rational, discursive process) without the recollecting process as a way leading to and from the apprehension and affirmation of the forms? Is not recollection (*anamnesis*) a depth meditation one often has within one's own soul?

In the *Meno* we have only the insufficient example of the slave boy (not Meno) to clarify how we arrive at true opinions. What precisely would count as finally securing and fastening down true opinions so that they amount to knowledge is a further question not precluded, but only implicit, in the slave boy demonstration. (In the *Phaedo*, as we shall see, *anamnesis* and the forms are more explicitly related.) There is no reason to reject or abandon *anamnesis*. It is part of the continuum or flow of learning and inquiring leading to the whole, the completed activity of knowledge itself. It is of added support to note that the understanding of *anamnesis* in the *Phaedrus* (249c) likewise indicates its preparatory basis. *Anamnesis* will be the activity of gathering together and discerning a unity from out of a multiplicity of perceptions. Without *anamnesis*, there is no reason to suppose that we can move forward recollecting and recovering a sense of the whole (or, mythically, what was once or always known to us deep in our divining psyche, namely, the whole). In no way does this synthetic learning endeavor negate its opposite movement, analytical *diarsis*. Unfortunately, *logos* too frequently (by Sayre, Cross, and Bluck)<sup>21</sup> is understood only in terms of analytical divisions, abstractions, and definitions.

In summation, it should be clear that recollecting as an act means recognizing, discovering, intuiting, or finding insight in regard to the forms which bring oneness and intelligibility to multiplicity. For Voegelin, this is the "flow of presence"<sup>22</sup> that characterizes what Plato is philosophically experiencing. As a process or flow, recollecting means inquiring, searching, learning, and dialectical questioning and answering (not teaching in the sense of instilling). It will be carefully noted that the mythical dimensions of recollection, although not considered in this chapter, have not been reduced to the discursive process of *logos*, nor precluded. Since Sayre does not avoid this, he can charge that recollection is "ultimately incoherent." This needs to be questioned on the alternative grounds that recollecting is really ultimately mythical. Sayre's specific charge is that

the doctrine [of *anamnesis*] is ultimately incoherent, purporting as it does to account for knowledge with reference to prior awareness of the atemporal Forms. To employ immediate access to the eternal Forms would at least seem to require that the soul itself partake of atemporal existence, since the Forms presumably are apprehended immediately only in their atemporal realm. But if the soul's state of immediate awareness is prior to the time of recollection, it must be a state existing in time. And the soul cannot be atemporal in a state of time.<sup>23</sup>

Jacob Klein's commentary on the *Meno* also makes significant mention of the problem of the time dimension, which is characteristic of the temporal process of our learning through recollecting and the atemporal timeless target or goal of all learning and recollection, the eternal forms.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the first thing that has to be established is Plato's own presentation of the recovery of knowledge through recollecting. The slave boy must have either "once acquired or always had" the knowledge he now has been shown to have (*Meno* 85c–86b). Thus, Plato is aware of the difference between the time bound and the timeless. The slave boy arrived at this knowledge (insofar as it is timeless and not really timebound true opinion) not from outside—that is, from any teacher. It must have always been in his soul throughout all time, or it was acquired some previous time before this life. In both cases, there is reference to some eternal time that the mortal, temporal human soul has an affinity toward and with. The difficulty or ambiguity here may be a matter of language. How does one speak within time of the eternal when referring to that which could only have been comprehended at all times or some timeless time not in this temporal life? Socrates does say immediately after this passage (*Meno* 86b–c) that "most of the points I have made in support of my argument (*logou*) are not such as I can confidently assert, but the belief in the duty of inquiring after what we do not know will make us better, braver and less hapless than the notion that there is not even a possibility of discovering what we do not know."

To make sense of this recollecting *logos*, it is necessary to attend to the dilemma (in this case, the temporal and eternal) that makes a resort to recollection unavoidable and indispensable. Does not the recollecting *logos* require us to relate it to those (literal or figurative?) afterlife or preexistence mythical images of the *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*? Is not the recollection *logos* based on an experience of the eternal without which there is no ground for knowledge, but only a groundless flux? To what extent, if any, is Plato's theory of forms dependent on a mythical context? The answer is the purpose of chapter 4. For now, it is important to stress that *logos* and *mythos* move into and out of one another—that is, *anamnesis* has a grounding and mediating status and role in the clarification of the *logos* that leads from ignorance through true or false opinion

on to knowledge. Time and again *mythos* and *logos* do not ignore or forget one another.<sup>25</sup>

In at least two respects *mythos* and *logos* are intertwined. First, as Klein<sup>26</sup> has perspicuously distinguished, *logos* can mean argumentative seriousness (thus Sayre's treatment), or it can mean mimetic playfulness. It is the latter that directly connects with *mythos* as it portrays for us what should or should not be the guide or model of imitation in our own actions. We are called to act (*praxis*) and there are bearings, an order or whole, within which our actions have meaning. This leads to the second way in which *mythos* and *logos* interact. There is a life or sphere of activity beyond the immediate and the ordinary. In terms of images, this mythically takes us up into the heavens, or down into the depths (Hades), to the preexistent or to the afterlife. This involves speaking paradoxically about the immaterial through material images and treating the atemporal in time dimensions. In this respect, we can understand how deficient and misplaced Sayre's criticism is of the recollecting *mythos*. This whole time dimension problem boils down to whether as temporal humans we discover the atemporal and divine within us. Not to acknowledge this has different consequences than acknowledging this.

The *Meno* has two examples of *logos* proper that address the difficulty of turning opinion into knowledge. Already *logos* as reason was shown to bind true opinions fast to make them stable and lasting. The binding of reasons to support something results in learning and understanding.<sup>27</sup> Those who can give a rational account (*logos*) have knowledge; those who cannot do this have potentially unstable opinions, be they true or false. In terms of action, true or right opinion and knowledge amount to the same thing. In other words, the same action may have true opinion or knowledge as its basis. However, as revealed in the *mythos* of Er, citizens who habitually and conventionally are doers of good deeds do not necessarily return to this life as good persons. For some reason, this fate depicted by Er of individual souls failing to progress, even though well-disposed and experiencing the order of the heavens in their afterlife disturbs some commentators, even though it is quite realistic regarding the human condition. They are like the great Athenians who failed to be statesmen in the Socratic sense of succeeding in improving the present and future generations in their care. And they usually failed to pass their "knowledge" and character on to their offspring! Insofar as it is humanly possible, we strive to have rulers who are persons of practical knowledge (*phronesis*), while persons of opinion are to be ruled. This is to say that rulers in particular are always held to account. *Logos* is the ground and justification for ruling.

The other example of a *logos* proper is that of proceeding by hypothesis or supposition. Socrates supposes or suspects<sup>28</sup> that excellence is knowledge. In other words, there is no good that is outside the domain of knowledge.

This hypothesis requires testing, because virtue and knowledge may not be coextensive, may only overlap, or could even be radically separate. The argument or *logos* reveals that any virtue or good, beneficial thing depends on the exercise of wise judgment or prudence (*phronesis*). However, *phronesis* is not the same as *episteme* (or even *sophia*). We are left wondering whether human excellence or virtue (*arête*) has been wholly comprehended, or as Klein asks,<sup>29</sup> can *logos* or speech tell the whole truth, which means knowing the whole? *Phronesis* applies more to the dimension of action and deed, whereas knowledge (*episteme*) and wisdom (*sophia*) reach for the whole of goodness. In the *Meno*, the Socratic *logos* operates on the level of deed (see *Meno* 97b, 98b, 99c) and prudence (except for the already considered passage 98a, which alludes to causal reasoning). Accordingly, we need to go on to the *Phaedo* in order to continue our search for *logos* proper.

### THE PHAEDO

The *Phaedo* has been characterized as a thoroughly mythological mime.<sup>30</sup> This means that a more complete treatment of the *Phaedo* will have to wait until a later chapter when *mythos* is directly approached. Nevertheless, it is within this mythical framework and in relation to the mythical subject matter of the dialogue (i.e., the fate of the human soul) that *logos* proper appears as the rational deduction of consequences given an agreed upon hypothesis. But this argumentative notion of *logos* in the *Phaedo*, which is the result of the challenge of Cebes and Simmias, is a developed, not a rudimentary, understanding of *logos*. To begin with, Socrates associates *logos* with the reasoning function of *dianoia* (*Phaedo* 79a) that rules the soul of humans by grasping the invisible and the unchanging from out of the visible and changing array of sense perceptions. (Can we not say, contra Sayre, that likewise Socrates tries to discern the eternal from out of the temporal?) In this respect, the *logos* engages in a separation and self-purification of the soul in regard to its bodily needs, emotions, and pleasures. This is only possible because the soul through its inner *logos* has an affinity to essences or forms. In fact, the soul has its own striving or desire to recollect and to discover things in themselves (e.g., absolute equality, *Phaedo* 75a–b). The dialectical process of questioning and answering leads to such knowledge (*Phaedo* 75d). This dialectical reasoning (*Phaedo* 65c) is a kind of contemplation in which the soul collects itself and concentrates and reaches out toward the reality (*tou ontos*) itself as much as possible. Such philosophic self-possession, a dialogic meditation going on within one's soul, achieves purification from the body and engages in the practice of dying (*Phaedo* 80e–83c). To take up and follow such reasoning is gradually and eventually to behold the true and the divine (*Phaedo* 84a). Thus, *logos* is the natural

activity of the soul in contemplation, the art of gathering into oneself and being most akin (*suggenes*) to the invisible and divine, the wise and immortal. After such an exposition, Socrates mimetically and fittingly becomes absorbed in himself for a long period of silence (*Phaedo* 84c).

The two challenges to Socrates' argument regarding the immortality of the soul in its preexistence and postexistence succeed or fail depending on two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that all learning is recollecting (*Phaedo* 92d); the second hypothesis is that there are things in themselves, such as beauty, goodness, and so on (*Phaedo* 100b). The acceptance or rejection of these hypotheses is the outcome of reasoning out to their consequences. Reasoning makes them either sufficient or sound arguments. Simmias, who wants to consider the soul as a bodily dependent harmony, contradicts his original acceptance of the first hypothesis, which rests on a differentiation of body and soul such that the soul rules the body. Treating the soul as a harmony degrades the soul to the level of admixture with the body, and moreover prevents us from distinguishing good and evil souls. If body and soul are simply harmonious, then how account for wickedness and disharmony? Simmias' analogy of the soul to the harmony of the lyre and its strings fails to differentiate and superordinate the soul to the body. Such consequences Simmias will not accept. Thus, Simmias' analogy is shown rationally (via *logos*) to lead to unacceptable consequences.

Socrates' treatment of Cebes' analogy of the soul to the weaver and his woven cloak also is preceded by a period of silence in which Socrates is absorbed in thought. Cebes has proposed that the soul is like the weaver who outlasts the many cloaks (bodies) that he makes (inhabits) only in the end to perish. Again, we note that the soul has not been sharply differentiated from bodily attributes, especially the attributes of genesis and decay (*phthoras*). Socrates' first remarks autobiographically addresses the problem of causation. Those (pre-Socratics) who investigated nature in the past failed to explain the ultimate causes of generation and decay. Even Anaxagoras, who stated that *nous* is the cause of order among all things, explained causation materially, as if the bones and sinews of persons account for (are the cause or reason of) their movement from place to place. Instead of material or natural causation which belongs to the domain of necessity, Socrates finds the real causes or reasons for human action to be a matter of choosing or deciding what is best (efficient causation). No wonder the natural philosophers gave no thought to perfection or the Good. The Socratic distinction between human nature and physical nature parallels that of the soul and the body. It is in the soul that persons have recourse to arguments or conceptions (*logous*, *Phaedo* 99e), which then are examined in light of reality.

Henceforward, Socrates will assume or hypothesize a *logos* that seems most indispensable (e.g., that there exists beauty in itself, the Good in itself,

greatness in itself, etc.) and to accept what agrees with this and to reject what does not agree with or follow from this. In order for the discussion to proceed Socrates has to have Cebes' agreement that such an assumption (*hypothemnos*) regarding the forms and essences (*ousias*) is granted. The *Phaedo* does not directly consider alternative arguments that would proceed as if there were no such forms or essences. (The *Theaetetus* provides such an alternative.) Nevertheless, Socrates' method does not prohibit such considerations. To say that beautiful things are beautiful because of the presence of or communion/affinity/participation (*methexei*) with beauty in itself is for Socrates the safest, plainest, simplest answer. To examine the consequences of such a hypothesis is to give a *logos* (*Phaedo* 101d). To proceed without such a hypothesis will mean different consequences. Socrates warns that one should never confuse consequences that follow from and agree with a hypothesis and the hypothesis itself that remains unproven. Only by assuming a higher hypothesis can one judge the sufficiency and adequacy of an untested hypothesis. This hypothetical method should not be abstracted from the Socratic concern for what is best (*Phaedo* 101d–e), including one's *daimonic* power and the Good (*Phaedo* 99c) and, in sum, a comprehensive intelligible order.<sup>31</sup> We do realize that without such assumptions the other possible consequences are being subject to chance, necessity or human, Titanic contrivance, and so on (e.g., not to leave out Atlas in *Phaedo* 99c).

On the basis of the soul's affinity with the forms or essences which are indestructible (they do not admit their opposites) and because the mortal body is the opposite of the soul, it can then be argued that the soul is immortal and indestructible. But the primary Socratic mode of argument is to carry out the consequences of assuming (1) if the soul is immortal, then . . . ; (b) if the soul is mortal, then . . . . The drawing out of such consequences (a) or (b) bear so heavily on human action (i.e., if death is the final, then why need I care about my soul, and in no way can I be held accountable for my actions, given my mortal condition) that *mythos* is unavoidable once we assume that the soul is immortal. *Mythos* addresses that "something more" that we, in our humanness, cannot fully comprehend via *logos*. Our souls long for this fulfilling realization. An afterlife, a judgment of souls, and a cosmic order (which are the typical subject matter of *mythoi*), all follow as consequences of our *logos*. Thus, *logos* leads into *mythos* as well as out of *mythos* (e.g., *anamnesis* and deep contemplation) in terms of consequences involving aporetic and euporetic *logos*.

The *Phaedo* does portray a *logos* crisis. In fact, it is a crisis which if not overcome would prevent the burgeoning of *mythos* (or, at least, would result in false *mythos* such as in the case of the sophists who use *mythos* as a device for saying and legitimating anything expedient). This crisis occurs immediately after Simmias' and Cebes' challenge regarding the postexistence



immortality of the soul. Passages 68c–69d and 90d–91c in the *Phaedo* mention *logos* seventeen and fourteen times respectively. The primary difficulty and fear at this juncture is whether Socrates can supply a *logos* to meet the apparently overwhelming challenges of Simmias and Cebes. Can Socrates turn the tide of disbelief, distrust, loss of confidence, and confusion (*Phaedo* 89a)? Socrates' first response is to personalize the argument (*logos*). Do not let the argument escape and die; bring it to life (*Phaedo* 89b–c). The great danger is that we will be misologists, haters of argument, in the same way that persons become misanthropists. Both have similar causes, the lack of art or skill (*techne*, *Phaedo* 89d). This is to say that persons lack that art or skill to judge the worth of others and after being misled by their apparent truthfulness and trustworthiness, they become haters of all persons and their *logoi*.

When one does possess the craft of judging persons, the conclusion reached is that few persons are simply good or simply bad, since most persons are somewhere in-between, an admixture of both. Likewise, in regard to *logoi*, most arguments are based on opinions that fluctuate between the good and the bad. Thus, Socrates introduces the hypothetical method as a *techne* that can test the soundness of any *logoi* in the sense of opinion. Do not despair regarding arguments; and do not become disputatious for its own sake. Rather turn the question of soundness toward oneself and strive courageously to be sound in one's own soul for the sake of death (*Phaedo* 90e–91a). If you are looking for some air-tight, logical demonstration and proof that the human soul is immortal, then you are looking outward in the wrong place. Look within (*anamnesis*) and consult the dynamic flow of your own experience (*pathos*). Does it register in your consciousness that there could be eternal life, since our striving for such fulfillment is intelligible and complete, if there is such an end which we have some sort of affinity for. Let the argument speak the truth irrespective of those who refuse to believe anything. This is one reason why Socrates personifies *logos*, to make it more believable, thus making it mythical. Socrates accordingly avoids both extremes: an impersonal objectivism (e.g., naturalistic philosophy) irrelevant to one's soul; and a subjectivism solely grounded on self-interest. Through such a teaching (*techne*), persons will attain self-knowledge or soul-knowledge, depending on who they truly are.

## THE REPUBLIC

In the *Republic* the *logos* proper of the philosopher that we were seeking all along shines forth. In the context of characterizing the education that leads to the comprehension of justice in itself, and thus defending the philosopher who would be king, Plato distinguishes the function of the mathematician

from that of the philosopher. In the explanation of the divided line, it is asserted that the mathematician or geometrician uses hypotheses as starting points that are assumed without further justification in carrying out his downward, deductive reasoning (*Republic* 510b, 511e). Furthermore, they necessarily make use of visible forms, likenesses, or images (diagrams) in their *logoi*, which they adopt from the lower half (*eikasia* and *pistis*) of the divided line. They fail to rise above their own assumptions, although they really do seek intelligible realities seen only by the understanding (*dianoia*, *Republic* 510e–511a). The mathematician's function according to this understanding (*dianoia*) is situated between opinion and belief, which is the second section of the lower half of the divided line, and reason (*nous*), which is the fourth and highest section of the divided line. The philosopher on the other hand does not accept the mathematician's hypotheses as unquestioned, absolute starting points. She/he advances upward toward those first principles that are *anhypotheton* (unhypothetical, *Republic* 510b), and in this way, does not make use of any images. All assumptions are rationally accounted for (given a *logos*) by proceeding through the ideas alone (*Republic* 510bc, 511c). This is the dialectical power of reason (*logos*) itself rising to the *arche* of everything, comprehensively beginning and ending with the *eide* (*Republic* 511b–c) in traversing the knowledge of reality.<sup>32</sup>

There is a major paradox and irony throughout this part of the *Republic* 500c–517c, which covers the four related images: the sun, the divided line, the cave, and the philosopher qua artist par excellence. All of these images, symbols, hypotheses, and analogies are employed by Socrates in an attempt to enable Glaucon to comprehend the philosophical *logos* proper, which by definition is beyond images, symbols, hypotheses, and analogies—that is, *translogos*. This kind of irony and paradox should evoke great caution and care. And if we identify that *anhypotheton* with the Idea of the Good, which is beyond essence and being in dignity and power (*Republic* 509b), and which is the cause and ground of all knowledge and truth, should we not join Glaucon in loud laughter because of these hyperbolic superlatives uttered by a Socrates, who is unaccustomed to speaking by way of comparisons? In this instance involving the Idea of the Good, Plato not only uses visible images (the vision metaphor and the sun), but also seems to go beyond the dialectician's activity of arriving at the essence of things by *logos* (*Republic* 532a, 534b). Perhaps this is because the Idea of the Good is the ultimate to be apprehended, and the most superhumanly difficult to be contemplated, thus god *theos* and *daimonion* are called upon (*Republic* 517b, 531c), all of which suggests that the dialectician will not desist from giving *logoi* until she/he reaches the Good in itself. Yet, on the other hand, the Good is the cause of all reason and truth and the author of the intelligible world such that none of the forms known by the giving of *logoi* attains the Idea of the Good. The Good

itself, as a transcendent ground for all the forms, cannot be dependent on them; therefore, the Good must be distinguished by a *logos* (*Republic* 534b) different from all other *logoi*. This does not mean that the Good cannot be approached by the dialectician's upward path. But is this the only route for the philosopher? Socrates resorts to images and symbols to explain the meaning of his vision (*Republic* 533a), since he cannot do otherwise in the presence of Glaucon, as well as in the presence of the ineffable (*arreton* or *alogon*).

Accordingly, the goal (*telos*) of a philosophical *logos* proper must be understood in the light of what can be said in approaching this final end, the Idea of the Good. Is it not the case logically, that the Idea of the Good resolves the problem of the "Third Man" in the *Parmenides*? A *logos* or discourse on the level of the forms themselves as well as the noetic apprehension of the Good is less an attainment or accomplishment than the required, intelligible end of all our striving. It would amount to a divine (i.e., an ineffable) *logos*. Yet, could we even begin to strive to know without some recognition or recollection of the Good and the other forms (especially the just and the beautiful) as the proper perfecting end of our human striving nature? The Idea of the Good as an ordering principle<sup>33</sup> affirms the harmony of the whole. Our own attempts to give a rational account (*logos*) reveal an affinity to this ordered whole as it is good, beautiful, and just. Giving a *logos* of the Idea of the Good presupposes that we already fully know of the whole, and the end of all our pursuits. Oh, to be divine! Nevertheless, the Idea of the Good as the principle (*arche*) of order (*kosmos*) makes possible any *logos*, since our intellect would by nature only acquire its perfection by actively participating (*prolepsis*) in this order of the Good. Our deepest strivings have appropriate bearings, because we are but a part in the whole, thus we must have recourse to images, analogies, models, *mythoi*, and symbols that are constitutive of our experiences. The mathematician is particularly skillful within the in-between (*metaxy*, *Republic* 511d), using images, analogies, models, *mythoi*, and symbols. Later, the extent to which this is relevant to the philosopher's art of using philosophical *mythos* will be explored.

## THE THEAETETUS

In the *Theaetetus*, the *logos* or conversation that is begun between Socrates and Theaetetus (with Theodorus, the mathematician, an observer for the most part) concerns the problem of gathering all the various kinds of knowledge under one *logos* or account. As was true for the *Phaedo*, there is the indissoluble connection of *logoi* with the forms: in the *Theaetetus* the search is for a *logos* embracing all knowledge in one super form (*ousas eni eidei Theaetetus* 148d). An example or model from mathematics is given, reminiscent of

the definition of color in the *Meno*. However, in this case it is Theaetetus (not Socrates) who defines the roots (*dynameis*; *Theaetetus* 148b) of non-square, oblong numbers (surds) according to their necessary and sufficient conditions.<sup>34</sup> Obviously, Theaetetus' mathematical training (as well as the presence of his mathematics teacher, Theodorus) provides a promising setting. Not that a necessary and sufficient definition of knowledge will be immediately discovered. Rather, all the participants of this dialogue are capable of distinguishing between a wind egg and a healthy offspring, given the Socratic art of midwifery. This philosophic *techne* of Socrates, midwifery, is just as important as, and is not to be separated from, the hypothetical method used by Socrates. In other words, a midwife's function is to bring to fruition whatever already has been impregnated. All of us are impregnated (a metaphorical variation on recollection). In this respect, Socrates can argue that by himself he is ignorant and does not by himself bring about knowledge. With the help of others who are wise Socrates can extract *logoi* (*Theaetetus* 161a–b). Socrates here acknowledges a special kind of educational *polis* or community of lovers of wisdom. Furthermore, the midwife analogy (alluded to throughout the *Theaetetus*) is consistent with the recollecting *logos* that affirms a preexistent knowledge that paradoxically we need to recover and discover. The experience of recollecting is a strange duality of recovering something we must have known previously, since we have an affinity (*suggenous*) for it. Clearly, Plato rejects anything such as Locke's *tabula rasa*, based on the nominalism of constructivism.

Yet, we also have discovered that which we hitherto did not know and could not have previously elaborated. The origins of knowledge through recollecting remain a mystery, and this is what provokes *mythos*. Recollection itself (*Theaetetus* 209c–e) accounts for true opinions, but it remains unclear how they would qualify as knowledge—that is, whether there is a *logos* that would transform true opinion into knowledge. Socrates in the end remains confident only about his art of midwifery, which he declares was received from a god. It is a god, not Socrates, that is the cause and measure of fair things being delivered from within persons (*Theaetetus* 150d–151d). It remains Socrates' responsibility not to allow the imposters to flourish, not to destroy the truth, and to take care concerning who is worthy of association. His *daimon* warns him regarding with whom he should have discussions. For Socrates, there is quite an array of factors such as *aporia*, questioning, recollecting and recovering (not teaching a doctrine), causal reasoning (*Meno* 98a), the gods and the divine, and among friends in a common, enabling discovery process.

Of course, the midwife analogy literally breaks down at certain points. Socrates deals with the souls of young men, not the bodies of young women, and the ordinary midwife does not attempt to distinguish between real children and monstrosities, that is, between true and false offspring. However, it

was an old Greek custom to carry the newborn around the family hearth as an initiation ceremony to determine whether or not the child will be accepted into the home or will be exposed. It is part of Socrates' hypothetical method to examine an argument or *logos* on every side (*Theaetetus* 160e, 191c), to test its consistency regarding what we already know and its acceptability regarding implications flowing from it. Therefore, in this light we shall examine the two major hypotheses in the *Theaetetus*: (1) knowledge is perception according to the *logos* (description and account) (*Theaetetus* 151eff.); and (2) knowledge is true opinion accompanied by a *logos* (*Theaetetus* 201cff.).

The *Theaetetus* is not known or commonly recognized to be a dialogue in which any *mythoi* occur. Nevertheless, a considerable portion of the first part of the treatment of knowledge as perception involves the telling of a tale (*mythos*, *Theaetetus* 156c). The tale involves the whole of the Greek tradition, especially Protagoras and Heraclitus, as far back as Homer, but excluding Parmenides. The tradition holds that nothing ever is but is always becoming or in motion. Not only does this characterize our sense perception, but we ourselves are not always the same person. Heraclitus was wrong about not being able to step into the same river twice; one cannot even step into the same river once. Rest is the cause of nonexistence and death; only motion (*kinesis*), as in the case of the sun and its rays that form the golden chain, keeps everything going round (*Theaetetus* 153c–d). (In the *Republic*, the sun will be the potent image of the Idea of the Good.) The active and passive forces of this motion are infinite in number. The basic assumption of this tale is that nothing exists in itself, nothing is invariably one (including ourselves; see *Theaetetus* 157a–b), since everything constantly is becoming in relation to everything else that is becoming. Accordingly, being itself does not exist (thus, Parmenides' absence).

Why does Socrates call this a *mythos* or tale? Is it a true or false *mythos*? Primarily, these traditional arguments about becoming and the flux lead to bewilderment or *aporias*. We need to examine within ourselves the nature of appearances, avoiding if possible the sophistic, eristic battering of *logoi* against *logoi*. Theaetetus' response is one of wonderment and amazement. And Socrates knows that wonder in the form of *aporia* is the beginning of philosophy. Consequently, this *mythos* is told in order to produce and to excite this wonder (*thaumazo*) at the very juncture where some kind of rational treatment can deal with all its perplexity. The *mythos* itself is meant to evoke a *logos*, as well as being a somewhat reasonable account itself (*Theaetetus* 157c–158e).

There are two defining characteristics of *mythos* that explain its appearance in the *Theaetetus*. First of all, Plato usually speaks of a *mythos* as something heard from another or others,<sup>35</sup> something passed down by tradition, something referencing a special kind of inner hearing, be it *daimonic* or divine

inspiration.<sup>36</sup> (This does not exclude the fact that Plato is quite critical of tradition, hearsay, and those who uncritically depend on supposedly divine, external inspiration.) In this respect, *mythos* is quite distinct from *logos* that involves a questioning and answering among interlocuters who are present and active participants. The expositors of the “all is becoming in flux” tradition from Homer to Protagoras cannot be present in the *Theaetetus*, and thus Socrates has to reconstruct in some consistent and persuasive manner their *logos* or argument via a *mythos*. Socrates even wonders in the *Theaetetus* (152c–e, 161c–e), just as he wondered about Protagoras in the *Protagoras*, whether these persons have an esoteric truth or knowledge not revealed in their public speeches. There is a serious problem regarding how truth, knowledge, and even speech (*logos*) would be at all possible and meaningful in the midst of a flux that makes us all our own quite fallible judges (assuming that knowledge is nothing but variable sense perception). Consequently, Plato puts the *logos* of the ancients in a *mythos*, which signals to us the tension between what might be uncritically repeated in a *mythos* and the critical, analytical dimension of *logos* proper. (In addition, what characterizes *noesis* is a seeing, not a hearing. The Greek terms for knowing are “seeing” terms.)

The second characteristic of *mythos* is that it acts out mimetically the consequences of certain positions that are held. Given the reluctance of Theodorus (who has been influenced by Protagoras and others) to enter into a dialogue with Socrates, Socrates has no choice but to set the stage in a dramatic fashion regarding the whole traditional background underlying Theaetetus' blunt statement, namely, that knowledge is perception. It may also be true that the best characterization of Protagoras' position would amount to a persuasive, mimetic tale that Protagoras himself would have been likely to have delivered to the demotic galleries (*Theaetetus* 161e). This especially is true if Protagoras was famous for saying publicly (could he really have believed it himself?) that any one (whether god or dog-faced baboon) is the measure of his own perceptions and opinions. This would make Socrates' art of midwifery and dialectic utter folly and futility.

The primary issue between Protagoras and Socrates depends on whether a distinction can be made between appearances (infinitely multitudinous) and being (self-sameness). Socrates makes this clear by asking if we can distinguish between what happens to us when dreaming compared to our experiences while awake. A parallel case is that of deciding whether two different sets of opinion are both true. Some measure for truth and falsity seems obligatory, since it is common for persons to admit that an opinion is either true or false. In one respect of having had a sense perception, only the perceiver can know what she/he has perceived. She/he certainly has truly perceived, if by “truly” we mean actually. In other words, a false perception, and likewise a false opinion, depend on the original perception, which is still

really a perception of opinion. We are led from sense perception to opinions, judgments, memories, and some measure, all of which qualify the nature of sense perception regarding its true or false status. Common opinion affirms this (*Theaetetus* 170a–172b). But this is to assume that there is some constant, invariable measure beyond perception and opinions. Socrates, acting out Protagoras' position, contends that since all is fluctuating appearance the crucial question is not the truth or falsity of such appearances, but whether they are relatively worse or better for the person perceiving. This is the function of education enabling the wise, sophistic Protagoras to go from the worse to the better condition. In this fashion, Protagoras utters *logoi* (speeches) like a physician who uses drugs (*Theaetetus* 167a).

The whole momentum of Socrates' defense of sophistic *logoi* by telling a *mythos* is to engender in Theaetetus some account (*logos*) of himself (*Theaetetus* 169a–c). In other dialogues (we previously have mentioned the *Meno* and *Phaedo*), to examine oneself is tantamount to testing an argument (a *logos* which in this case is whether “man is the measure of all things”). Such an argument as this will have certain necessary consequences or deductions (*Theaetetus* 170e). Therefore, if truth is whatever is true to anyone, then nobody shares any truth in common (except accidentally). Furthermore, how can “man is the measure of all things” be true in itself? It may be true for Protagoras, but not necessarily for any other person. It would be difficult or incommunicable to defend the manner in which persons as individuals could be self-sufficient in wisdom. If wisdom implies truth, and if we want to know who is wise or why someone is wise, then there must be some common, communicable measure (*metron*) that can be agreed upon so that persons speaking with one another can decide who is truly wise. On analogy with politics, each *polis* enacts into law what it holds to be just, honorable, and pious in truth. *Poleis* differ from one another, which is to say that no one of them exists by nature according to the essence of justice, honor, and piety (*Theaetetus* 172b). What is true for them depends on the aptness of the measure behind their enactment and observance of their laws. But, as the advantages of laws consist of making for a better or worse quality of life, it cannot be the case that any and all laws will be profitable and beneficial. This requires some standards (*kriterion*) in which to make judgments (*Theaetetus* 178b–c). Protagoras never clarifies by what measure he can be the *phronimos* (*Theaetetus* 183b–c), who perhaps unlike most other people can judge the advantageous, the Good, and the just. If everyone is their own self-determining user of *phronesis*, then there is in all likelihood no common, speakable meaning to being a *phronesis* user. It is very helpful here to follow Gadamer who states that Socrates' “know thy self” really means “know thy *logoi*.”<sup>37</sup>

The philosophers and the citizens of the *polis* tend to part ways, insofar as the law courts and their kind of *logoi* and judgments represent the *polis*.

In the law courts citizens become the servants of political, popular *logoi*, and no freedom or leisure is possible for the philosophic pursuit of what justice (*dike*) is (*Theaetetus* 172d–173c). As a result, Socrates responds to the Protagorean position with what we might call a lengthy countertale (*Theaetetus* 172d–177c). The term *mythos* is not used at all here, but Socrates does say that when we proceed from *logos* to *logos* a greater *logos* overtakes us (*Theaetetus* 172bc). This section is labelled a digression, and it threatens to flood the original *logos* regarding knowledge as perception.

The reason why this section amounts to a tale (and partly a countertale) is that it sets up two patterns, two ways of life, which have determinate consequences for who a person is and will be. The philosophic way of life is steadfastly upright and free, insofar as leisure time away from the concrete political pursuits of the *agora* can permit the investigation of the universal nature of all things including human nature (*Theaetetus* 173e–174b). Nevertheless, such a philosopher may ordinarily cut a ridiculous figure, because he lives in perplexity (*aporia*) and disdains ordinary pursuits that are bent toward the gaining of reputation and honor. The pseudo-philosophical way of life (that of the *philodoxer*) results in a man of bent soul, since his full-time occupation is in the slave-like service of doing and saying what conventionally and politically have been preestablished. The two patterns of life, in sum, are the divine and blessed versus the godless and wretched (*Theaetetus* 176e–177a). Men will pay the penalty of pursuing the life that resembles one pattern or the other. The godless life is the result of believing that individual persons are self-sufficient such that they can autonomously devise their own measures of good and bad, true and false. Thus, Socrates delivers this greater *logos* that on the one hand borders on a *mythos* of judgment concerning the final end and on the other hand has consequences that result when a *logos* (account) is elaborated of the doctrine that knowledge is perception. A pattern of life, an understanding of the nature of reality, and an ethic of acting and speaking are the points upon which *logos* and *mythos* converge.

The crucial refutation that knowledge is identical to sense perception depends on an important distinction, which reveals the active judgmental function of the soul as opposed to its passive reception of sense impressions. Socrates asks of our sense organs (our eyes and ears), are they that *by which* or *through which* we sense? It is the former by which our bodily sense organs see and hear. We still need to clarify the “through which” whereby we do have the power to think and make common judgments and comparisons regarding likeness and unlikeness, being and not-being, unity and plurality, and identity and difference (*Theaetetus* 184c–185e). Theaetetus supplies the answer (which elicits a bravo and a praise of his beauty from Socrates): the soul investigates what all things have in common, sometimes alone through its own faculties (*dynamis*), other times in conjunction with bodily faculties.



Regarding likeness and unlikeness, being and not-being, unity and plurality, and identity and difference, the soul also examines these in relation to each other as they are analogously (*analogismata*) reflected upon within our soul in regard to the past and the present in relation to the future (*Theaetetus* 186a–c). It is not the reception of sensations through healthy bodily organs that causes the soul difficulties (i.e., if knowledge were no more than perception). The active, analogical reflection by the soul considering the being and worth of such sense perceptions is what requires considerable experience and education. Knowledge consists not in sensations alone, but in reasoning about them, which then leads to the apprehension of being and truth (*Theaetetus* 186d).<sup>38</sup>

Knowledge then consists of some sort of judgmental function of the soul, which encourages Theaetetus to identify all true opinion with knowledge. However, if we operate on the assumption that we either know or do not know (leaving aside for the moment the matter of learning and forgetting<sup>39</sup>), then it is incumbent upon Theaetetus to explain how false opinion occurs. This *aporia* regarding the origination of false opinion involves its ontological reference and not the ways in which we know or do not know (epistemology) (*Theaetetus* 188c–d). Therefore, can anyone hold an opinion of what is not in relation to what is, or independent of all reality? Since it is impossible to hold anything of what is not, false opinion seemingly involves a relation to what is when we mistakenly identify one thing with another. But we can still ask how false opinion arises in the mind, because it is going against the nature of things, by saying that the right is the wrong and the beautiful is the ugly, and this must remain impossible, if not extremely unusual and perplexing. The soul when it converses with itself (*Theaetetus* 189e–190a) apprehends and knows, or does not apprehend and know, the objects before it. In some way or another, the soul must think it knows what it really does not know, if false opinion is to be possible. Paradoxically, Socrates has been trying all along to get the truth about false opinion by disposing of false opinions regarding the possibility of false opinion. It is when the soul reflects upon itself, or with another soul, that the soul then can give an account (*logos*) of itself and its experiences and objects.

Knowledge in some way involves opinions of the soul accompanied by a *logos* that justifies (makes true) the soul's opinions. The truth of this definition of knowledge, as well as whether the soul will arrive at knowledge, depends entirely on *logos* (giving a rational account). Socrates resorts to two analogical models, the wax block and the aviary, in order to clarify what this *logos* might be. For the sake of the argument (*logos*), assume that our souls are wax blocks of different sizes, textures, and qualities on which images or our perceptions are imprinted. False opinion then is a mistake of recognition—that is, when we wrongly assign or match an imprint with what we now

are perceiving. The source of error may be in our present perception, or in the poor quality of our wax (our memory imprints in our mind). Depending on the nature of our memory implants and our perceptions, our thoughts or judgments may or may not be correctly interchanged with our sense perceptions. Nevertheless, there is a serious limitation with the wax block analogy; it applies as a true or false *logos* only in cases of identity with our memory imprints.

Another model is needed, namely the aviary (*Theaetetus* 197dff.), if one is going to explain how false opinion arises in cases where sense experience is absent, such as in cases of mathematical judgments. This in turn raises the problem of how someone cannot know that which (e.g., numbers) he does know in his mind. In other words, we have to know what knowledge constitutes in the first place (our original object of inquiry) as a ground or measure. The aviary model is meant to supply an example analogous to the distinction between possessing knowledge potentially (*dynamis*) and having knowledge actually. Thus, our mind as an aviary may be filled with all kinds of birds (knowledge we possess potentially) that we can acquire or collect. Such is our knowledge in holding. (Reminiscences of the *Meno* here.) But we have knowledge in actuality only when we take up what we possess and separate it in our mind, gaining control over it, even so far as to teach it to someone else (*Theaetetus* 198a–d). Given a potential and an actual differentiation of knowledge, we can explain how a man does not know actually what he knows potentially. We also recollect what Socrates means when he says he is only a midwife who knows that he does not know (yet).<sup>40</sup>

The aviary model breaks down when it is extended and understood more concretely by Theaetetus to contain birds representing kinds of ignorance as well as kinds of knowledge. This response is engendered when Socrates remarks how absurd it is for someone to possess knowledge potentially and yet to be ignorant through this very knowledge. It appears, paradoxically, as if our potential knowledge is the source of our ignorance (*Theaetetus* 199d). This is Socrates' way of wondering out loud about the extent to which men do not make actual what is potential in them. Why do people fail to recollect that which would make knowledge possible? It is *logos* that bridges the gap, and we know from comparing sophistic and philosophic *logos*, there may be true and false *logoi*. Eventually (*Theaetetus* 201c–d), Theaetetus remembers (i.e., recollects) having heard someone once say that true opinion joined by reasoning (*logos*) leads to knowledge.

In the meantime, both the aviary and the wax block are negated as analogies falling prey to circularity and infinite regress: they themselves require another level of knowledge to account for the knowledge and ignorance contained within them and to account for the existence of true and false opinion (*Theaetetus* 200b–c). As long as we stay within the confines of these

two models we cannot distinguish the basis (namely *logos*) for true and false opinion. One could add here, if an *anamnesis* of the forms is possible, which is to say that the forms exist and we can come to know them via recollection and giving *logoi*, then a condition of knowledge preexists as the ground for our philosophic striving. The *Theaetetus* in the end focuses on what kind and process of *logos* would make true opinion into knowledge.

There are three candidates for a *logos* that might transform opinion into knowledge (*Theaetetus* 206d–210b). First, *logos* might mean giving voice to one's thoughts, speaking or explaining by nouns and verbs. The problem with this definition of *logos* is that it fails to distinguish right opinion from knowledge. The second definition of *logos* is that of accounting for something in terms of its elements. Such an orderly description of the parts of a wagon, for example, would amount to technical knowledge. Nevertheless, this kind of *logos* added to right opinion does not achieve knowledge, because there is no guarantee that an enumeration of parts goes to the sum or essence of a thing beyond a mere description of constituent parts. Would just knowing the parts of one thing be sufficient to say what this one thing has in common with other things of the same kind?

Lastly, the third and most common sense of *logos* is that of the characteristics of an object that distinguishes it from other objects. However, this notion of *logos* amounts to nothing more than what we originally have with right opinion. To have right opinion about an object is to be able to distinguish it from other objects. *Logos* in this sense adds nothing. Even though none of these senses of *logos* along with right opinion add up to knowledge, we still need not reject the possibility of some different sense of *logos* that would meet the requirements of the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the third sense of *logos* is most promising, if we think of *logos* in terms of Platonic forms and essences, which would specify both what a given object has in common with other objects and its differentiations. But Socrates has no intention of making a connection at this point between *logos* and the forms, although it should be a very prominent alternative (if we engage in recollection) for Plato's readers. The *Sophist* and its understanding of *logos* in terms of the method of collection and division will terminate the consideration of Plato's understanding of *logos* proper as a bridge between opinion and knowledge.

## THE SOPHIST

In the *Sophist*, the pattern or paradigm put before us is the method of collection and division according to a method of *logos* that endeavors to understand affinities and non-affinities. This will be the basis for making comparisons

(*Sophist* 227a–228a)—that is, for collecting various activities and functions under one division or kind (*eidos*, *genos*). An example of this procedure, demonstrated by the Eleatic Stranger, is the division of art (*techne*) into production (or imitation), as opposed to acquisition or possession. The basis for this division of kinds is that producers work upon something not preexistingly formed (e.g., the work of the *demiourgos*), whereas those who possess the acquisitive art deal with something preexisting (e.g., the acquisition of knowledge, money-making, fighting, and hunting). The point of this division (which will be even further developed by a downward division) is to locate the angler, and by the example of such division according to kinds (which ends in classifying the angler as an acquisitive artist engaged in water hunting with barbs) we will then have before us a paradigm or model for hunting the sophist. Ironically, the sophist is a hunter like the angler, only the sophist hunts by rhetorical persuasion (not force), on land, after young men, and for the sake of wealth.

In Plato's *Seventh Letter* (342a–344d), there are four rungs on the ladder that lead to the truly knowable. First, there is the name of that under inquiry; second the *logos* or definition; third, the image portraying the truly knowable reality; and fourth, knowledge, intelligence (*nous*), or true opinion, regarding that which is known. The latter exists in the soul and is closest in kinship to the truly knowable reality of the whole which is fifth, at a remove, verily the silent, unspeakable “truth of the whole of existence” (*alethes tes holes ousias*). If *mythos* can be located on the third rung, then *logos* and *mythos* are both means toward the knowledge of the real, but are not identical with that end. What should strike us as the foremost characteristic of *logos* and *mythos* (and at the same time identical with the human condition) is that they both mediate between an experience of becoming and temporality on one hand and the vision that yields knowledge of true being and reality on the other hand.

Even though this may be the crowning point of *logos* proper, namely, the method of collection and division according to kinds, the very beginning of the *Sophist* still exemplifies the problem of what kind of *logos* (form of speech) the Stranger will choose. There are two possible *logoi* or forms of conversation first mentioned by Socrates (who otherwise will have no active part in the *Sophist*): (1) a long, uninterrupted *logos* in which the Stranger will expound whatever he wishes; and (2) the method of questioning and answering as employed splendidly by Parmenides. The Stranger's choice is not unSocratic; he will prefer a continuous speech by one person, if there is no interlocutor who is uncontrollable, inoffensive, and unwilling to dialogue (*Sophist* 217c–e). Consequently, Socrates produces Theaetetus as an interlocuter, and the Stranger immediately consents to a discussion via short questions and answers. Nevertheless, the discussion (*logos*) itself will be very long because nothing less than the manifold appearances of the sophist are

to be investigated and captured in definition. The sophist will be known in the end by an agreement in argument (*logos*) and not just by name (*Sophist* 218b–249d).

Perhaps it now should be noted that Sayre does not at all believe the goal of the *Sophist* is the catching and defining of the clever, elusive sophist.<sup>42</sup> According to Sayre, Plato really is exhibiting through dissimulation that mode of argument (*logos*) that proceeds by way of logical analysis of necessary and sufficient conditions.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the *Sophist* is the crowning achievement of *logos* proper in the sense of the utmost precision that can be had through formal reasoning. If this is solely and fundamentally Plato's project, then it is understandable why Sayre strongly devalues the political significance of the dialogue. There is no concern for the interrelationship of the philosopher with the statesman and the sophist. The problem of the philosopher(s) as the one or the few versus the *demos* or the many is excluded along with any mode of discourse that is characterized by metaphor and *mythos*, especially if allied to intuition and insight (*nous*).<sup>44</sup> The question before us is whether *logos* proper (admittedly a sense of *logos* that does reveal itself most emphatically in Plato's *Sophist*) has these exclusively abstract, logical properties and consequences, which would obliterate *logos* as an acted-out, political dialogue revealing who it is (be it philosopher or sophist or statesman) that seeks or does not seek to participate in the truth of being (*ousia*, *Sophist* 248a–e).

Collection and division, being the *logos* practiced by the Eleatic Stranger, result in six preliminary definitions of the sophist. This manifoldness in appearance and in affinity to other preoccupations (e.g., the hunter, the merchant, the retailer, the seller, the athlete, and the purger) reveals half of the problem in defining the sophist. The other half of the problem involves the sophists' affinity to non-being. (In a moment we shall consider: can non-being be defined or given a *logos*?) In reality, the sophist parasitically adopts all these manifestations or images. The sophist is a jack-of-all trades, a busybody, and a man for any and all seasons. Nevertheless, the goal of our method of argument (*Sophist* 227a–c) is to go beyond external appearances, even though there is some significance in understanding the affinity the sophist has to various arts. The method of collection and division proceeds according to a division of arts on the basis of their collected affinities and their natural differentiations. The many affinities of the sophist do not amount to a single *logos* or a single definition. What is worse, the sixth definition of the sophist (the sophist of noble lineage, *Sophist* 231b), who is said to purify souls by removing opinions that obstruct learning, seemingly characterizes the elenctic practice of Socrates. Of course, Socrates in his own day was confused with the sophists, and he did engage young men in ways superficially and deceptively resembling the sophists. Furthermore, it was the

tactic of some sophists to attack conventional opinions in a manner similar to Socrates. The real issue involves the kind of purification practiced: does it really make men better (thus implying some standard or measure of the right and the Good)? Does such purification use the method of questioning and answering to bring about modesty (*sophrosyne*) among young men, insofar as these young men will now know what they did not know? Or does it produce “the empty conceit of wisdom” (*Sophist* 231b)?

If a *logos* in the sense of *logos* proper were only a method of logical discrimination via questioning and answering, it would become extremely dangerous in the hands of the sophist who would have the ability and power to use this art and power of *logos* proper on any object for any purpose. Throughout the *Sophist*, Theaetetus and the Eleatic Stranger share a common end, which allows for *logos* in terms of short questions and answers; both men seek the way things really are—that is, truth and reality are understood to be interchangeable (*Sophist* 240b, 246b, 263b). The nature of this truth/reality is contrary to the indifferent, if not deceptive, false art of the sophist. The six definitions of the sophist reveal that the sophist presumes to have an overblown knowledge about everything and anything (*Sophist* 232c–233a). The magical power of the sophist enables him to dispute all things, as if any person could know all things (*Sophist* 233a–c). This disputatious manner indiscriminately calls into question divine, invisible things, as well as contingent, earthly matters, such as law and public affairs (*Sophist* 232c–d). The sophist does not admit any knowledge she/he does not know.

Accordingly, the sophist is now compared to another kind of artist, the painter. Both have the power to juggle and imitate all of reality (*Sophist* 234b–235a). The painter paints pictures, whereas the sophist uses words or spoken images to persuade his/her listeners. If we are to capture the sophist by the orders of our king, *logos* or reason (*Sophist* 235b–c), we need to divide the imitative art. There are two kinds of imitation: (1) by likeness according to proper proportions as they truly are; (2) by appearances (*fantasmata*) which are so out of proportion that they seem fantastical. Although the sophist seems to be cornered within the “fantastic art,” it is a perplexing problem to distinguish appearing and seeming from being. How can the falsehood of appearing and seeming be at all, if it amounts to not-being? It is here that the sophist finds a home within which to hide. Is it at all possible to explore non-being, to catch and define the sophist at least, if non-being is inconceivable (*alolon*, *Sophist* 238c)? Is not non-being shifty, in the shadows, mostly hidden, just like the wily sophist? If we say that the sophist's art is to produce deceptive images, appearances, and opinions about what is not, how can we say that such images, appearances, and opinions, as well as the sophist him/herself, exist? In some way, non-being must consort with thinking and with *logos* to result in false speech.

The passage that follows in the *Sophist* (242c) is the only time in the entire dialogue that *mythos* is explicitly mentioned, and mythical figures, the gods and the giants, are represented (*Sophist* 246a). The matter at hand is the nature of existence or reality. The Eleatic Stranger complains that Parmenides (previously referred to as the “father”) and others spoke about the nature of reality in its oneness and/or manifoldness, as if telling a story to children. Besides their conflicting accounts, none of them even cared whether their arguments could be followed (*Sophist* 243a–b). Their accounts are mythical in themselves, because we cannot question them, since they are not here to defend themselves. The only proper method to use is to make believe that they are present and confront them with questions about the perplexity of being and not-being.<sup>45</sup> It would seem that all *mythos* needs a critical *logos*. Does this subordinate and reduce *mythos* to *logos* as such?

In this way, Parmenides is questioned (as if present) concerning how being can be designated. Is being one? Is being a whole with or without parts, and if the former then what is the relationship of the parts to being? Does being come to exist? These kinds of questions and difficulties are raised to show that being is as much a problem as not-being. Likewise, the definition of the philosopher is as much a quandary as that of the sophist. In sum, Plato is asking whether a *logos* can be given of being as well as of not-being. In terms of mythical images, the battle rages between the gods (friends of the forms) and the giants (the materialists or atomistic, natural philosophers) revealing a polarization regarding the nature of being (in traditional *mythos* we are reminded of another battle between Zeus and Chronos). The giants, the rebels, drag down everything that pertains to the heavenly and the invisible, and they forcefully declare that all existence to be no more than tangible body and matter. They violently refuse to admit that there is anything more than the corporeal. The gods, on the other hand, cautiously defend themselves by turning toward real or true existence, which consists of invisible ideas or forms known by the intelligence or mind (*nous*). A tremendous battle is fought between these two rivals (is not such a battle ongoing today between some philosophers and modern natural science?). The consequences of the giants’ claims would mean the fragmentation and reduction of all *logoi* to inconstancy (evolution); all would be generation, flux, and motion (*Sophist* 246a–c).

Both the giants and the gods acknowledge that bodies and souls (minds) exist, and consequently, both of them have to be accounted for in *logoi*. However, it is very difficult to conduct a *logos* according to the rules of dialectic (questioning and answering) with warring, rebellious giants. It is even doubtful that such giants can be made better in deed, although the main task is to seek the truth and to follow the path of *logos* irrespective of enemies.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it is hoped that the giants will admit that the existence of the virtues and of wisdom in the soul is something incorporeal. At the least the Eleatic

Stranger hopes that they will concede that the nature of being or existence can be defined as power (*dynamis*)—that is, the power to act or to be acted upon (*Sophist* 248c). More specifically, humans are capable (*dynaton*) of becoming just or unjust; in most cases, they exist in-between (*metaxy*), in potentiality to justice or injustice and also have a body that participates in generation via perception betwixt a soul that participates in real being (*ontos ousian*, *Sophist* 248a). We start with becoming (the flux) on our way to being (*ousia*). The idea of justice is not in potentiality, but our own existence is in potentiality to it. This is the crux of the argument that the Eleatic Stranger presents; both motion (knowing, living, acting, and all those other verbal participles and gerunds, not nouns) and rest (self-sameness, unity) characterize real being finally. If one or the other is emphasized exclusively, then knowledge, reason, and mind are endangered. How could we be alive, to act, and to have all this *eros* to know being, if real being itself is devoid of life and thought, and is totally other, fixed and immovable (*Sophist* 248e–249b)? And if all is only in flux, then this would mean a fruitless and vain bearing or direction for the mind seeking knowledge thorough reason (*logos*). Consequently, we are enjoined to resist by every *logos* possible this either-or polarization, represented by the mythical war of gods versus giants (*Sophist* 249c–d). Yet these poles truly exist in a dynamic relation to one another.

The question remains whether a definition (*logos*) of being itself has been attained or is even attainable. To say that being includes or embraces motion and rest is not to say what being itself is, since we are only saying that both motion and rest exist, while in themselves they are opposed. Is not being some third thing? Yet how could there be anything that was not either at rest or in motion? We have to conclude that being cannot be given a *logos* separate from other forms and their possibility of combining or not combining. Everyone applies being as an attribute either of motion or of rest or of both. Discourse (*logos*) is impossible without such attribution, although we still can query whether a given thing has fulfilled its potential, or its completion/true being by nature. Also, being in itself is other than and beyond all things, since it is the source or *arche* of all things. In this respect, true being is the ground as well as the end for all discourse.

Does not the pursuit of true being not only culminate in knowledge, but also have consequences for the agent or actor who strives to participate and commune (*koinonion*) in wisdom? There is a powerful tendency among contemporary philosophers to ignore the action dimensions of the Platonic *logos* that have as one of its ends knowledge. Is not Plato constantly considering the consequences of human activities and pursuits regarding the souls and political being of persons? Is not the recognition of communion and participation in dialectic and *noesis* fundamental? It is questions like these that invite the study of the relationship of word and deed in Plato's dialogues.



Before doing this, we need to understand the notion of *logos* as the interweaving of forms reached via the method of collection and division in the *Sophist*. *Logos* (reasoning) is the dialectical art of joining and combining forms themselves, as well as explaining the basis for the commingling and participation of individual things in the forms (*Sophist* 253b–d). It is extremely important to note (given the previous mythical analogy of the battle of the gods and the giants), that *logos* is not solely that act of reasoning between the forms alone (being, motion, rest, sameness, and otherness or difference), but also involves the participation of individual things (represented by giants and humans) with the ideas represented by the gods. It is characteristic of the papers on *logos* by Sayre, Cross, and Bluck to ignore this later dimension and the possibilities of a harmony or complementary relationship between symbolically mythical participation or human action and the rational (*logos* proper) activity of the philosopher involved with the forms or ideas alone. In any case, the philosopher (somewhere betwixt giants and gods) has been discovered while searching for the sophist: the philosopher devotes himself to the activity of reasoning (*logismos*, *Sophist* 254a) about the most important forms—being, rest, motion, sameness, and otherness. Only if we first know (qua philosopher) can we discern the non-knower (sophist).

To discover the sophist, we need to explain how not-being can be. It is through an understanding of the form or nature of otherness that we can say non-being exists. The nature of otherness is entirely relative or relational. While otherness participates in all things as they are interrelated and also participates in being, otherness is not that in which it participates (*Sophist* 259a–b), but other than being, namely, not-being. Otherness or not-being is different than being (one is inclined to say it is a privation or deficiency of being) and not opposite to being. If otherness or not-being were opposite to being, then it would be totally separate. Accordingly, it would be impossible to speak of the reality of injustice, ugliness, falsehood, and so forth. Falsehood is possible if not-being is not completely divorced from all the forms that combine and intermingle. In this way, Plato argues that “the complete separation of each thing from all is the utterly final obliteration of all discourse (*logon*). For our power of discourse (*logos*) is derived from the interweaving of the ideas with one another” (*Sophist* 259e).

If not-being did not mingle with opinion and *logos* (i.e., if it is totally opposite and separate), then all *logoi* would be necessarily true. Since we have discovered that not-being partakes of being, we have at the same time discovered the sophist who no longer can deny the participation of falsehood in being in the form of *logos*. The sophist is the *via negativa* embodiment of this. We truly have a false *logos* when what is said is other than what is. Such falsity may exist in our speech, in our thoughts, or in our opinions. Opinions whether true or false are the result of our thought (*dianoia*). Speech and

thought may become the same, except that thought is a silent dialogue within ourselves. To judge truth or falsity the Eleatic Stranger asks us to recollect the previous division of *mimesis* into likeness making and fantasy. Only insofar as we are the works of god can our likenesses be images of that divine reason and knowledge. Otherwise, we engage in fantasy-making that is without knowledge and is based on simple human opinion or some kind of intentional human dissembling that one knows what one really does not know.<sup>47</sup>

## WORDS AND DEEDS

This treatment of *logos* (including *logos* proper) could continue covering, at the least, important passages in the *Statesman*, *Philebus*, *Laws*, *Timaeus*, and *Parmenides*. In fact, a separate publication on *logos* in Plato would be in order, although one great danger such a project would entail is the threat of an unwarranted (i.e., not based on the Platonic corpus) separation of *logos* from *mythos*. The foregoing examination of *logos* unavoidably includes *mythos*, and the conclusion was reached that *logos* and *mythos* move in and out of one another.<sup>48</sup> Additional evidence can be given for this argument by looking at the often-mentioned combination of “in words (*en logoi*) and in deeds (*en ergoi*)” in the Platonic corpus. This intimate connection of words and deeds has a long Greek tradition. For instance, we observe it in the Homeric depiction of the arête of men, which shines forth in words and deeds. Thus, words and deeds are mutually coordinated, since to speak is to act, and action is memorialized over time by speech. (Of course, there will always be some kind of actions that do not befit words, as well as some kinds of speech that do not befit enactment.) This unity of speech and action can help explain the unity of *logos* meaning both story and speech. With Plato and the development and differentiation of *logos* to the point of *logos* proper, we need to recognize the rational drawing of consequences for action given the speech or words of an interlocuter in the dialogues. Speech becomes a mime for action as it is part of the political philosopher's function to make visible the consequences of serious argumentation (in itself only one side of *logos*) in the world in which we necessarily live and act (*lebenswelt*). Speaking and acting (no matter how differentiated *logos* or speaking becomes) still constitute a unity, but no longer a unity to be taken for granted in the manner that traditions and commonplace understandings become uncritically accepted. With the differentiation of *logos* into narration or story on one hand and rational account or grounding on the other hand, there still remains a common core. The unity of “word and deed” perseveres because the refining of *logos* proper by the philosopher's dialectical inquiry does not exclude consequential action or different kinds of agents (e.g., the *demos*, sophist, poet, statesman, et al.).

The problem of the consequences of speech (*logos*) for political action is severe and unmitigating. Do we mean what is possible in deed given any existing political order, or do we mean the possibilities of action in the best political regime? Does the imagination of the best political order in speech allow for unlimited possibilities of action, or are we always to imagine that our words and deeds must be carefully circumscribed even in the best political regime? There is plenty of evidence that Plato addressed both kinds of politics, the political actuality and the political best (*aristos*). Resorting to a mythical *logos* may as much be the result of not-being politically able to speak directly as not being able to enact for listeners in concrete reality what they are seeking. This may be the end (*telos*) of political order or the best regime and the highest perfection that humans can reach. It is not surprising, as we shall see, that *mythos* (like metaphor and analogy) appears in the Platonic dialogues when an impasse has been reached. It is as much an impasse requiring political and educational caution, as it is an epistemological and ontological *aporia* that requires indirect expression and reflective imagination. In addition, all political regimes have *mythoi* in the sense of common beliefs that people adhere to in a community (*polis*).

To conclude this chapter, we need to examine Plato's understanding of the interrelationship of "words and deeds" in regard to their status and their political and educational consequences in two senses: (1) the explicit and implicit references to "words and deeds"; and (2) two impasses, namely, the public or political favoring of visible deeds over invisible words, and the private and conversational favoring of invisible words over visible deeds. In both instances, there is political (*polis*) responsibility at stake. In our educational community (a micro *polis*) everything is openly in common.

The implicit situations in which Socrates acts out in speech and has a public role through serious argumentation (*logos*) are just as significant (if they are not more powerfully poignant) as Plato's explicit references to the educational standard or paradigm, "words and deeds." Regarding the latter, on four different occasions Plato makes it clear that young men will look to their elders and judge them or improve upon them according to their "words and deeds" (*Protagoras* 325d, *Gorgias* 461c–d, *Republic* 563a, *Laws* 765e, 717d). Explicitly and publicly, openly and visibly, words and deeds are representative of a learning process that habituates a young person. Naturally, the poets have a significant part in the process, since they imitate speeches and actions that are worthy or unworthy of emulation (*Timaeus* 19c–e). *Sophrosyne* as regards the pleasures (*Philebus* 45d, *Laws* 647d), piety toward the gods (*Laws* 885b, 935a), military courage (*Laches* 193c), friendship (*Menexenus* 244a), even the duty to inquire (*Meno* 86bc), and to test people's arguments in conversation (*Theaetetus* 160e) characterize the persons who would aspire to be fully virtuous in word and in deed (*Republic* 498e–499a).

Consequently, one can conclude that Plato's explicit references to "words and deeds" exemplifies the educational and political concern for the virtuous model of life. Nevertheless, Plato is not unaware that the standard of what is intended to be imitated in "words and deeds" may be false—that is, may not rest on knowledge (*Sophist* 267c). Thus, we are advised to look for the persons of wisdom (be they persons of practical and/or theoretical wisdom),<sup>49</sup> who would be the fitting model for speech and action (see *Laches* 201a). Plato is also aware of a potential splitting of *logos* and *ergon* in the cases where later in life, when we have learned much through experience (action, *ergon*), we come to realize that what we previously held to be true in argument (*logos*) really was false and damaging to our character (*Sophist* 234e). Before considering such impasses or conflicts between *logos* and *ergon*, we need to examine some implicit examples of the interacting relationship of *logos* and *ergon*.

Frequently in Platonic dialogues a major interlocutor is brought to shame just at that point where his speech or argument (*logos*) has action (*ergon*) and character revealing consequences. There is the blush of Charmides who is boldly and immoderately encouraged to explain what modesty (*sophrosyne*) is. Likewise, the threatening and even speech-defying consequences of Thrasymachus' and Callicles' defense of "might is right" become shameful (*aidos*), when acted out before others, because there is no basis in knowledge that would be revealed in *logos*, which would truly benefit the users of such unwarranted, unlimited power. Also, Socrates' first speech on *eros* in the *Phaedrus* defending the non-lover shamefully reveals, as it is acted out in speech or *logos*, the calculating manipulation of those who take advantage of erotic drives. Related to this is Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium* that exposes Socrates in deed as a man of *eros* who follows rigorously and consistently his own speech or words regarding *eros* in its bodily manifestations. Note that Alcibiades was not present for Socrates' speech on *eros* in the *Symposium*. Thus, he can reaffirm indirectly Socrates' *logos* through Socrates' deeds without having been erotically persuaded previously by Socrates' own *eros* speech.

All of these examples indicate that deed and speech follow upon one another. We speak as we act, and we act as we speak. There is this abiding interaction between speech and action that in the end reveals and constitutes who we are by nature. In this respect, we can understand how Socrates' *daimon* (his identity or guardian spirit) prevented certain doings or sayings (*Apology* 40b). All of the Platonic dialogues (for us in their written capacity) are meant to be revelatory witnesses to different kinds of persons discernible explicitly by their different kinds of deeds and implicitly by their different kinds of speeches.

Although there is such a unity of "word and deed," this does not exclude the possibility of a conflict or impasse occurring between them. This can

happen on two levels. First, publicly and politically, given the character of the way things are, there may be little room for noble and exemplary words and deeds. There is a significant digression in the *Theaetetus* when Socrates outlines the public and political problems of acting given the slavish, wheeling-and-dealing speeches, and actions that occur in the Athenian law courts. In these deformed law courts, there is little possibility of a consideration of justice, truth, and happiness in themselves. There is only an acceptance of what convention dictates. Thus, there is the serious failure to know what one does not know.

The law courts characterized the Athenian *polis*, and of course Socrates' words and deeds were brought before such a court that was foreign to the manner in which Socrates chose to act and to speak. In Athenian courts a time limit was imposed on what one can say and the extent to which one could cross-examine accusers. Also, direct contact with the judges in order to cross-examine them regarding their opinions was not possible. In this respect, the words (*logoi*) of Socrates were more befitting private (not in the *agora* or the law courts before large assemblies of citizens) conversations (*logoi*). In fact, the Athenian *polis* honored actions and deeds in preference to words (*Apolo-**gy* 32a). Thus, a potential area of conflict and rupture was opened between words and deeds (*Crito* 52d).

In the *Laches* (193e) the dilemma is that no one can define what courage is. Yet, many seem capable of recognizing it in deed. Without a knowledge of what courage is, how would we be able to habituate young people to be courageous, instead of rash or cowardly? The political problem (*Laches* 195a–198a) is that while many think they know more than they actually do, at least they can recognize what is good and noble. Yet they become quite angry and unruly when they are found to be confused in words about what they presumably know. *Laches* represents the many, and Socrates has to soothe *Laches*' anger in order to continue the inquiry or *logos* regarding courage and whoever is best able to teach it. In such a public and political setting, it is difficult directly to pursue *logoi* that are grounded in knowledge without offending those who at best only represent in deed (semblance) what you are seeking to ground.

There are limits to what Socrates can openly say given the political upheavals in Athens. Socrates recommended that persons who wished to become philosophers (not sophists) had best avoid active participation in political affairs (*Theaetetus* 173d–e). Was this only contingent on the present character of Athenian politics, or was this a final judgment concerning all political involvement? Socrates realizes the danger of putting one's words or speeches into writing (*Phaedrus* 276c–e). Would it be possible for those who read such words to understand precisely what is intended without being able to confront the writer directly? Might not dogmatization or false conclusions

pervert the original thoughts and intentions of the writer? Finally, does not an indirect form of speech, which implies more than it says, befit the situation of speaking to an unknown audience? Especially if a dialogue of speeches results in a paralysis of the possibilities of immediate and direct action, then either we will be advised to give up the inquiry (thus avoiding unwarranted consequences), or we will be encouraged to go back and reconsider the crucial deeds and arguments, and to rethink their significance and possibilities.

The second level of conflict occurs within the so-called private conversations<sup>50</sup> (*logoi*) that Socrates has with various sophists and young men. In this instance, primacy is given to words or kinds of *logoi*, be they long or short speeches, contentious eristic, or purifying elenchus. The danger is (as was previously discussed) misology or hatred of arguments (*Phaedo* 89c) once words come to mean anything and are manipulated solely for personal advantage. This stifles and negates our duty to inquire about what we do not know, if we always find ourselves in the company of the kind of sophists who want to win verbal battles irrespective of their consequences for action and truth. There can be a healthy and an unhealthy reaction to *aporias*. The philosopher resorts to an art of rhetoric or persuasion in an attempt to draw out the consequences of speech for action in a healthy manner—that is, healthy in the sense of not surrendering the inquiry. At least, in part, this would mean preserving the integral relationship of words and deeds, if we are not to forsake the possibility of realizing goodness and knowledge within ourselves. Although it is true that in deed it is not important whether we have true opinion or knowledge, since the outcome in deed is the same (so argues the *polis* and *demos*), the philosopher nevertheless is concerned with that which will provide stability and guidance (*psychagoge*) over time (*Laches* 194c–e). At times (*Phaedo* 87a–c, *Theaetetus* 160e, 191a–c, 200b–c), Socrates will personify the *logos* when an interlocuter fails to know what to say. In this way, the *logos* can be acted out—that is, when an impasse in the dialogue threatening a rupture between *logos* and *ergon* can be healed by dramatic impersonation (*mythos*).

## CONCLUSION

The perfection or completion of a person as philosopher cannot be achieved through only the epistemological pursuit of *logos* (*logos* proper as Sayre sees it), as if this were the end of knowledge leading to wisdom. First of all, we have shown that *logos* is a means. Secondly, *logos* is not only of epistemological significance. Even if there does not exist a common (communal-political) place for action and speaking in justification of one's being and one's deeds, the philosopher will speak as if she/he were acting and act as if she/he were speaking in such a place. If the philosopher were to choose only to act (the

condition of Nicias and Laches regarding military courage), she/he would no longer be the philosopher in search of the ground (*logos*) and justification for her/his actions. If the philosopher chose only to speak—that is, to attain only the sophist’s mental prowess of rhetorical knowledge that disposes of one’s opponents—she/he would be soul corrupting as well as dead to the world of action and an irrelevant figure regarding her/his benefit to fellow citizens and friends. Part of the problem is that the philosopher would then be ignored as “all talk and no action,” or worse as a word manipulator. Some commentators have either chosen to understand Plato to be completely apolitical (Sayre), or others have charged that Plato is completely antipolitical (Arendt).<sup>51</sup> Do not the events of the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* encourage the philosopher to withdraw from the world, or is the *Phaedo* only representative of the imminent approach of Socrates’ death, which is, in fact, a withdrawal from the world?

Questions such as this become important regarding *mythos*, because the *Phaedo* is very much a mythical dialogue and because a fundamental problem in understanding Plato’s *mythoi* will be the question of whether they are primarily political and public, or speculative and private. Perhaps *mythos* is a combination of both. However, the greater part of the problem is that speaking and acting entail one another, if the philosopher is to be the philosopher. What a person says (especially chosen metaphors and analogies) defines who that person is. Who a person is is visible or examinable primarily by his/her action or activity. Speaking separated from action makes for unaccountability. Speaking and acting are peculiarly human, in-between the bestial and the divine. Even though a despotic regime might narrow the space for speaking and acting or might reduce drastically the possibilities of common interaction (in speech and in deed) among friends, we still have to acknowledge that some kind of public action is required to be accountable to ourselves and toward others. In effect, the private conversations of the philosopher do not become by definition or by intention purely private and isolated from the political (i.e., Plato is neither apolitical nor antipolitical). Instead, they become a mimesis in word and in deed of our greatest hope, namely, that the public visible world of the *polis* (deeds) will more and more participate in the hidden, invisible longings (words) of the seekers after wisdom. However, there is no realistic hope that by human action the deeply disturbing tension between the philosopher and the *polis* will ever entirely abate and be resolved in this world.

Perhaps it is relevant at this point to mention that Plato on a few occasions spoke of a divine *logos*. In one sense, a divine *logos* is a tale told about the righteous and good works (*erga*) of a god (*Republic* 380aff.). We speak about a god or the gods in a *logos* or tale, which comprehends the kind of actions that alone can be attributed to a god. It is further understood that such a tale of the gods as causes of good things will be a pattern or paradigm for action

in any well-governed *polis*. However, this is not to suggest that a god or the gods serve only some instrumental or utilitarian, political function. Plato acknowledges that *logos* (speech or tale) is bestowed by the gods in order that we might understand through our own power of reasoning (*dianoia* and *nous*) the harmonious revolutions of the cosmos (*Timaeus* 46c–47e). Insofar as we have an affinity (*suggenos*) to the divine reason in the cosmos (*Epinomis* 986c), there is a divine origin to our *logoi* or statements. Through our speech (*logos*) the gods are born, although in deed (*ergoi*) they have been from long ago (*Critias* 106a). In other words, from divine deeds of long ago we can give an account (*logos* as *mythos*) of the divinely made cosmos.

There is no question but that such *logoi* make for only a likely story, a *mythos*. We cannot clearly know with certainty such divine cosmic matters, yet we can speak through likenesses (analogies) and images. Even when Socrates affirms that virtue may have its origins in divine dispensation (*Meno* 99e–100b), or that we may have to journey through life on the vessel of some divine reason (*Phaedo* 85d), this does not preclude the asking of questions and the continual testing of the divine through inquiry. Our *logos* stands as a witness before Zeus (*Philebus* 66d). And even if we ascend to that heavenly vision of beauty, which is beyond *logos* and *episteme* (*Symposium* 210eff.), this does not prescind from the path of *logos* that takes us there, be it *logos* proper or *logos* in the form of *mythos*. Our end, completion, or perfection and the whole cosmos of our existence should not be confused with the path or means of our striving.

Somewhat oddly, not very many contemporary commentators (see the many commentators in the Collobert and Partenie volumes) speak in depth about what Plato intends by the gods, god, and the divine. (See appendix c.) If you start from a professional, philosophical secularism, then the divine cannot be taken seriously in the sense of *theo logos*, a theology. Eric Voegelin assuredly discerns Plato to be a theologian.<sup>52</sup> Plato is the first known person to write of a *theo logos*. Plato is as much a critic of traditional Geek religion as he is a critic of Greek poets. Yet Plato, of course, is no debunking, iconoclastic Voltaire. Religion, theology, and divine inspiration need to be purged, purified, and made consonant with the moral order leading to *eudaimonia*. To demythologize and discard religion and the gods is self-destructive of the Platonic “love of wisdom.”

Demythologizing can take at least four wrong paths. First, religion and the gods serve only a utilitarian purpose, such as a civil religion for the nonphilosophical *demos* (as some Straussians contend<sup>53</sup>). Clearly in the *Euthyphro* the gods are holy in service to that beyond being and the Good, not the reverse. Second, the gods are no more than human projections and constructions (anthropomorphism) constituting a compendium of goods and perfections that we humans alone need to claim as our own (Feuerbach). Reductionist



interpretations including allegorizing advocate this and turn Socrates' concentration on the soul into modern self-possession. Third, the *daimones* are an inventive and desperate way of escaping the forces of fortune, chance, contingent opportunities, fate, and disorder in the cosmos. This would reduce Socrates/Plato to a Euthyphro or Cephalus. Fourth, the gods are just objects of worship that cannot be bribed and offer no rewards or punishments, since you actually are on your own from birth to death.

This last demythologization comes close to the gods and the divine considered to be objects that represent the eternal, the vision of which the just soul may have in *theoria* and once disembodied. For Plato, there are *daimones* from the gods that are assigned to each soul and function like guardian angels who offer restraints and negatives, similar to what a bad conscience may do. There are Muses and messengers (Er, a soldier and Diotima, a priestess) who may direct *eros* and inspiration. There are ladders, chords, and pulls between the philosophically driven souls and the divine, because there is some divine, immortal part of our souls that participates in the divine by way of analogical affinity. Therefore, in the *Timaeus* a *demiourgos* (master craftsman) constructs the universe in accord with the divine paradigm and archetype. The *demiourgos* is a maker, a weaver, an orderer. Thus, we human souls can consult the heavens for the likenesses of the divine, albeit we are at a further remove than the *demiourgos*. The divine is a *telos*, a perfection, the measure, the self-same, unchanging crown king of *dike*. By way of *anamnesis* or recollecting, we can know what we do not know, we can return to original first principles (*arche*), and we can transcend from *praxis* to *theoria*, from *dianoia* to *noesis*. Such would be Plato's theological philosophy.

The purpose of this lengthy chapter had been to examine the ways in which *mythos* and *logos* intersect as regards the rudimentary definition of *logos*, the pursuit of *logos* proper, and the harmony and the disharmony of words and deeds. It is not surprising that in Plato's dialogues *mythos* follows upon *logos* or argumentation between interlocutors, or that *mythos* is the context within which *logos* proceeds to reveal the (at least potential) deeds of those who speak. *Logos* as speech or intercourse between souls reveals who the speaker is (see *Alcibiades* I 105d–e, 118b, 129b, 130d). *Logos* or speech becomes a kind of doing or acting that is preserved in the memory (via *anamnesis*) when comprehended or concluded by *mythos*.

This chapter has attempted to make clear the harmonious and integral unity of *logos* and *mythos*.<sup>54</sup> It has been found that the conditions for having *logos* or discussion is an agreement on fundamentals (e.g., in the *Phaedo*, Cebes and Simmias acknowledge the existence of the forms and accept the theory of recollection; in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, Theaetetus mathematically understands what a definition amounts to). This at least includes an agreement regarding the way in which one will proceed (preferably the give-and-take

of short questions and answers) once an *aporia* of the soul has been encountered. Also, most important of all, a commitment to the truth wherever it may take us keeps the *logos* alive. None of this precludes or excludes the resort to *mythos* when appropriate. Nevertheless, there has been no attempt as of yet to approach *mythos* directly, to consider its function and its place within the context of the dialogues as a whole, although a number of important defining characteristics (mimetic playfulness; the quality of having been inexplicably heard sometime before; the finding of *mythos* in the midst of impasses) have been unavoidably encountered.

There has been no suggestion whatsoever that *logos* as word should be subordinated to *mythos* as a combination of word and deed. At least one major argument reveals that *mythos* is related to the representation of things in word and in deed. Therefore, it has been argued (if we can take the *Sophist* as a decisive example) that despite the highest development of *logos* qua *logos* proper, emphasizing rules of logical consistency, strict differentiation of necessary and sufficient conditions in giving definitions and as much rational, analytical accountability as is possible (viz., the analysis of Sayre), still we cannot separate those remarkable intellectual achievements from the philosopher in the midst of the *polis*, vis-à-vis the demos, the sophists, and the statesmen. This context is not just an external dramatic setting that can be shucked aside. Nor do we discontinue doing philosophy in the Platonic sense and in the real comprehensive sense of pursuing wisdom, as if our intellectual achievements are somehow necessarily or actually cut off from who we are and what we do when we politically address this-worldly existence. Accordingly, we can only strive to examine this whole context and in the following pages to place *mythos* within this context.

*Mythos* and *logos* are distinguishable and necessitate distinction even if they are not to be separated without separating intellection and action (*praxis*). Any *mythos* can be called a *logos* in its general sense, but not every *logos* is a *mythos* (e.g., *logos* proper). Specifically, *logos* involves an exacting, consistent inquiry regarding reality as somehow fixed and ever the same, while *mythos* is a probable account regarding events, happenings, in sum the domain of reality that we call becoming and not-being (see *Timaeus* 59c–d). It has been commonplace to assume that a rationalistic philosopher like Plato propounding the so-called theory of ideas would dismiss and separate himself as much as is possible from the domain of becoming. Plato's *mythoi* would have significance only when they raise persons from the world of becoming into the world of eternal truths, the divine ideas. Unquestionably, this is one of the most important functions of Plato's *mythoi*. However, this does not necessarily argue for the negation of the world of becoming, nor does it easily make *logos* (as a rational account) of the ideas our only worthy philosophical preoccupation. *Mythos* and *logos* need each other. *Logos* is there to critique *mythos* on the

basis of its dialectical process and *mythos* is there to reveal the human limits of *logos* regarding the analogical drama of the human soul into the beyond. Both occur within the context of a *polis* of friendship and a cosmos of intelligibility. It is all about open, ongoing discourse. For our sake, it is the dramatic tragedy of Plato that he is a political philosopher and not just a philosopher.

## NOTES

1. It is odd that a book with a lot of insight such as Kathryn Morgan, *Myth and Philosophy: From the Pre-Socratics to Plato* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) fails to define philosophy in Platonic terms. Instead, there is the contemporary characterization of professional, academic philosophy, assumed to be consistent with Plato. This is what Voegelin calls being beholden to contemporary “school philosophy.” See Hans-Georg Gadamer, “In Reply to Nicholas P. White,” in Charles Griswold, ed., *Platonic Writings Platonic Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 258–266 where Gadamer is confounded and at a loss for words given White’s contemporary-oriented, philosophical questioning of Plato.

2. J. A. K. Thomson, *The Art of the Logos* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935), 1–9.

3. See *Laches* 179c, *Protagoras* 317c, *Phaedo* 58e, *Symposium* 177d, *Phaedrus* 227b–d, *Republic* 328d, *Theaetetus* 143c–e, *Sophist* 216b, *Timaeus* 17c.

4. This reference to “gentlemen” (*kaloï kagathoi*) at this point in the conversation (*Protagoras* 347d, 348e, 312b) is meant to remind those present that there are rules for conversation among decent persons. Even at a wine party, gentlemen can conduct their conversation without extraneous noises, music, or foolery. Socrates describes Protagoras as more the gentleman who is sensible and good himself, but cannot make others good. Since Protagoras claims to have this gift of teaching, then he is potentially a philosopher who can know and teach the real basis for moral virtue. Socrates is almost always in the presence of potential gentlemen, insofar as a gentleman is one who has been well-taught the nonvocational arts (*Protagoras* 312b). But the gentleman himself is, at best, a teacher of moral virtue only by example in deed, whereas the philosopher in addition pursues the *logos* of virtue.

5. Paul Friedlander, *The Dialogues of the First Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), II, 19.

6. Gregory Vlastos, ed., *The Protagoras of Plato* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), Introduction, 1x.

7. Friedlander, *The Dialogues*, II, 16.

8. For Plato, much remains to be learned via recollecting (*anamnesis*) and via that internal dialogue one has with oneself, in contradistinction to forgetting when overwhelmed by long speeches.

9. Friedlander, *The Dialogues*, II, 7, 18. Also see *Gorgias* 505d and *Protagoras* 347c–348a.

10. Both *mythos* and poetry have the nature of being long, unexamined (but not necessarily unexaminable) speeches. Their length and numerous unquestioned

assumptions raise the question of when they can be appropriately used. Also, both *mythos* and poetry are in this instance based on tradition, convention, and popular approval. Greek poets resorted to mythical tradition as a repository of experience culturally constituting the Greek people. This is overwhelming. One wonders whether Plato wanted fundamentally to displace this Greek tradition in favor of his own critically expounded tradition, combining *mythos* and *logos*.

11. A long speech by its very longevity convinces the uncritical. See, for example, Agathon's breathless, descriptive splurge regarding *eros* in the *Symposium* 194e–198a.

12. To distinguish analytically and to abstract out of context is not to separate apart ontologically. The ontological reference is important, if we want to know the way *logos* and *mythos* function to the fullest (the whole). The part-whole *aporia* is discussed by Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good*, 12–13. For a delightful adventure, consider comparing two divergent approaches to *mythos* and *logos* (Anglo-American philosophy versus continental German philosophy): Richard Buxton, ed., *From Mythos to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). The strongest, single-minded contention that philosophy has successfully moved from *mythos* to *logos*, the irrational to the rational, an Aryan achievement, is: W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos Zum Logos* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner, 1940).

13. Kenneth Sayre, "Logos, False Judgment and the Grounds of Knowledge," an unpublished paper, 1. See also William Cobb, "Anamnesis: Platonic Doctrine or Sophistic Absurdity," *Dialogue* XII (1973), 604–28.

14. Sayre, "Logos," 1, 3–5.

15. Frequently, Sayre translates *doxa* as judgment. This can be misleading because it is a secondary meaning of *doxa* as given in Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 8th revised edition (New York: American Book Company, 1897), 383. *Krisis* is the Greek term for decision, choice, and judgment. This indicates that a judgment more commonly is understood to be the deciding result in the consideration of opinions or evidence such as in law courts. Judgments would not necessarily be identical to opinions. It may be that Sayre's translation of *doxa* as judgment has more to do with contemporary epistemological problems. Sayre, "Logos," 1.

16. Sayre, "Logos," 3.

17. See Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language*, 45–67. In these pages, Burrell argues that Plato's vision metaphor encourages a kind of direct, immediate insight that amounts to knowledge, which would be contradictory to the long, hard road of the dialectical process. See also R. C. Cross, "Logos and Forms in Plato," *MIND* 63 (1957), 443–44 for the same argument.

18. Sayre, *Logos*, 3 comes very close to conceding this, which is to concede the very dilemma of Meno's paradox. Sayre throughout ignores questions of ontology which are decisive for what we are trying to know (epistemology). Note, however, the Freudian or Voegelinian slip in this unpublished article when "ground of being" is used instead of the perhaps the intended "ground of knowledge."

19. See Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 92.

20. Sayre, "Logos," 4.
21. See Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method*, 132ff. and Cross, *Logos*, 433ff. and R. S. Bluck, "Logos and Forms in Plato," 522–29.
22. See Voegelin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, "The Drama of Humanity," 181, 213–14 and his *In Search of Order*, 29–31. Also see Stephen Costello, *The Flow of Presence* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).
23. Sayre, "Logos," 5.
24. Klein, *A Commentary*, 95, 109–11, 130–31, 149ff., 157, 166.
25. Does Socratic *aporia* lead Plato and us to some nominalistic, constructivist position regarding all human knowledge, or does it instead lead us from experience (*pathos*) to think beyond, to transcend?
26. Klein, *A Commentary*, 18–19.
27. Klein, *A Commentary*, 247–48.
28. Klein, *A Commentary*, 205–22.
29. Klein, *A Commentary*, 216–18, 168–69.
30. Klein, *A Commentary*, 147, 207.
31. This is contrary to Sayre who thinks the hypothetical method only concerns formal causes and not also final causes (Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method*, 4–5). This is important even though Sayre admits that Socrates is searching for and trying to discover the truth of things. Sayre's point of emphasis will be explanations according to formal causes, which involves logical relations of truth and falsity between propositions and statements (Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method*, 15, footnote). Sayre is ever the modern professional philosopher rejecting final causes (*teloi*).
32. Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method*, 42–56 overemphasizes this philosophical *logos*, and thus Sayre is perplexed enough to say that Plato is unclear about the upward path leading to the nonhypothetical.
33. Burrell, *Analogy*, 39, 47–48, 53–56, 60–64. See also Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good*, 27, 81–82, 111–12, 115–18, 123–25, 164–70. Gadamer recognizes that the Good is always referred to as an "idea," not an "eidos" or form. It is something we may have a view of, not an object of knowledge. Voegelin would contend that the Good is experienced and known via luminosity not intentionality.
34. Sayre, "Logos," 13.
35. Josef Pieper, *Platons Mythen* (Munchen: Kosel-Verlag, 1965), 31–5 emphasizes the *ek akoues* nature of *mythos*, but at the same time he very sharply delimits what can be actually considered *mythos* in the Platonic corpus. In other words, Pieper does not look at *mythos* and *logos* in their broadest manifestations, and thus is not encouraged to go in the direction I am taking as the example of the *Theaetetus* indicates. More will be said in the next chapter about Pieper's delimitation of *mythos*.
36. See some representative examples in the Platonic corpus: *Phaedo* 63c, 62b; *Meno* 86b, *Phaedrus* 245b–c, 249d–e, 253a, 262d; *Crito* 54e; *Theaetetus* 151a–b; *Euthydemus* 289c.
37. Leibniz made an important distinction between mere perception and apperception. The later involves reflection upon our sense perception.
38. This explains why *anamnesis* is only implicitly present in the *Theaetetus*.

39. Aristotle's definition of nature (*physis*) not as some fixed material thing but rather as potentiality (*dynamis*) toward act (*energeia*) comes to mind here. See Steven A. Long, *Analogia Entis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), who contends that Plato did not subject analogy to the potential-act distinction that Aristotle originated.

40. Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method*, 120–1, 132–37.

41. Sayre, *Plato's*, 215.

42. Sayre, "Logos," 21.

43. Sayre, *Plato's*, 204.

44. Sayre, *Plato's*, 204, 238.

45. Recollect that in the *Theaetetus* Parmenides was left out of the mythical account of the forebearers to philosophy.

46. More will be said later in this chapter about the important interrelationship of word (*logos*) and deed (*ergon*).

47. For some reason C. Partenie claims (see "Plato's Myths" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* on-line) that fantasy and the fantastical are characteristic of Plato's myths, without giving any examples to show that Plato contradicts himself and thus becomes a sophist.

48. While Voegelin clearly distinguishes *mythos* from *logos* (as noetic and dialectic reason), there is also his recognition that *mythos* and *logos* interpenetrate each other. See Voegelin, *Collected Works* vol. 28, 74, 106–10, 229 and *Collected Works*, vol. 12, 93, 126, 130, 337, 365. Also see Jerry Day, *Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 233–34. Before reading Voegelin's later writings, I discerned in Plato a crafted balance between poetic *mythos* and philosophical *logos*, which includes of course Plato's critique of traditional Greek poetry. In Voegelin's later writings, *The Ecumenic Age*, 228, 230, 259, *Anamnesis*, 90, and *The Search for Order*, 14ff., 44, 90, 116, he develops the symbol "balance of consciousness," which among other things relates to the need to balance *mythos* and *logos*, the soul's primordial experiences and *noesis* versus luminosity and intentionality. Voegelin actually moves in his writings from equivalence to balance to paradox. (In Voegelin's last work, *In Search for Order*, he resorts to the term "paradox" eighty-seven times in 107 pages.) One might have thought that Gadamer, who takes Platonic *mythos* seriously, would not subordinate *mythos* to *logos*. Unfortunately, Gadamer represents the philosopher who will "conceptualize" Platonic *mythoi*, not recognizing the difference between the dramatic play of symbols versus the literalizing and hardening of conceptual analysis. Likewise, Gadamer tends to dismiss the metaphorical in Plato's dialogues. See his *The Idea of the Good*, 34, 124–25, 178.

49. My understanding of *theoria* and *praxis* (contemplation and practice/action) is not simply equitable with *logos* and *ergon* respectively. *Ergon* meaning work, function, or activity applies equally to contemplation and to practice. An *ergon* is that function (be it proper or not) that is characterized by a person's *theoria* or *praxis*. Likewise, both *theoria* and *praxis* require a *logos*, if they are to be publicly examinable. Plato's multivalent flow of discourse is provocative for the experience of wonder and reflection.

50. By private, I mean any place outside the *agora* or assembly. These conversations still are fundamentally public, beyond the fact that private or subjective or partisan interests and inclinations are not being expressed. These conversations are open to public criteria or inquiry, examination and judgment; hence the conversations are truly philosophical and not just contentious and polemical.

51. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 164–65, 198–203. Eric Voegelin also registers Plato's deep dismay about the Athenian *polis* and claims as well (in retrospect) that historically the Greek *polis* is finished (See *Order and History*, vol. 3, 8ff., 39, 88ff., 162ff., 219, and chapter 9). However, it is valuable to reconceive Plato's *Republic* as the constitution, for the most part, of the Academy Plato was then establishing. Other mini *poleis* are realistic among friends and believers. In this albeit limited sense the *polis* is not really dead.

52. Voegelin, *Order and History*, 101ff., 216ff., 313.

53. For a sample of Straussians who demythologize see Joseph Cropsey, *Plato's World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Mark Blitz, *Plato's Political Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Catherine Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). In Voegelin's terms, there is "no leap in being" to possess a spiritually transcendent source. But does not the *eros* of the dark horse (in the *Phaedrus*) try to take a leap after the charioteer grows wings to ascend to the procession of the Olympian gods encircling a divine banquet? The charioteer, however, controls the dark horse who would leap grossly to possess the beloved beyond in order to become divine. In this regard see John Sallis, *Logos and Being* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1973), 143–49. Sallis declares that the *Phaedrus* is indeed a step up from the human banquet in the *Symposium*.

54. Also, this conclusion has been reached by G. D. Stormer, "Plato's Theory of Myth," *Personalist* 55 (1974), 220 and Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 291–92.

## Chapter 3

# The Integral Relationship and Circular Sequence of Plato's *Mythoi*

The time has come to make good the promises of chapters 1 and 2 which at least were preparatory rites of initiation leading to Platonic *mythos* itself. A treatment of Plato's *mythoi* necessitates such a roundabout, indirect approach, if only because Plato's *mythoi* do not simply stand alone, self-explanatory and categorizable, independent of the context in which they occur. First, that context contains metaphors and analogies that either are important in understanding a Platonic *mythos*, or are further elaborated to become a *mythos* and, in effect, are themselves a part of the functioning of a *mythos*. For example, the sun, line, and cave passages of the *Republic* contain the analogy, good : *noesis* :: sun: vision. This has significance for interpreting the image of the cave. Also, the metaphor of stripping in the *Gorgias* 523e and *Republic* 611d is further elaborated to become the central motif of the judgment *mythoi* of the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*. In this case, *mythos* enacts indeed the philosophical stripping or unburdening of one's soul via a purgation of accumulated misperceptions and evils. Furthermore, the *techne* analogy in the *Statesman*, the metaphor of the body as the prison of the soul in the *Phaedo*, and the mathematical metaphors and images in the *Republic* and *Timaeus* all have a status and function that are crucial to the understanding and interpretation of Plato's *mythoi*.

Secondly, if metaphor and analogy lead into *mythos* and if metaphor and analogy are part of the advance of dialectic, we can understand how *mythos* occurs in the context of philosophical *logos*. In the last chapter, it was shown how *logos* and *mythos* interpenetrate and are interdependent in such a fashion that we cannot always, in every case, conclude that either one of them is subordinate to the other.<sup>1</sup> *Logos* and *mythos* may function as complementary or parallel, or they may be integrally a part of a revolving sphere of dialogues that seeks to apprehend some truth concerning the direction and range of our



souls' experiences (*pathea*). The very existence of such an ordered, circular revolution is made possible by the metaphorical and analogical character of *mythos*, which allows for a movement and a linking between individual, *polis*, and cosmos, between the immediately known and the mediately known and the unknown, between the was, is, and not-yet, between the particular, immanent good, just and beautiful and the universal, transcendent Good, just, and beautiful.<sup>2</sup> In the case of *logos* and *mythos*, to belittle or exaggerate one or the other (in the name of rationalism or mysticism) is to forsake the whole for one of its parts.

Previous commentators have either decided to consider Plato's *mythoi* separately in abstraction from the dialogue (and the *logos* of that dialogue) in which these *mythoi* occur (e.g., the tendency of J. A. Stewart<sup>3</sup>), or they have concluded that Plato's *mythoi* are mere playful ornaments to express to the nonphilosophical multitude what has already been achieved dialectically and philosophically. There are also those commentators, who believe that Platonic *mythoi* are allegories hiding certain esoteric truths that non-philosophers are not eligible to know and understand.<sup>4</sup> Many of the major commentators on these *mythoi*<sup>5</sup> have to some degree philosophically (as if good rationalists and/or modern-day Aristotelians) categorized and classified the *mythoi* according to their content. Thus, such classificatory schemes designate Plato's *mythoi* to be eschatological, aetioloical or genetic, historical, anthropological, political, ethical, allegorical, speculative or cosmological or parascientific. In fact, it originally was my intention to provide such a classificatory scheme of my own, albeit it would be difficult to exceed these previous labors. Everyone has, of course, noted that such classifications overlap regarding most of Plato's *mythoi*. Apparently, this has not dissuaded anyone concerning the appropriateness of their schema given Plato's intentions when resorting to *mythos*. Yet, such classifications tend to exclude a grouping of all the *mythoi* together as a unified whole.<sup>6</sup> To classify or to categorize is to pull apart, to analyze according to isolated, dominant characteristics, and to divide the treatment of the *mythoi* neatly into convenient chapters or sections of a chapter.<sup>7</sup> This may result in examining *mythos* unmythically—that is, statically and externally like a scientist examining the physical parts of a biological specimen.<sup>8</sup> Or better yet, the philosopher becomes a lepidopterist, who collects and euthanizes butterflies (concepts and theories) in order to pin them to their display board. At issue is what it means to do “philosophy,” narrowly and exclusively or broadly and inclusively.

Having no desire merely to duplicate what others have done at length and being troubled by the consequences of treating Platonic *mythoi* with ready-made, deadening classifications or specific, dichotomous attributes, allow me to present what can be called a natural spherical grouping of Platonic *mythoi* (see appendix A). Before clarifying precisely what such a grouping of *mythoi*

constitutes, some preliminary matters will be covered, all of which will properly lead to such a natural, spherical grouping of *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus.

## THE GROUPING OF PLATONIC *MYTHOI* GIVEN THE SOUL'S FLOW AND PLAY/DYNAMICS VIA *MYTHOS*

Although the idea of the natural grouping of Platonic *mythoi* struck me before reading Schleiermacher's *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato*, it was a most welcome discovery to learn that Schleiermacher himself long ago made the attempt to group the whole array of Plato's dialogues naturally. Schleiermacher was not specifically concerned with grouping Plato's *mythoi*, but he did enunciate the principle of grasping the whole or the unity of Plato's dialogues<sup>9</sup>. Schleiermacher opposed the application of possible external criteria for compartmentalizing Plato's dialogues, while also rejecting the notion that the dialogues were fragmentary, concerning only particular subjects of inquiry. Instead, every dialogue is a whole in itself, and there are natural sequences and necessary relations between dialogues.<sup>10</sup> Certain dialogues reciprocally illustrate one another.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the form of the dialogues is inseparable from its subject or content. Specifically, this meant for Schleiermacher that the dialogues are a mime for the "original mode of acquisition," whereby the readers and participants are driven and thus striven (externally and internally) to come to know spontaneously and inwardly what is being investigated and sought.

One may have reservations as to the success of Schleiermacher's project of ordering the Platonic dialogues, since he was too frequently overly concerned with chronological evidence as a major determinant. Also, he tended to search for a developmental order to Plato's dialogues whereas, as Shorey points out<sup>12</sup>, there is no reason why this should be a guiding or decisive criterion for understanding Plato's dialogues. In addition, one may question the principle upon which Schleiermacher grounded his natural grouping of the dialogues. He held that the order of the dialogues depended on the nature of knowledge.<sup>13</sup> This epistemological interest or principle arguably had the effect of narrowing Schleiermacher's understanding of the main purpose of Plato's *mythoi*, namely, "to excite his readers to a spontaneous origination of ideas."<sup>14</sup> Consequently, *mythos* becomes subordinate to the dialectical apprehension of the ideas: for Schleiermacher "a subject is not seldom anticipated mythically which does not appear until later in its scientific (*epistemic*) form."<sup>15</sup> A specific instance for Schleiermacher is the doctrine of ideas which passes, apparently without loss, from a mythic to a scientific exposition. Likewise, Schleiermacher considers the charioteer *mythos* of the *Phaedrus* to be

for the most part an addition to the pomp of the whole dialogue and perhaps decorative.<sup>16</sup> Certainly Plato's *mythoi* (especially the *Phaedrus mythos*) may be understood as a *via media* toward the noetic apprehension of the ideas, but it remains to be seen whether *mythos* has a contribution of its own, which is not reducible to some rational, analytic, and doctrinal comprehension of the ideas.

It is important to spend a considerable amount of time with Schleiermacher because he does exemplify to a degree what has been a powerful and dominant standard in Platonic interpretation, namely, that Plato's achievement as a philosopher centers exclusively on his theory (contemplation?) of ideas. This highly, if not solely, rationalistic, essentialistic bias needs modification. Schleiermacher himself moves away from such an exclusive emphasis when he acknowledges that *mythos* is interwoven with philosophical exposition and that there is a remainder left over that is "vividly mythical" after the mythic passes into the scientific.<sup>17</sup> But there is no explanation of what this "vividly mythical" is. In fact, Schleiermacher expresses a skepticism and ambiguity about Plato's *mythoi*. "Myth rests quite on the boundary between the Natural and the Supernatural," yet Schleiermacher wonders if this is foreign to Plato's basic intentions.<sup>18</sup> Also, mythical elements in Plato are not repeated, if they are philosophically and dialectically solved in a later dialogue.<sup>19</sup> This contradicts a treatment of Plato's dialogues as a whole and a unity, since Platonic *mythos* seems to be some foreign, disposable body. At another point, Schleiermacher allows tales an unfathomable depth representing the inward form of things and the true history of the world.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps only the uncertain and the indefinite can be graphically explained or illustrated mythically.<sup>21</sup> These comments by Schleiermacher are suggestive, but not developed.

More important as a principle of interpretation, Schleiermacher asserts that anyone who studies Plato, the philosophical artist,<sup>22</sup> should be aware of "how the gradual development and molding of the Platonic myths form one fundamental myth."<sup>23</sup> Without having to accept any theory of gradual artistic development and molding, we can be encouraged to try to grasp the Platonic *mythoi* into a "fundamental *mythos*," albeit in principle the centrality of the *Republic* for Schleiermacher and its close connections with the *Timaeus* would be the most likely Platonic expression of such a fundamental myth.<sup>24</sup>

According to what principle or along what grounds can Plato's *mythoi* be naturally grouped, while at the same time being true to their mythical character? The nature of this question dictates that the defining characteristics of the mythical be provisionally determined as much as is possible at this stage on the way to presenting what may be defended as a natural grouping of the *mythoi* along a dynamic continuum within a revolving sphere. For this reason, the spherical image (with the *Timaeus* in mind) contains the philosophic grouping of Platonic dialogues, with the *Republic* (*Politeia*) in

the center. Originally, about forty years ago, I imagined the Platonic *mythoi* corpus to be on a hierarchical, linear, progressive continuum, including all the *mythoi* from lesser to greater, from the magisterial (heuristic) to the pupillary (indispensable, nonreductively pointing to the beyond). *Mythos* constitutes a play and a flow, a *dynamis* (a common term found throughout the Platonic dialogues, meaning “function, power, potential, ability, the possible and capable, etc.”) and occurring in the *Timaeus* fifty-three times. No longer do I visualize Platonic philosophic *mythoi* to be organized in a linear continuum. Instead they are spherically situated, based on Plato's own understanding (see *Timaeus* 30a–b, 32c–37c). There is a chart in appendix A showing how the key Platonic mythical dialogues may be grouped or clustered, like stars in the cosmic firmament.

The ing-ing goes round and round continuously and orderly, searching, inquiring, striving, struggling, seeing and knowing, playing, loving, reasoning, wondering, purifying, collecting and dividing, contemplating, beholding, mythologizing, and so on, all true to the verbal, participle language of Plato often turned inappropriately into nouns (dogmas) in translation. The drama of the soul is the journey of the soul, preferably not alone, but in some *polis* (or mini-*polis* substitute) of friends. This journey is vitalized by the dominant symbol (so perspicaciously discovered by Eric Voegelin<sup>25</sup>), namely our in-between condition, the *metaxy*, an adverb ordinarily in Greek that goes along with many prepositions such as through (*dia*), upward (*ana*), and downward (*kata*). The ana-logical interrelationship of soul, *polis* and cosmos (centrally found in the *Republic* 368e, 435e, 509a–b, 592b) pervades this spherical, revolving paradigm (*Timaeus* 19c). This does justice to the Platonic corpus and the political drama of the soul tensionally betwixt our deficient mortal, earthly existence and the immortal, heavenly, superabundant realm, neither of which are resting places in this life for the betwixt, earthly soul.

Since there can be no definitive and final conclusions about the chronology of Plato's dialogues and because Plato most likely revised his dialogues over time, it seems wiser (and truer to Plato) to focus on the substantive, philosophical content, which also is not definitive and final, if you understand Socratic/Platonic philosophy as the ever-ongoing love of wisdom. Let us heed Plato's warnings in Letters VI and VII that he never wrote down his philosophical teaching (which the Tübingen school variously has taken to the limit).<sup>26</sup> We must not dogmatize anything in Plato's dialogues; it is all up-in-the-air dialectically and mythically, remaining true to the human condition of becoming-unto-being, and the ongoing inquiry (ing-ing), hoping for a flash (*exaiphanes*) of intelligibility (*noesis*) in our heightened consciousness. Events and interlocutors may be important (but not decisive) in Plato's dialogues,<sup>27</sup> but they do not terminally ground Plato in what dynamically grounded him, namely the search (*zetema*) for intelligibility (*noesis*) and the

destiny (*moira*) of the human soul necessarily in some *polis*, among friends, toward the Good, and in light of an ordered cosmos.

Analogy (a kind of affinity in likeness along with possibly greater dissimilarity paradoxically) permits us to connect by degree and scope, if not to avoid an unbridgeable breach, divide, abyss between mortal and divine, becoming and being, difference and sameness, the immanent and the transcendent. We need to avoid assuming we can attach ourselves to one or the other poles of this tensional in-between, or even break this all-too-human tension. Kinship (*suggeneais*) and communion (*koinonia*) can be experienced (*pathos*) and acted upon (*pragma*). At this point, it is difficult to avoid acknowledging and discussing the analogy of being (existence) despite only intimations in Plato's ontology. Within the sphere, the *Republic* is at the living center because it is the most fully palpating in content dialogue. There is the analogical epistemology of the divided line, the offspring analogy of the sun and its radiance, the depths of the cave image (analogy), the analogical (like but unlike) *aporia* defining justice, the educational *philia* of Socrates with Thrasymachus, Adiemantus, and Glaucon, the cosmology of the *mythos* of Er, and so on. The *Republic* certainly is no manifesto, unless one imagines a manifesto that automatically self-destructs before our eyes (whenever will philosophers be king or kings philosophers, and does anyone really have a firm, definitional grasp on what justice really is)? Nor is the *Republic* grossly a PR job<sup>28</sup> for Plato's Academy, although the best characterization of the *Republic* is that it is a dialogic development of the curriculum of Plato's Academy, about to be founded, whereby everyone over the age 10, namely all adults/parents, will be expelled. Think of *Lord of the Flies*, but with Socrates present and better prepared than orderly, custom-based, English gentlemen to balance courage with moderation. Moses leading the stiff-necked Jews into the wilderness of exile from Egypt had a similar paideutic problem.

There are four clusterings of dialogues around the center, the *Republic*. Immediately below and attached to the *Republic* are the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. Educational dialogues are directly below to the right: *Cratylus*, *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Protagoras*, *Theaetetus*, and *Sophist*. There are the Socratic dialogues directly below to the left: *Ion*, *Charmides*, *Lysis*, *Euthyphro*, *Phaedo*, and *Apology*. Above to the left are the erotic dialogues: *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Epistles*. Above to the right are the most aspirational dialogues: *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *the Critias*. The contents of this sphere and the revolving sphere itself are analogically a living creature dramatically in motion, ascending and descending. These dialogues are represented in the divine banquet, which portrays the procession of the reformed Olympian gods encircling the feast.

Unavoidably, in the last chapter much was said about the fundamental characteristics of *mythos*. This will be to some extent repeated and extended for the sake of examining and clarifying the dynamic nature of *mythos*.

Accordingly, the question before us, to use an example, is whether the *Phaedo* or the *Republic* as a whole are mythical dialogues, rather than dialogues which just have at least one discernible, full-fledged *mythos* at the end. To a limited extent this question has been already considered, insofar as the principle of interpretation has been established that one does not rend the *mythoi* from their context. The context in which *mythoi* occur is the dialectical movement of *logos*, the frequent occurrence of metaphor and analogy, which are integrally related to *mythoi*, and the actual, political drama of deeds (*erga*) that occur within the dialogues. Nevertheless, it is proper and important to consider what Plato explicitly states about *mythos* in those passages where the term “*mythos*” has appeared. Also, in order to understand its status and function, we should approach *mythos* by undercovering the basis for Plato's own understanding of what *mythos* is and the way in which Plato sought to have *mythos* interpreted. It is only reasonable in interpreting Plato's *mythoi* to be guided by Plato's own method of interpretation as far as this is possible.<sup>29</sup> (See appendix B for some unhelpful, occlusive hermeneutical approaches.)

From the start, Plato must confront *mythos* as a given—that is, as a compendium of traditional stories embedded, in various degrees, in the Greek soul as part of their cultural heritage. This conventional, mythical stock can neither be entirely dismissed politically, nor entirely accepted philosophically. Voegelin reads the *Epinomis* to be a credible warning from Plato that we should not destroy (demythologize) the traditional myths and leave the *demos* bereft and possibly worse off.<sup>30</sup> In one respect, you could say that Plato's strictures against poetry in the *Republic* wipe the slate clean of most of the traditional, poetical accumulations (*Republic* 501a), preparing the way for Plato's philosophic *mythoi*. On the other hand, the *mythos* of metals and the *mythos* of Er respectively can be related (compared and contrasted) to Hesiod's Five Ages and Homer's Odysseus descending to Hades to interview the dead. If Plato does not engage in a clean sweep of the traditional *mythoi* from the Greek imagination (as if he were some modern, secularizing debunker or analytical philosopher), then he must have some justification and some measure for inclusion and exclusion of the Greek mythical tradition.<sup>31</sup> In the first chapter, we examined the importance of what is commonly understood as the basis for developing metaphors and analogies. Likewise, with *mythoi*, certain established understandings, traditional symbols, common modes of making connections, accepted beliefs and popular opinions are given to characterize a people and a particular political order. Hence the political philosopher begins with a persuasive and argumentative effort to elaborate or buttress, to revise or rectify or convert, such given, conventionally held beliefs and opinions (see *Statesman* 272c–d and *Republic* 379a).

There are numerous instances of the tension of the political philosopher vis-à-vis a particular political order given its traditional *mythoi*. Most

fundamentally such *mythoi* are long, plausible stories, roundabout narratives, the consequence of people in *poleis* having the leisure to amuse themselves (*Critias* 110a). The lengthy and playful nature of *mythoi* make them apparently uncritical, childish, and not serious, in sum, irrelevant and/or at odds with philosophic advancement. Worse than this, traditional *mythoi* may be scandalous, such as the case of anthropomorphically projecting wanton and hubristic behavior on the gods, which in turn can become an excuse for similar human behavior.<sup>32</sup> If such *mythoi* are fundamentally lacking in any seriousness (never mind the extreme case of perverse *mythoi*), then the political philosopher will ignore them as mere harmless forms of idleness; or she/he could scourge them as a form of distracting indolence. *Mythoi* do penetrate the souls of those who indulge them. Thus, they become a form of advice or counsel (*Laws* 790c) for individual action, being representative of a political order in its relation to the gods (*Critias* 120d), as well as having something to do with the order and government of a regime (*Laws* 712a, 752a). The lawgiver takes seriously the importance of *mythos* regarding any political founding and the oracular power of persuasion that can be exercised through *mythos* (see *Republic* 378e, *Statesman* 304c, *Gorgias* 493c–d, *Laws* 663d–e, 712a, 927d, *Critias* 113a–b).

But *mythos* is even more than a matter of persuading and nurturing the general populace. The problem of the rambling length of such stories can be accommodated with the remark that length may be necessary and better than any other alternative the dialectician has when trying to discover the truth of reality (*Statesman* 286e–287a). A better, briefer way is always desirable, yet this first has to be achieved before one can abandon any discourse, mythical or not, because of length and indirection. Furthermore, is the childlike character of a person in the presence of *mythos* a belittling denigration of the mythopoeic person rather than a requirement for listening to the *mythos* openly and in amazement?

The listener is asked to become a child again, to be born anew out of the earth (*Statesman* 271b) in order to understand and to participate in the revolutions of the cosmos. Specifically, in the *Statesman* (272a–275a) this means that we are children of Zeus not Chronos. To confuse the two ages and to commit the great error of mistaking kingship in the age of Chronos with kingship in the age of Zeus is also to fail to understand the different natures of the human flock (the children) in each age (*Statesman* 275b–c). Is it not an integral part of our human condition that we are but children or puppets (*Laws* 645b) in the cosmic scheme? Is *anamnesis* or recollection a process of returning to beginnings symbolized by becoming a child again (not “literally” acting like a child), but stripping one’s soul of accretions, and being born again?

These questions cannot be answered conclusively until we examine in depth particular *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus. For now, we are exploring

the dimensions of *mythos* that come to the surface when the term “*mythos*” appears in the Platonic corpus in order that we may reach some conclusion about the nature of *mythos*. The playfulness of *mythos* is not simply its childishness or non-seriousness. *Mythos* is not to be simply taken at face value nor dogmatically “literalized.” *Mythos* is meant to engage its hearers in a play of symbols that analogically directs souls beyond their meager, all-too-likely routine, habitual lives.<sup>33</sup>

There are other reasons why we are like children before *mythos*. Very frequently Plato introduces a *mythos* as something heard long ago from the ancient past. (That something has been heard *ex akoues*, see *Hippias Major* 285e–286a, *Laws* 804e, *Statesman* 268e, 269a–b, *Phaedo* 61d–e, *Timaeus* 21acd, and that it is of old, *palion*, see *Laws* 719c, 804e, 865d, *Symposium* 195b, *Statesman* 268e, *Timaeus* 20d–e, 21a–d.) This implies remembering or recollecting something we had contact with metaphorically long ago when we were very young, civilizationally. In other words, what we have heard has a source outside ourselves, which can become a part of ourselves, but only as a kind of revived memory or recollection. This experience of recollecting requires some kind of distinct, discriminating, symbolic objectification (about which more will be said in the next chapter). The important point is that we are not solely the authors or originators of *mythos*<sup>34</sup>, yet *mythoi* do naturally come to us at certain moments of experience (see *Phaedo* 60b–62b). The Muses are called upon in this great effort of recollecting, because we are also calling upon others, not just ourselves, to help us partake in the story's truth that comes through *mythos*. In telling a *mythos* we are telling a fiction in words (*Republic* 376d–378e), as well as a falsehood regarding what may be conventionally held to be true. Twice Socrates catches himself (once with the help of his *daimon*) shamefully, ironically telling questionable tales/speeches: in the *Phaedrus* (243c) when Socrates shamefully praises the non-lover and in the *Theatetus* (45eff.) when Socrates impersonates Protagoras and his belief that knowledge is perception. Yet we are compelled to tell the truth (*Phaedrus* 237aff.) and follow the story much like children who want to hear it over and over again. The image (*eikon*) scenario of the cave in the *Republic* comes to mind.

*Mythoi* confront us with the problem of their truthfulness. This question of the truthfulness of any *mythos* unavoidably is connected with the way in which a particular *mythos* is interpreted (see *Phaedrus* 229c–d, 243a–b, and *Laws* 941b). This problem of interpretation puts Plato and Socrates in conflict with both popular understanding and the sophistic, rationalistic/utilitarian treatment of *mythos*. Are *mythoi* just useful, edifying fictions (*Republic* 382d and *Laws* 663d)? Or does the purpose and end of *mythos* speak to our tragic existential condition (*Cratylus* 408c)? Is this even transcended when *mythos* speaks to the truth of the soul (*Republic* 382a–e) and the truth of



reality (*Gorgias* 523a), albeit through the fictions of conventional words and traditional mythic events and symbols (*Republic* 382a–e)? We cannot ignore the meaning and implications of this ontological, experiential reference to the truth of reality (see *Statesman* 286e–287a and *Gorgias* 523a).<sup>35</sup>

In summation, we have uncovered the following problematical characteristics of *mythos*: it is uninterruptedly and uncritically long; it is traditional, ancient, and heard or recollected from some outside source arising within one's soul; it has a childlike, playful character, and befits and encourages childlike listeners;<sup>36</sup> it partakes of the dynamism of becoming, the dimension of time; it is a plausible, likely story, but in some way a truthful narrative account;<sup>37</sup> and it is meant to be a persuasive model for deeds<sup>38</sup> that enable the realization of a well-founded political order. *Mythos* constitutes a people especially since it is a guide for public political action. *Mythos* has an essential sacred dimension relating humans to the divine in the context of a divinely formed cosmos, which has reference analogically to political and psychic order. These characteristics of *mythos* enormously stretch the boundaries of *mythos*, intimating a boundlessness (*apeiron*) to *mythos*, or a *mythos* within the boundlessness. On the other hand, *logos* partakes of the limited (*peras*). The *apeiron* implies the abyss and meaningless chaos, all of which Plato sought to avoid via his experience of *noesis*, a determinant, limited intelligibility. Still, is the divine a marker of unbounded, infinite intelligibility, or is this incoherent, nonsensical, chaotic nothingness?

Both the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* begin with the problem of retelling and recollecting something that has happened a long while ago about which there have been only hearsay accounts. In the case of the *Symposium*, there is even the problem of transmission from those who were present to those who will narrate the account or story but were not themselves present. Plato pays due respect to the Greek oral tradition. Both the omnipresence of death in the *Phaedo* and the lively, erotic drives of the *Symposium* call for mythical, dramatic performances. Socrates quite explicitly in the *Phaedo* 61e states that it is fitting for his friends and him to tell stories about the next world given his approaching death and the unknown. Likewise, the *Republic* and the *Laws* also can be considered as a whole to be mythical (and certainly not treatises or manifestos), because symbolically they witness the paths to be taken and the deeds required if a political order, not antithetical to the perfection of different kinds of humans, is to be founded at least in speech (*logos*), if not in actual practice.

Certainly, it is worthwhile to consider Josef Pieper's strong objections to such a loose, broad, and boundless understanding of the boundaries of Platonic *mythos*. For Pieper the truly mythical involves happenings that occur between the divine and human spheres, be it human or divine action.<sup>39</sup> *Mythos* is not reducible to anything else, especially not reducible (like an allegory)

to some external, solely rational, clarifying purpose.<sup>40</sup> Most notably, Pieper completely separates the metaphorical and the figurative from the mythical on the supposition that the former has only instrumental value. Consequently, Pieper argues that the cave image in the *Republic* is not a *mythos*. Neither is the Ring of Gyges story, nor is Diotima's teaching truly mythical (but in both these cases Plato calls them "*mythoi*"). They all serve other purposes and are not mythical affirmations in their own right. The true *mythoi* are the likely story of the production of the cosmos in the *Timaeus*, Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*, and the eschatological *mythoi* that conclude the *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Phaedo*. Furthermore, Pieper emphasizes the fragmentary character of *mythos* in Plato primarily because the mythical tradition is no longer intelligible to Plato as a whole. In conclusion, Pieper believes that Plato lacks the power to reenact this mythical whole (or compactness as Voegelin would call it), as if that should and could be Plato's intent, when Plato presents a reformed, philosophic *mythos*.

For all his valuable insights about the essential characteristics of *mythos* in Plato, Pieper has examined the nature of *mythos* in a historical context wherein, no doubt, traditional *mythos* has withered and fragmented given the differentiation of philosophy from traditional religion. This historical occurrence is not necessarily relevant to an understanding of the nature of *mythos*. In other words, the irreducible character of *mythos* in itself in mythopoeic times can be returned to or held up as a standard. It partakes of something universal that preserves the irreducible character of *mythos* for a philosopher such as Plato. Nevertheless, with Plato we have philosophic *mythos*, not at all reducible or particularly beholden to historical, traditional *mythos*. *Mythos* can be irreducible without having the property of absolute compactness and autonomy, independent of the critical inquiry (*logos*) of the philosopher. In fact, the truthfulness of *mythos* regarding the soul and ontic order require the critical assessment (dialectical *logos*) of the philosopher.

Furthermore, *mythos* may take on the appearance of being an outer shell within which philosophical *logos* occurs (in this sense a whole dialogue may be formally mythical), while still remaining indispensable as a means of communication and a direction toward the transcendent. As was argued previously in chapter 1 concerning magisterial metaphors, the resort to *mythos* may be unavoidable and indispensable, while the given *mythos* itself is dispensable or contingent. Pieper's conclusions about what is truly mythical are important and acceptable regarding that content (the between and the beyond) which is integrally mythical. However important the experiential content of *mythos* and *mythos* as a symbol-bearing reality, we cannot afford to ignore how *mythos* functions, which is to raise questions concerning why *mythos* is resorted to and what the status of *mythos* is as a form of discourse. In conclusion, Pieper's radical narrowing of the "truly mythical" rests on

the assumption that there is no one fundamental *mythos*, which as a whole unites the many fragments or diverse *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus. It might be more convenient to narrow down and to classify what is mythical in an unadulterated sense, but much will be lost (as immediately will be shown) by not examining the whole flow of mythical expression in the Platonic corpus, a realistic, tenuous drama of the human soul.

In the presence of this confusion of responses to what *mythos* represents as well as the distressing confusion of many various kinds of stories and *mythoi* that confront us as if we were children (*Sophist* 242c and *Timaeus* 23b), Plato evidently wants to establish some uniform standard regarding *mythos* that will make *mythos* representative of what is truthful. An example of this tendency occurs in the *Statesman* 269b:

Well, all these stories and others still more remarkable have their source in one and the same event or experience (*pathous*), but in the lapse of ages some of them have been lost and others are told in fragmentary and disconnected fashion. But no one has told the event or experience (*pathous*) which is the cause of them all, and so I must tell it now; for that will help us to make clear the nature of the king.

Thus, follows the great cosmological, aetiological *mythos* of the *Statesman*. This is solid textual evidence that Plato himself understood his *mythoi* to have basic, foundational experiences (*pathea*) in common. This does not imply some one source for *mythos* in the sense of an idea or form that would utterly subordinate *mythos* to *logos* proper. Rather *mythoi* are representative of common, central experiences (*pathea*) and/or events that are the root cause of all particular *mythoi* and mythical experiences. Clearly, this is the starting point for Voegelin's exegesis of Plato's philosophic *mythos*.

Given an understanding of *mythos* in Plato from the perspective of taking into account all the particular *mythoi* including their dialogic context, the following natural pattern presenting *mythos* as a continuous and fundamental whole in Plato can be delineated. First of all, the natural place to begin is with a clarification of the problem of *mythos*. Plato cannot ignore two such problems. On one hand, there is traditional *mythos* which is critically considered in the *Ion*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic*. On the other hand, there is the sophistic interpretation and manipulation of *mythos* in the *Protagoras*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*. In this way, we can ascertain what kind of mythical expression Plato rejects and what constitutes false *mythos*. On this basic level Plato does not just radically break with *mythos*, but must respond with a counter *mythos* or counter charm (such as the *mythos* of the earthborn and of metals in the *Republic*, but also the *eros mythoi* in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*), which at a minimum is appropriate to the conventions and traditions of non-knowers.

Secondly, there are *mythoi* that essentially are conversion (*periagoge*) *mythoi*—that is, in the act of acquiring knowledge (the *Meno* and the *Republic*) or being erotically motivated (the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*). These *mythoi* are elaborated in order to speak to or about individual souls in the midst of a choice or a conversion crisis that becomes definitive of whom they will be. Note the *Theaetetus* 176e–177c for what it means to live one pattern (*paradeigmeton*) of life as opposed to another.

Thirdly and lastly, there are judgment and foundational *mythoi* inseparably representative of psychic, political, and cosmic order—for example, the *mythoi* found at the end of the *Republic*, and in the *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*. This kind of *mythos* is a way of representing the political and cosmic orders with analogical reference to the order of the soul. Within this political and cosmic context, a *mythos* may also be a judgment of the chosen, lived nature of an individual soul. The relating of the psychic, political, and cosmic requires (as will be shown) analogical, mythical expression.

One dialogue persists throughout this natural continuity or continuum of experiences in *mythoi*, namely, the *Republic*. The *Republic* may be considered a focal point, pivotal to understanding *mythoi* in its entirety in Plato. Thus, the mythical expressions in the *Republic* constitute evidence that there is some more comprehensive, fundamental, natural continuity including the *mythoi* in other Platonic dialogues. This dynamic natural continuity begins with the problem of traditional and sophistic *mythoi*, which is deficient or false *mythoi*, which is but one experience of *aporia* among a slew of aporetic, unsettling experiences ranging from utter alienation to ecstatic vision. Then this somehow leads to the soul's experience of conversion (*periagoge*) in the depths of one's soul followed by a possible ascent to the sun/Good, concluding with the judgment of the soul and the foundation and representation of psychic, political, and cosmic order. Less explicitly than the *Republic*, the same kind of pattern or natural grouping can be found in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Statesman*, and *Laws*. Within this structure or natural grouping, *mythos* can be dealt with interpretatively as a fund of experience (*pathos*) dynamically occurring within the human soul.

*Mythos* naturally forms a dynamic continuum representative of the nature of human soul striving, given such basic, aporetic, human experiences as wonder, death, love, beauty, disorder and order, the parts and the whole, the Good, justice, happiness, alienation, loss, confusion, paradox, the many in the one, and so on. Thus, *mythos* is a form of dynamic participation that elicits meditation upon such experiences in a way that philosophical *logos* or dialectic alone fails to do comprehensively, although *mythos* alone would be lacking qualification and justification, and untethered without philosophical *logos* or dialectic. Examining *mythoi* naturally elaborated as a whole enables one to reflect on *mythos* itself, its status and function rather than just

particular *mythoi* of apparently only localized or contingent significance. Furthermore, the treatment of *mythos* as some static and dogmatic teaching must be avoided and can be avoided by keeping alive the dynamic, boundless, restless potential (*dynamis*) of *mythos*. Thus, the opening of the soul never should be closed by rationalistic or theological dogma (fixation) and ossification. Easier said than avoided.

There is the tendency of commentators to abstract Plato's *mythoi* from their context or to consider Plato's *mythoi* as primarily decorative in the context in which they occur. A natural, grouping of the Platonic *mythoi* in the context of the whole Platonic corpus can avoid both these alternatives. This grouping is natural because it portrays a realistic, existential drama of experiences regarding the nature of the human soul that integrally unfolds as might be expected in a well-ordered story.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, the *mythoi* that disclose the experience of conversion and ascent would be naturally prior to *mythoi* which portray the judgment of souls and the foundation of psychic, political, and cosmic order. And prior even to the experience of conversion would be the radical critique of traditional and sophistic *mythos*, which could be understood as a propaedeutic for conversion (*periagoge*). Also prior to conversion (a reorientation) would be ever-abiding, restless, aporetic experiences that haunt the human soul.

This is not to deny that a prior experience of cosmic order could generate an experience of conversion and ascent, as well as a break with traditional and sophistic *mythos*. This initial cosmic experience of order, however, could only be naturally fulfilled by the sequence or continuum presented here. My point is not that there is some mythical drama that proceeds inexorably. One could break with traditional and sophistic *mythos* and choose logical positivism as a professional way of life. Or one could experience conversion and ascent, but fail to achieve or fulfill this experience in terms of psychic and cosmic order. In the *Republic mythos* of Er, the souls returning from the heavens to be reincarnated make fateful, sometimes damaging choices for their next way of life, because they were only habituated, not philosophically converted, regarding the heavens (including the Good beyond being). They were passing spectators not deep meditators. Indeed, the human charioteer in the *Phaedrus mythos* falls short because his/her wings do not fully grow to have sufficient feathers. This mythical drama has a coherent, apprehendable whole and natural sequence worth pursuing. This mode of approaching Plato's *mythoi* is defensible on the grounds that it provides access to Plato's *mythoi* as a whole in a way that allows the play of symbols in the *mythoi* to disclose the depth of varying experiences conveyed through *mythos*.

Yet, it might be said, Plato never composed a writing that simply elaborated a fundamental *mythos* in the way proposed here. This is true for the most part, although the *Republic* primarily (and some other dialogues as well)

does have a structure roughly conformable to this treatment here (see *Republic* 376d, where Socrates states the *Republic* as a whole could be considered a *mythos*). In Books II and III of the *Republic* three traditional *mythoi* are criticized. There is nothing like the sophistic myth of Protagoras (to be considered shortly) in the *Republic*, but Glaucon's use of the Gyges story does have a typically sophistic argument behind it concerning human nature. Next in the *Republic* comes the *mythos* of the earthborn and humans composed of different metals. This is an origin and foundation *mythos* with a political reference, but only an implicit cosmic reference. Socrates notes that this *mythos* will not be easily believed, but something like it is required to preserve a sense of brotherhood and equality (all persons are earthborn) in order to gain acceptance for inequality (persons who are of different metals). The success of this *mythos* rests upon something else, and it is meant to function more as a persuasive traditional *mythos* for Athenians. (For Americans, there is our unique, mythical, and living worship of two documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, filling in our *psyche*, for having no "Long live the King or Queen.") For the many to believe it would require the sanction of tradition, but for the philosopher to endorse it would require the support of *logos*. Such tenuous support can be found in the *Republic* regarding justice.

Thus, the conversion and ascent image of the cave is the decisive, affirmative starting point. Such a conversion experience means a definite (but not necessarily absolute) break with convention and tradition and is the beginning of philosophical education. Finally, the *Republic* concludes with the *mythos* of Er, which depicts not only the judgment of the souls according to their lived natures, but also the cosmological order human souls inhabit. The cosmological order is the analogically greater foundation for the possibility of political and psychic order.

While the *Republic* lends some credence to grouping naturally all the *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus, it still remains the case that Plato never left a work simply representative of the whole function of *mythos*. It would have been dangerously misleading for Plato to have done so. Readers would have assumed that *mythos* contains a whole that is an end in itself, exclusive of the context of dialectical *logos*. *Mythos* could have taken on the appearance of an uncritical autonomy; *mythos* then would be ideology. Consequently, the best treatment of *mythos* strives to avoid such a dangerously uncritical, analgesic immersion in *mythos* in order to be true to Plato's intent. This can be done first by recognizing that *mythos* is not an end or whole in itself, although *mythos* speaks to or about such an end and the whole. That *mythos* leads to such a comprehension of the cosmic whole also requires carefully attending to the dialectical *logos* that either precedes or follows *mythos*. A *mythos* is pre- or sub-rational, if it has *logos* follow or assess it. A *mythos* is supra- or

trans-rational, if *logos* prepares for and demarcates the opening of *mythos*, which goes beyond *logos*. Also, *mythos* may function on the same level as *logos* without being the same thing as *logos*. In this respect, the mythical image of the cave occurs in the context of the divided line and the imagery of the sun, and the relationship of *mythos* and *logos* is complementary and interdependent.

Perhaps another way of making the same point is to say that *mythos* is not an act of knowledge, but *mythos* could be the consequence of a noetic act or the generator of a noetic act or finally the embodiment of such a noetic act. *Mythos* is a carrier that befits our noetic apprehension of the end (be it first principles or the Good) in two ways: (1) our human condition is not autonomous or self-sufficient intellectually; and (2) knowing itself requires more than intellectual abstraction and conceptualization, since knowing means a living, experiencing affinity with the known. In this respect, *mythos* is an indispensable means of communication, indispensable to the noetic act even though *noesis* retains its distinctiveness from *mythos*. Voegelin characterizes the differentiation of *mythos* and *logos* to be respectively ontological luminosity and *noesis* distinct from epistemological, scientific intentionality, two different philosophical languages.

In sum, to assume that either *mythos* or *logos* is the end rather than the way to the end (the beyond, *epekeina*) is to appropriate divinity to oneself.<sup>42</sup> In other words, naturally arranging and elaborating Plato's *mythoi* is for the sake of clarifying the nature of *mythos* according to its own indispensable, but not independent, function. *Mythos* and *logos* (*noesis*) at their best work together and complement one another, be it on the same or different levels. This relationship will not be forgotten when *mythoi* are interpreted in order to reveal their indispensable experiential status and function.

The contexts in which *mythos* is found (the conventional one of traditional *mythos* and sophistic treatments of *mythos* and the philosophic one involving *logos* and the use of metaphors and analogies) need to be related politically<sup>43</sup> to the three audiences of *mythos*. First, there is the audience of non-knowers, the *demos*, who can be distinguished according to two types. One type resists persuasive instruction and is more dissuaded, if necessary, by external command and compulsion, pain, threat of punishment and social stigma. They are least able to differentiate the false *mythoi* from the true *mythoi*, especially when the false *mythoi* appeal to their immediate, biological and perceptual interests (bread and circuses). The other type within the *demos* has judgmental abilities that enable them to be persuaded and habituated regarding that which they understand (but do not know by themselves) to be beneficial and advantageous. The noble lies the philosopher tells in words (but certainly not lies in the soul) are meant for both of these people. In this respect, traditional *mythos* is reformed and sophistic alternatives are eschewed.

The second audience involves those who are learners and potential knowers. They engage actively in pursuing, questioning, and inquiring about fundamental grounds and relevant distinctions. Consequently, magisterial, heuristic *mythoi* function on this level of initiating and provoking learning. Once one comes to know, then the magisterial, heuristic *mythoi* are dispensable in the order of knowing, although they still may be indispensable in the order of learning. They also may remain in one's memory as a valuable source of insight by which they can reenact the learning process for themselves as well as for others.

The third audience consists of those philosophers (lovers of wisdom, not graspers and possessors) who have not by any means stopped learning, but they have become knowers (at least knowing what they do not know, since the more you know the more you know what you do not know), and they continually strive toward the limits of what they can know in order to become wise (*sophia*). Such wisdom requires experience and ageing. And there is a kind of *mythos* that leads to and speaks about these limits. Pupillary *mythoi* are indispensable and irreducible; they are truly philosophic *mythoi*. Regarding this last audience and its philosophic *mythoi*, there does not seem to be any one *mythos* that is purely this kind. The Protagoras *mythos* can be depicted (not without argument)<sup>44</sup> as a false *mythos*, while the *mythos* of the earthborn is called a great lie in words, and the cave image is primarily a magisterial *eikon* consistent with the sun *analogon* of the Good and the epistemological divided line. All of this can and will be argued at length. But, is there something irreducible and not dispensable in experience regarding these last *mythoi* just mentioned? And does it follow that the *mythos* of Er is wholly an irreducible, pupillary, philosophical *mythos*? The decision regarding which *mythos* in the natural grouping of these *mythoi* are pupillary or magisterial cannot be made on the basis of a one-to-one relationship between the natural grouping and the various audiences proper to magisterial and pupillary *mythoi*. To distinguish between pupillary and magisterial *mythoi* is to raise the question of the ontological status of a particular *mythos*, whereas the natural grouping of *mythoi* expresses the dynamic, epistemological function of *mythoi* themselves. It may be the case most of the time that Platonic *mythos* functions on different levels pertaining to different possible audiences. The inquiry here tries to go further than this, seeking to ascertain whether there is a level on which *mythos* is irreducible even for philosophers.

In summation, it should be emphasized that these three kinds of audiences do not represent a political caste system. The history of a person's soul may move without discontinuity from the lowest to the highest kinds of *mythos*. If there were a rupture in this continuity, then, for example, the educational community<sup>45</sup> established by Socrates in the *Republic* as it uses *mythoi* for non-knowers (necessarily including children or potential non-knowers as well as



determined non-knowers or parents) would not be continuous with the finding and educating of those nature, or souls fit to engage in philosophical studies. It is very unlikely that Socrates would have thwarted his essential purpose, namely, the arousal and conversion of souls naturally inclined for philosophy. Logically, this could be avoided if a continuity between the various *mythoi* and philosophical studies were reducible to some non-mythical content that was always consistent with the philosopher's seeking after truth.<sup>46</sup> However, this makes *mythos* a formal artifice, which has no truly integral connection with its content, except that the content remains hidden from those who are not meant or able to hear it. Is it the case that *mythos* goes beyond the limits of what can be said directly and univocally because of the central experiences that are symbolically experienced and open to development within *mythoi*? If so, then such efforts at reducing *mythoi* to the non-mythical destroy any meditation on insights that are inherently mythical in their communication. There is no chance that the philosopher would listen to *mythoi* themselves, instead of destroying them through reduction or allegorization.<sup>47</sup> It is necessary to think in terms of the dramatic history of the soul regarding the status and function (thus the natural continuity) of *mythos*, rather than assuming beforehand that the philosopher presides as some divine manipulator over *mythos*, propagating and dictating *mythoi* of all kinds only for the sake of non-philosophers and aspiring philosophers.<sup>48</sup>

Because of the enormity of any task proposing to examine and interpret all of Plato's *mythoi* (which would also mean, given what was previously stated, including the action and drama of all the dialogues as they relate to particular *mythoi*), instead particular *mythoi* will be selected and examined when judged sufficiently representative of *mythos* naturally grouped as a whole in Plato's dialogues. The remainder of this chapter will primarily deal with the problems of "false *mythos*" in the dialogues *Ion*, the *Republic*, and *Protagoras*.

### The Critique of Conventional and Sophistic *Mythos*

There are three ways of judging the traditional and conventional *mythoi* and poetry of the Greek heritage. First, we will examine an agent of poetry, namely, the rhapsode Ion, who plays the role of telling tales (in this case only Homeric ones) that are meant to inspire audiences. Secondly, we will consider what kind of effect such tales have on audiences that hear them. This will mean examining the mimetic function of poetry. Thirdly, we will see what happens when a sophist like Protagoras decides to tell a tale to suit his own sophistic purposes. In Plato's terms, the rhapsode, the sophist, and their audiences initially constitute the political domain of poetry or tale-telling, since the political integrally involves those interactions and results that occur when people come together in a community.

## The *Ion*

What happens when Socrates confronts Ion, an unrestrained rhapsode of Homeric poetry? The primary problem, according to Ion's own admission, is that Ion falls asleep, and is unable to focus his attention, when anyone or anything other than Homer is being discussed (*Ion* 532b–c). On the other hand, Socrates wants to speak about what poets have in common, which means somehow keeping Ion's attention. Ion resists Socrates' question and answer inquiry and repeatedly threatens to give his standard rhapsodic performance, his shtick so to speak. Socrates will listen to Ion on Ion's own terms only when Socrates has some leisure (*scholē*, *Ion* 530d) for such amusement. As for now, can Socrates carry on a real dialogue with Ion that keeps Ion awake and attentive, but prevents him from giving his monologic spiel?

Keeping Ion awake and interested (yet not his usual, unrestrained self) requires involving Ion with himself and what he does. Socrates appeals to Ion's self-interest—that is, to that boast of his that he is the best of the Homeric rhapsodes. The reader of this short dialogue must be fully aware (unlike Ion) of the ironic/sarcastic severity of Socrates' seeming compliments. For example, Socrates explains that rhapsodes like Ion are part of a magnetic chain of divine inspiration (*entheous*) and possession emanating from gods to poets to rhapsodes. In sum, the rhapsodes are interpreters of interpreters, or interpreters of poets who interpret gods (*Ion* 533d–535a). This prefigures the argument in the *Republic* that contemporary poets are imitators of imitators—that is, they are at a third remove from reality. In this respect, the poets and rhapsodes lack art (*technē*) and knowledge (*epistēmē*) (*Ion* 532c). More bluntly, poets and rhapsodes like Ion lack the power of recognition, of making distinctions and of judging, all of which comes with understanding (*dianoia*, see *Ion* 530c, 531c, 532a–b). Being divinely inspired and possessed means to be out of one's mind (*nous*) or mad (*Ion* 534c, 536d). After this happens Ion seems to sense that the conversation is going against him. Consequently, Ion attempts to give Socrates a display of his supposed art or, in effect, the lack of it truly (*Ion* 536d, 537a).

The key problem of the *Ion* is whether the poets (directly) or the rhapsodes (indirectly) have any art or knowledge of their own. At the end of this dialogue (*Ion* 541d–542b), Ion must choose between being a deceiver, who only speaks as if he had some special art with its own proper content, or being a man graced with divine dispensation. Ion accepts the latter title to be more noble. Ion excludes the possibility that the poet and the rhapsode are noble liars, which would free the divine from any participation in base lies at all. But more relevant to the context of the dialogue, Ion is unable to imagine a way in which poetry and rhapsodic interpretation supervenes all the arts (such as those of the general, the charioteer, the horseman, etc.). Poetry could be

a supervening art in some way ordering all the lesser arts according to some principle. By definition Socrates understands that “every art has been apportioned by god a power of knowing a particular work or function” (*Ion* 537c). Without explicitly suggesting the possibility of a common, supervening, ruling art that unites the different arts so that they serve a common purpose, Socrates admits (this is the only time in this dialogue that Socrates speaks as if he were his own interlocutor) that the poet’s art may be that of the seer (*Ion* 538e–539c). This does not solve Ion’s immediate problem: what is the rhapsode’s art?

Especially burdensome for Ion is the implication that the rhapsode is even worse off than the poet, at a further remove from the divine source of inspiration and existing in a relation of servile dependence. “The poet and the rhapsode are like containers that passively and mindlessly receive their contents from some external source.” The seer may be no more than this. This is a slavish not a ruling art and would more properly serve users (such as the various craftsman, generals, rulers) as opposed to rulers ruling over them (*Republic* 601d–602b). In fact, among humans who are political leaders the seer is likely to be a kind of slave who may or may not be listened to, and who would not want to tell of untoward visions. Nor would he gain gratitude in retrospect for such foreknowledge (see the *Iliad*, I. 6–20). No matter how much Ion wants to contend that the poet and rhapsode can speak knowledgeably about all things (*Ion* 539e), Ion has failed to become aware of the way in which this might be possible without having to claim that he is a know-it-all, jack-of-all-trades, and without becoming a slave to others and to his own work.

The following conclusions may be drawn. Rhapsodes (and possibly poets too) are at best instruments of divine purpose. However, this says nothing about the way the gods are represented. If the gods themselves take on all kinds of attributes and are capable of all kinds of deeds, then this would explain how the rhapsodes and poets can be all kinds of things to all kinds of persons. Implicit in the *Ion* is a radical critique of Greek theology—that is, the Greek account of the gods. This does not necessarily counsel atheism or agnosticism. In fact, in one passage already quoted, Socrates does acknowledge a godly or divine apportionment. Every art has its proper function or work according to that works’ function/power (*dynamis*) of knowing in the order (cosmos) of things. The poet and the rhapsode do not by any means offer a training in the multitude of arts; hence Ion’s *aporia*. But they still might have some educational, service (*therapeia*) function.

Socrates delineates the common subject matter of the poets: war, public and private associations of good and bad persons, the ways of the gods as they associate with one another and with humans, happenings in heaven and in the underworld, and the origins of gods and heroes. In sum, the political and

cosmic dimensions of the world order in which humans and gods associate with one another are the content of traditional poetry and *mythos*. Accordingly, there has been no final dismissal of the political relevance of poetry, even though Ion has been dismissed as an interlocutor. Therefore, we need not conclude that divine inspiration is rejected as irrelevant, as easily as Ion is rejected. What if there is a divine inspiration or madness that can be held accountable to *logos*? In other words, is there a place for divine inspiration, which is a source or beginning for that which *logos* can critically accept or reject? If so, without divine inspiration would there be no beginning, no original insight for *logos* to examine? Secondly, divine inspiration may carry one beyond any *logos*, if only because *logos* has sanctioned the way beyond itself.

Being a good rhapsode requires understanding what the poet originally intended (*Ion* 530c), otherwise the rhapsode fails to be a credible interpreter. Quoting or appealing to poets in itself is not a proper form of argumentation, because it is primarily a rhetorical attempt to impose on the discussion an external, conventional authority, who is not even present to be examined and to partake in the argument. As we have seen with Ion, the rhapsode is mindless. Ion cannot be a model for the interpretation of poetry and *mythos*, nor does Ion represent any kind of defense of poetry and *mythos*, which would be required to justify its place in the political domain. To Ion the conventional authority of the poet becomes an insurmountable barrier preventing self-inquiry and self-examination.

There is this difficulty (*aporia*) reading Platonic dialogues, given the duality of terms, or crudely their unfavorable/bad versus favorable/good dimensions and connotations: see, for example, play, writing, opinion, *mythos*, poetry, *eros*, madness, *polis* (Athenian or *kallipolis*), rhetoric, images, imitations, and so on, as well as certain pairings: sophist/philosopher, body/soul, pleasure/happiness, divine inspiration/*daimonion*, sensible/intelligible, and so on. Dramatic context and the flow of the dialogue are everything. The art of making distinctions (not separations) will be made, and degeneration versus regeneration will be in order. In an overarching sense, Socrates/Plato are pursuing as much clarification as possible, counting on participant readers to likewise qualify and revise their opinions in the direction of knowledge and wisdom. The extraordinary openness and transcendent reach of Platonic discourse should prevent any reduction to simple dichotomies, doctrines, or isms. In this light falls the warnings of the *Seventh Letter* (341d–341e):

But this much I can certainly declare concerning all these writers, or prospective writers, who claim to know the subjects which I seriously study (*spoudazo*), whether as hearers of mine or of other teachers, or from their own discoveries; it is impossible, in my judgement at least, that these men should understand anything about this subject. There does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any

treatise of mine dealing therewith. For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion (*sunousias*) therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul all of a sudden (*exaiphanes*), as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself. Notwithstanding, of this much I am certain, that the best statement of doctrines in writing or in speech would be my own statement; and further, that if they should be badly stated in writing, it is I who would be the person most deeply pained. And if I had thought that these subjects ought to be fully stated in writing or in speech to the public, what nobler action could I have performed in my life than that of writing what is of great benefit to mankind and bringing forth to the light for all men the nature of reality? But were I to undertake this task it would not, as I think, prove a good thing for men, save for some few who are able to discover the truth themselves with but little instruction; for as to the rest, some it would most unseasonably fill with a mistaken contempt, and others with an overweening and empty aspiration, as though they had learnt some sublime mysteries.

### The Republic

The opening of the *Republic* dramatizes this very short-circuiting of true discourse (*logos*) that we find so often in Platonic dialogues (not only *Ion*, but *Theodorus*, *Callicles*, *Laches*, etc.). Four out of five authorities that Cephalus appeals to in his short conversation with Socrates are poets or at least poetical references: an alluded-to proverb (*Republic* 329a), Sophocles (*Republic* 329c–d), a retort of Themistocles (*Republic* 329e–330a), tales about Hades (*Republic* 330d–e), and Pindar (*Republic* 331a). Cephalus has no idea whether the poets speak the truth, especially regarding the after-life. Poetic sayings run through his mind as excuses for his elderly piety. Worse than this, Cephalus does not have the desire in deeds (in words he says differently) to partake in conversation with Socrates as a critical means of examining what the poets say. Cephalus' early exit to purify and atone (to pay the debts he owes) for his earlier life is about the best Plato can justly achieve from traditional poetry and religion on its own terms.

Polemarchus, his energetic son and heir (in more than wealth), enters the conversation with a quote from Simonides the poet: "Justice is to give to each what is owed" (*Republic* 331eff.). Socrates' immediate response is (given the slew of poets that has been thrown at him): what on earth does Simonides mean? Can Polemarchus explain and defend (give an account, *logos*) of Simonides' pithy, unelaborated (no matter how promising) statement? Polemarchus is unable to do so, because of a failure to have the knowledge of being able to differentiate what is owed to real and apparent friends as opposed to real and apparent enemies. If the poet's saying has any truth to it, and certainly Simonides' saying may intend something more than merely the

conventional wisdom of getting along with others who are our true friends, then it will have to be informed by some knowledge that enables us to distinguish different kinds of persons according to their varying functions and excellences (*aretai*).

Both Cephalus and Polemarchus as well as Glaucon (who reminds us of Aeschylus' remarks concerning the suffering wisdom of simple, just persons) and Adeimantus (who mentions Hesiod, Homer, Museaus, Orpheus, and Pindar and the poets in general) are witnesses to the fact that the poets have a strong command on the thoughts, sayings, and deeds of the Greeks (*Republic* 363a–366c). Especially is this the case with Adeimantus who speaks for the fathers that exhort their sons to practice justice, because it will bring good reputation and good standing among the gods. Justice has rewards and apparently is not its own reward. However, the poets have numerous sayings about the difficulty and unpleasantness of being moderate and just, while it is easy and pleasant to be licentious and unjust. In other words, it is only utility, convention, and opinion that counsel justice, and this is particularly applicable to vulnerable, weak persons (*Republic* 364b). The poets say that the gods make virtue difficult by assigning misfortune as well as transient happiness to humans. Homer even states that the gods can be beguiled and bought by prayers and sacrifices.

Rightfully, Adeimantus (the father figure of moderation) asks what will happen to the souls of young men who hear these sayings of the poets. Will they not conclude that justice is a matter of seeming just, whereas they should truly and shrewdly (like foxes) take and get all they can by unjust means? This assumes that they are not exposed in the process. Regarding the gods, there are three possibilities: (1) the gods do not exist; (2) the gods do not care about humans, even if they do exist; (3) the gods can be bought just like humans. Hence it is profitable to seem to be just among humans, to be really unjust clandestinely, and to make absolving sacrifices to the gods in case they do exist (*Republic* 366a–b). Adeimantus will only concede that rare humans who have divine natures, or who are committed to knowledge, will be just willingly. According to Adeimantus, no one including the poets has ever praised justice in its own right to be respectively the greatest good and censured injustice to be the greatest evil for human souls (*Republic* 366e–367a). Does this mean that poetry by its very instruction in human affairs is incapable of comprehending justice in itself, namely, that true justice beyond mere convention and the obvious contingencies of human existence? If so, then all poetry including *mythoi* would be no more than a self-defeating form of discourse. And if only those of divine nature, or those willingly committed to knowledge (i.e., philosophers) pursue justice, then will not poetry only be applicable to all-too-human non-knowers? Can Socrates even resort to the poetical (in *mythos*, analogy, and metaphor) in order to make the case for being just in itself?

The discussion indirectly involving poetry in Books I and II of the *Republic* prepares the way for the critique of poetry in Book III concerning the content of poetry and the political function of the poet. It is assumed that poetry has a political or cultural-educational function, because it is a cultural force that enters the souls of these persons who constitute the Greek people. Will poetry minister to the opinions, desires, and moods of the *demos*? Who will be the judge of poetry? Are there any grounds or norms for judgment? At this juncture, before these kinds of questions, Socrates is in competition (*agon*) not only with other Greek poets such as Aristophanes, but also with the sophists who understand the persuasive, rhetorical value of poetry.<sup>49</sup> It is proper to begin to scrutinize the effects of Greek traditional and conventional poetry and *mythos* at its most formative and most potent stage—that is, when it affects the young in their earliest education. Although the tales told to such youngsters may be only for the immature and for those who cannot be expected to be seekers of knowledge at this point in their life, nevertheless, no matter how reducible such early childhood tales may be to some expository understanding, if not moralistic utility, those tales still have to be judged appropriate or inappropriate, true or false. For Socrates/Plato the stakes are raised: how continuous or discontinuous will such tales be with an educational program that does not thwart the pursuit and love of truth and wisdom among those with the most promising natures.

To know those who have the best natures requires years of educational testing. Human nature is not simply something given and fixed. The standard and end guiding the earliest education of young persons in music and gymnastics is that of the gentleman-citizen, not the philosopher. Of course, this does not mean that those who are raised to be free, decent, courageous, moderate and magnanimous citizens will not be potentially lovers of wisdom. This potentiality or possibility (*dynamis*) in the nature of persons always must be respected. Book V of the *Republic* (see especially 456c–e and 471c–473d) pays great attention to the potentiality for the coming-to-be of philosophers in speech and deed. The dynamics (*dynamis*) of the coming-to-be of the philosopher in the soul and in the city becomes the natural basis for telling stories and using metaphors and analogies. For example, from Book III to Book VII in the *Republic* the following stories, analogies, and metaphors are presented: (1) the bestial, animal analogies as they represent the bodily side of humans (e.g., Thrasymachus enters like a beast; Adeimantus accepts the city of pigs; Glaucon is the noble, dog-like warrior, etc.); (2) the sexual procreation metaphors when they represent an attempt to go beyond the body, to harmonize the body with the soul, and also portray the philosophical-legislator as a mid-wife (the communism of women and children and the child of the Good that Socrates will speak about; see *Republic* 451dff. and 506e–507a); (3) the artist, painter, craftsman analogies, the *polis*-psyche analogy, the tales of the

earthborn and humans of metals, and the ship of state analogy as they represent political problems both conventional and contingent, but also true to the human soul; and (4) the sun, divided line and cave as well as the mathematicians' use of images and models to represent the higher education of the soul striving toward transcendent being and the Good in order to realize wisdom.

There is no need to treat specifically all of these *mythoi*, analogies and metaphors except to indicate that their functioning is due to the relationship that Socrates has to the spirited Glaucon and the moderate Adeimantus and the problem of the coming-to-be or genesis of justice in the city and in the soul. Glaucon and Adeimantus are being educated and tested to their limits. If we could imagine Socrates speaking to himself, one philosopher to another, what would be said? If justice and wisdom and the Good could be contemplated in abstraction exclusive of their tensional participation in the world, then there would be no longer any need for the language of *mythoi*, analogies, and metaphors. For that matter, insofar as *logos* (speech and reason) is an end in itself and not a means, the pure, immediate contemplation of Platonic ideas or forms would be humanly speechless, an incommunicable divine *logos*. In no way should our human existence-in-the-world dismiss the status of that which is—the Good, the beautiful, the true. They remain the end (*telos*) of our ongoing pursuit of perfection. However, rather than grossly, boldly grasping and identifying with this end as if an embodied human were now a god, we more appropriately recognize our tensional participation in this end, since such an end (i.e., the Good) that is the source and the fulfillment of all rational desires and desiring reason. In sum, *mythoi*, analogies, and metaphors are the appropriate languages for our tensional participating, coming-to-be being, especially as it is the case that we remain desiring, erotic, thymotic beings, not actual rational, noetic divinities.<sup>50</sup>

The evidence for this conclusion is Socrates' decision to carry out the genesis of the city (*Republic* 368b–369b) from its incipient basis in human needs (the city of pigs) on to a magnification via analogical representation of the soul in a feverish city, then a militarized guardian city, and finally an imagined rule of philosopher-kings. Consequently, the structure of passages 369c–376c in the *Republic* reveals the appetitive part of the soul (the true and healthy city of pigs), the spirited (*thymoeides*) part of the soul (the guardian dogs in a ready-to-war city) and the lovers of learning and wisdom (the philosophers who can distinguish real friends from enemies). Hence the famous analogy that the *polis* is the *psyche* writ large. Socrates advises that we constantly compare what can be said in speech about the city with what may or may not be found in the human soul. This is a tenuous analogy, since it is the case with any kind of drawing out and expounding of likenesses always threatening to be overwhelmed by unlikenesses. The long and hard road (*Republic* 504a–505b) is required no matter how much we may desire to



transcend the contingency of our human condition. The philosopher's place in the sun (*nous* and *theoria*), only follows after the night of the cave (the art of *phronesis* therein).

Generally, the use of all the different tales, analogies, and metaphors in the *Republic* through Book VII evokes powerful images, which become models for imitation (*mimesis*) in the minds of young persons. Stories about heroes and gods, which by definition will involve images and models for action in speech and in deed, must imitate the true and the whole and more specifically, the virtues of moderation and courage (*Republic* 388c). Furthermore, the development of good dispositions in human souls leads to beautiful harmony within and friendship without, among others (*Republic* 401b–c). Can such imaging and imitating be extended beyond the balancing of moderation and courage to the attainment of justice and wisdom?

There are two ironies in the *Republic* that have to be exposed to get a clear perspective on the status of poetry and its function of imitation (*mimesis*).<sup>51</sup> First of all, a poet like Homer, who does not simply compose straight narrative, remains hidden behind a cast of actors representative of a manifold of human types. The hiddenness of the poet makes him unaccountable (*Republic* 345a–b). But is not Plato also ironically a hidden author who never reveals himself in any of his dialogues?<sup>52</sup> And does Socrates ever really reveal himself? Secondly, for all of Socrates' strictures on *mimesis*, is not Socrates ironically one of the greatest imitators and generators of all kinds and conditions of persons (e.g., the kinds of persons or souls that inhabit the various regimes)? Socrates readily admits he is "a lover of images" (*eikones*, *Republic* 487eff). In sum, we have to ask: can Plato and Socrates be held accountable (as regards *logos*) for their self-presentation as concealed jacks-of-all-imitators?

There is a reason why Plato remains anonymous, as well as a reason for Socrates' indirect, mimetic art. Anonymity points beyond Plato and Socrates, who are particular historical persons, to that end, which all persons strive for its own sake. Is not this same end the final principle and measure for *mimesis*? In Book III of the *Republic* the imitator is held guilty for violating the practical and just dispensation—one person, one art or function. *Mimesis* in the sense of impersonation or miming<sup>53</sup> (as practiced by actors) is rejected as not suitable to a person's function given her/his nature. Who and what are you, if you are constantly playing various roles? Is not limitless license granted to actors who claim not to be responsible for what they imitate and whomever they impersonate? But is there another kind of imitation that is guided or directed by some non-personal, transcending end that befits the philosophical ruler in his/her function of maintaining political order as well as educating potential philosophers? These last two stated functions of the philosophic ruler would explain magisterial and pupillary analogies, metaphors, and *mythoi*. Is not the just and good man, the philosopher, an exemplar for

imitation? Certainly, imitation is inherent in the nature of non-knowers—that is, all children and some adults (see *Republic* 395c–397a). Do not we need to know the potential (*dynamis*) of these non-knowers, if there is to be justice—that is, the right ordering of the soul and *polis*?

Furthermore, in Book X of the *Republic* the imitator is found guilty of being at a third remove from reality, subordinate to the user and the maker of the objects of imitation. Can a case be made for the poetic imitator as a user of images and models for imitation? Quite explicitly, Socrates leaves open the possibility that the poetic imitator is more than a crude copier.

All the same, let it be said that, if poetry directed to pleasure and imitation have any argument to give showing that they should be in a city with good laws, we should be delighted to receive them back from exile, since we are aware that we ourselves are charmed by them. But it is not holy to betray what seems to be the truth. Are not you too, my friend, charmed by it, especially when you contemplate it through the medium of Homer? Very much so. Is not it just for it to come back in this way, when it has made an apology in lyrics or some other meter? Most certainly. And surely, we would also give its protectors, those who are not poets but lovers of poetry, occasion to speak an argument without meter on its behalf, showing that it is not only pleasant but also beneficial to regimes and human life. And we shall listen benevolently. For surely, we shall gain if it should turn out to be not only pleasant but also beneficial. (*Republic* 607c–d)

We have to wonder whether such technological and utilitarian terms such as making and using, as they have reference to beds and couches, are appropriate in some final way to poetry. In the world of technique and skill (*techne*) accorded to technicians and craftsmen, poetry will be subservient to making and usefulness. But does not the best poetry rise above this?<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps Plato would have us understand that poetry itself and the imitative function may point beyond itself regarding the origin and end of the poetical power of imitation.<sup>55</sup> Whether or not a poet hits upon a valuable truth is dependent in the first place on some inspiration or insight, which is not improperly called divine, befitting the unaccountability of its source and its seemingly more-than-human source. But the unaccountability and mystery of a source does not preclude the *logos* of accountability concerning what is said or imitated. Our Muse or our *daimon* could be false; it is not enough to claim simpliciter a supposed divine source or justification.<sup>56</sup> Is not the poet required to interpret his *daimonic* experience, and should not the poet be held to account for such interpretation? Inspiration and insight itself may be beyond rational understanding, but its products or offspring can be held rationally accountable to what would or would not befit its supposed divine source. The same holds true for the prophet and prophecy. (All of this rests on the assumption that what the poet imitates is more than what he

has been brought up to imitate—that is, something more than conventions. See *Timaeus* 19d–e.) In this respect, we can readily understand how Socrates is aware of the spell or charm of poetic *mimesis* (*Republic* 607c–d).

The whole matter of poetic *mimesis* depends on the poet's ability, or someone else's in lieu of the poet, to articulate his/her representations according to a noetically apprehended *ontos*.<sup>57</sup> This is the problem of likenesses, images, and imitations,<sup>58</sup> namely, their other-directedness and their tendency for self-transcendence. *Mimesis* as a model, image, or representation of justice, for example, is quite different from *mimesis* as impersonation and anthropocentrism. It is one thing to impersonate or to be captured by an impersonation of an animal, human, or god, and another thing to apprehend justice itself through its likenesses or representations.

In the end, we have to query whether a person who knows all of this about poetic *mimesis* would still be a poet and still maintain the importance of poetic *mimesis*. Why not devote oneself primarily to the knowledge of justice in itself, rather than some tertiary likenesses, images, and imitations of it? (The order of apprehension would be thirdly poetic *mimesis*, secondarily *logos*, and possibly *mythos* and ultimately primary and direct *theoria*.) Are there real limits to poetry when it exists at a third remove from true being, and are there also real limits to the knowledge or direct apprehension of reality, being in itself, the Good, and the other forms such as justice? Granted that Plato wants to ensure that poets do not confuse their imitations or likenesses with what truly is (although imitations or likenesses may be related to and participate in being.) Does this mean that which is, namely being, can be immediately and directly apprehended wholly as it is in itself? We can neither exclude the possibility of this immediate and direct apprehension, nor should we make the mistake of attributing to being in itself the analogical and mimetic character of the way we come to apprehend being itself.

In short, the way we come to know and communicate to others the knowledge of the Good and being is not to be confused according to Plato with the Good in itself or being in itself. Plato does not equate the human philosopher as lover of wisdom, with wisdom itself, and the divine *telos*. For those who put being first (not essences), they cannot escape the fundamental analogy of being and the irreducibility of *mythos* to anything else, especially literal allegory. If, for example, the Good and being are fundamentally imitative or analogical for us in this mortal life, then would there not be an infinite regress in trying to apprehend them? Not necessarily, but there would be continual tensions between the limits of what we can know by means of likenesses in relation to complete comprehension (oneness) with knowledge. Only as the Good in itself and being in itself are one (e.g., the cosmos as *monogenes*, *Timaeus* 31b) and the self-same ontologically (whereas the ways of coming to know them epistemologically remain many and different for humans) can

they function truly as the principles of intelligence (*noesis*), the source and the aspiration of all thought and action. While analogical, imitative, mythical, and rational discourse may go on and on endlessly inquiring, this does not mean that they have no proper, perfecting, natural end (*telos*), without which there would be no reason to go on and on? The Platonic ideas or forms make reason (*logos*) and thought possible and make action intelligible. On the other side of the issue is our experience of likenesses (mimetic and representative) in reason, in action, and in sensation, which causes a recollection or reminiscence of the ground of reality.

Getting clear about the proper sense of *mimesis* in Plato is important regarding the development of a Platonic mode of interpreting Plato's *mythoi*. There is sufficient textual evidence (*Republic* 378d–e, *Phaedrus* 229c–e) that Plato was not interested in allegorical interpretations of traditional *mythoi*, nor would he have been interested in writing allegories, since there was no guarantee that “hidden meanings” would be understood properly or improperly. What is particularly offensive regarding allegorical interpretation is its attempt to reduce a story to some conventional meaning (a message or moralistic, perhaps fundamentalistic, norm) destructive of its representative or analogical character. Allegorizing robs the *mythos* of its dynamic representation of experiences.<sup>59</sup> However, rejection of allegory does not mean rejection of different levels of understanding and meaning. Instead of searching for some “moral” to a Platonic *mythos*, one should contemplatively pursue the experiences and events found in this artistic, symbolic representation of a *mythos*. For example, imagine a very moral and upstanding person who now has Gyges' ring (yes, you can even be the humblest of creatures, a hobbit) and what would you do? Use the ring to do good deeds, or become a self-serving, righteous vigilante?<sup>60</sup> Best of all, you would destroy such a ring.

We have to understand the attack on poetry and *mimesis* in the *Republic* to be not an absolute attack on the nature of the poetic experience (inspiration) and the poetic function (imitation), but rather on the contemporary Greek convention or practice of poetry.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps the best way to argue this point is to consider whether the status of poetry has to be restricted to the lowest part of the divided line, *eikasia*. The mental power or faculty of *eikasia* (imagining or conjecturing) has as its object things imagined. The imagery of the cave is the kind of story a certain kind of poet would tell. In terms of the cave experience, *eikasia* would seem to befit the chained prisoners who know and do nothing but passively respond to shadow images that appear opposite them on a wall. The chained prisoners are so strictly confined mentally and physically that they are habituated to accept passively whatever images appear before them. (Take television and computer games today that suck into people's minds and vegetate their bodies.) There is no distinction between images and originals at this level of experience, even though the prisoners

do engage in guessing matches (gamblers regarding what will appear next on the wall in front of them, similar to today's lottery addicts with their special numbers and foolhardy dreams).

Perhaps the condition of the chained prisoners is like the mind of the poet or rhapsode, but is there any reason why the poet cannot be unchained? Especially is it important to consider the divided line in an analogical or proportional way, not in a static, flat way. If opinion or belief (*doxa* or *pistis*) can become true or right opinion vis-à-vis *nous* and knowledge aspiring to the forms (and let us contend that the four parts of the divided line correspond to four different powers of the mind and not four corresponding, different objects but rather the same object differently apprehended in four different ways), why cannot *eikasia* (images) be related to understanding (*dianoia*) as *dianoia* uses (as opposed to being dependent upon) geometrical images?<sup>62</sup> (See *Republic* 510bff.) The use of images (*eikones*) of things (experiences and events) is not the same as things being merely imitated (*mimesis*), because the goal is to seek to see through images to things themselves by means of the understanding (*dianoia*) (*Republic* 511a). These images are clearer than the shadows of *eikasia* within the cave, and therefore they are given honor (*Republic* 511a). They are images which through *dianoia* point to invisible intelligibles, rather than to visible things. Thus, we have the analogical proportion—opinion: *noesis* :: imagination : understanding (*Republic* 534a, 508c). Not only does this interpretation of the divided line analogically uplift the status of poetry (perhaps beyond many poets who do not seek anything further than images) and the mere use of images or representations. Also, there is an understanding of the use of images in mathematics that makes a certain kind of poetry continuous with the upward ascent to the forms. Perhaps this is why the imagery of the cave follows the divided line in the *Republic*.

The relation between poetry and mathematics can be developed further. What is particularly definitive of mathematics according to Socrates is the use of hypotheses (which is to say “underpinnings” or “stepping stones,” *hypotheseis*, *Republic* 510b, 511b), which are the starting points for mathematical *dianoia*. Such hypotheses are not demonstrated starting points, since the hypotheses themselves are assumed and are not yet critically grounded. Cannot the same be said about poetry and its use of statements that similarly are based on images? Commonly, poets like mathematicians do not think they need to give a further account of themselves and their starting points (*arche*, *Republic* 510b). Both poetry and mathematics seem dependent upon some higher first principles or paradigms that supervene and buttress images and hypotheses and the consequences of such images and hypotheses.

Of course, mathematicians as opposed to poets may be more precise and clear (self-critical) regarding their use of images, diagrams, and models. And the consequences drawn from mathematical hypotheses are more explicit

and accountable. But the poet also functions on the basis of suppositions or hypotheses. For example, Simonides believed that justice was in some way giving each person her/his due, but there was no dialectical treatment of the wide-ranging consequences of this supposition. No doubt this "saying" of Simonides requires qualification and needs to be subsumed under some extensive critical clarification of the natures (equal and unequal) of humans. Simonides alone may or may not have inspired such discursive reasoning (*logos*), and insofar as his pronouncement on justice became no more than a conventional saying, no further analysis of its consequences and no synthesis of its consequences with other hypotheses is undertaken. Simonides may not have thought about the role of practical reasoning (*phronesis*) that judges and decides in the application of justice given the great diversity of humans and human circumstances.

Both poetry and mathematics become the subject matter (i.e., the hypotheses) for dialectical activity. The question remains whether there is a common experience peculiar to poetry and *mythos* (note that there is considerable use of mathematics in *mythos* as part of the "play" in which the experience of *mythos* is objectified and concretized), namely, the conversion or turning around (*periagoge*) of the soul, which may happen through the intermediary of poetry and mathematics (*Republic* 521c–525c). Socrates considers the primary philosophical experience to be that of conversion following the *aporiasi* of sense-experiences and conventional beliefs, respectively related to mathematics and poetry, which are relentlessly philosophically examined (not forgetting that this critical understanding of mathematics and poetry is not commonly or conventionally practiced).

## Protagoras

Quite intentionally, it has been the objective of this chapter to raise questions and to propose directions that will be followed since this leads beyond what traditional *mythos* can offer. It remains in this chapter only to consider a representative example of the way a sophist, such as Protagoras, uses or retells a traditional *mythos*. The goal is to ascertain Plato's own understanding of the sophistic use of *mythos*. Nevertheless, there has been some controversy as to whether Protagoras' *mythos* is Platonic or sophistic.<sup>63</sup>

First of all, we must notice that Protagoras would, quite democratically, let others decide whether he will proceed by *mythos* or *logos* from the very beginning to explain the teachability of virtue (*arête*). Socrates does not usually begin conversations with *mythos*,<sup>64</sup> although obviously Socrates may pass through *mythos* during a dialogic encounter or may end with a *mythos* after a dialectical argument. (The next chapter will consider *mythos* in terms of the intermediating magisterial or pupillary function.) That Protagoras thinks of

*mythos* and *logos* as interchangeable and equal (i.e., purely relative regarding which is chosen and used) reveals the extent to which the sophistic use of *mythos* is the dissolution of *mythos*.<sup>65</sup> *Mythos* for Protagoras is merely one form of discourse, a heuristic device<sup>66</sup> and apparatus<sup>67</sup> manipulated by the rhetorician. If all *mythos* is reducible to a manipulative device that needs not be told (because the resort to it, as well as the experience within the *mythos* is dispensable), then this may not at all be a fully Socratic or Platonic understanding of *mythos* at its best.

It is not only the form and use, but also the content of this Protagorean *mythos* that is decisive in determining whether it is Socratic or not. On the surface, there are Socratic elements and distinctions in this Protagorean *mythos*, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the sophists and Socrates acknowledge or hold at least some things in common. Friedlander<sup>68</sup> is one of the most generous commentators, attributing to this *mythos* a great many incipient ideas and images that Plato will later develop, even though the formal use of *mythos* by Protagoras is arbitrary and unSocratic. For example, Protagoras is concerned primarily with the origin of political virtue establishing the basis for human community and its relation to human nature. This involves distinguishing humans from other creatures and also involves the human relationship to the gods. Protagoras describes the creation of mortal creatures as coming out of the earth, which is consistent with the traditional Greek belief (Socrates also tentatively respects the *mythos* of the earthborn in the *Republic* and *Statesman* 271a) that humans (among other creatures and created things) are autochthonous. Protagoras, however, never develops this earthbornness as the natural basis for brotherhood, equality, friendship, and community among men as does Socrates. In the end, we have to ask whether Protagoras shares with Socrates the same understanding that all humans have a common source and *telos*. Socrates is also more forthright declaring the *mythos* of the earthborn to be a lie in words, but not a lie in the soul.

In Protagoras' *mythos*, Prometheus (forethought) and Epimetheus (afterthought) are charged with equipping and distributing to human creatures their qualities. Because of Epimetheus' lack of forethought (Prometheus apparently lacked the forethought to understand that Epimetheus would fail) the human race came last in the distribution and therefore was without the provision of qualities that other creatures received. It is important to notice that the "qualities" distributed were solely for the preservation, protection, and fulfillment of the needs of the various creatures. Protagoras only tells us that Epimetheus was not very wise, but had not Prometheus agreed to let Epimetheus distribute these qualities? Can Protagoras not see Prometheus' lack of forethought? Perhaps the gods are just bumbling, and offer us only bare necessities. On the other hand, perhaps Prometheus foresaw Epimetheus'

failure, but in a Machiavellian way figured he could take advantage of the situation and be the “rescuer” for mankind?

Protagoras, in telling the *mythos*, does not put the blame on Prometheus. Nevertheless, Prometheus will steal the fire to make possible to humans all the developmental skills of the arts of Hephaestus and Athena. Protagoras does not tell us whether this was really an act of forethought, rather than Prometheus covering his brother's failure. It is assumed that this gift of fire benefited humans technically, even though, according to Protagoras, Prometheus is prosecuted for this theft due to the blunder of Epimetheus. But this blameless theft (on Protagoras' telling) was not enough. It is suggested that if Prometheus had the time and if Zeus' sentinels were not so terrible, Prometheus would even have entered the citadel of heaven for the sake of mankind to steal the “political wisdom” possessed by Zeus. So much for teaching that virtue is obtained by theft, rather than earned by virtuous deeds.

The technical arts alone, without political wisdom or prudence, are not enough to preserve the race of humans. This is in agreement with Protagoras' apology regarding the sale of his own teaching. Apparently, the arts can sufficiently supply humans to maintain the necessary means of life, but otherwise humans remain unprotected and destroyable by wild beasts. At first humans were dispersed; there were no cities; no art of government of which the art of war is a part. After a while, the desire to live among others and the desire of self-preservation brought humans together in cities, but humans still lacked the art of government whereby they could settle disputes justly. Humans did invent speech and names, acquired clothes and shelter, were able to engage in agriculture, and alone among all the animals worshipped the gods because of their stolen share in divinity thanks to Prometheus. Apparently, Protagoras wants to impress upon any listeners that Zeus, the holder of political wisdom, owed humans favorable treatment, if only because of their Promethean-caused “piety.” Otherwise, would not the gods be to blame for this naturally deficient creature, man?

It may be granted, as Friedlander contends,<sup>69</sup> that Protagoras' distinction between the technical, vocational skills and the political art of ruling is a Socratic distinction. But there is nothing specifically Socratic about it to be contrary to sophistry, especially if the political art for Protagoras is manipulative. Is the political art recognized by Protagoras founded on the political nature of persons and on the possibilities of perfecting human nature qua political persons? This would not seem to be the case and does not clearly follow from humans originally living together for the sake of self-preservation. Is politics only based on the desire of self-preservation? (Is Protagoras a forerunner of Hobbes?) Notice how humans invent speech (*logos*) and names before they are political, according to Protagoras. And the political is associated with the violence of war-making and not the rational, nonviolence



of speaking and persuading. For Protagoras, speech (*logos*) is an artifice not integrally, naturally political.

Socrates in the *Republic* shares with Protagoras a concern for the origins and coming-to-be of the *polis*. You might say that the city of pigs parallels the condition of humans in Protagoras' city before Zeus intervenes. Socrates speaks of the city of pigs as the true, healthy city, because as far as it goes no luxuries and no excesses have biologically, on the level of needs, entered the city. The deficiencies that Protagoras finds with his mythical portrayal of humans' early condition is similar to the deficiencies that Glaucon (not Socrates) experiences. There is no satisfaction for the spirited, Promethean warrior in such a defenseless, ambitionless city. Likewise, we have to wonder whether such a true, healthy city can survive a situation in which there is a problem of the just distribution of scarce, as well as surplus, goods. However, from Socrates' point of view this is the true, healthy city (which is Adeimantus' city), insofar as disputes do not rage and insofar as these problems of need are moderated (*sophrosyne*) and satisfied. Consequently, the true, healthy city in the *Republic* will be returned to on the level of needs after we purge the luxurious city and educate the guardians for the *kallipolis*.

Yet, from Socrates' perspective, we wonder if there is any possibility for philosophic discourse in the city of pigs? Socrates' use of a pun makes us aware of this problem: "So they will have sweet intercourse with one another [in the city of pigs] and not produce children beyond their means, keeping an eye out against poverty and war" (*Republic* 372b–c). Again, we wonder if Protagoras' *mythos* indicates any striving beyond the satisfaction of needs—that is, does Protagoras seek to ally human desires with the rational, noetic part of the soul, or with just the appetitive part of the soul? This would be a principle providing a basis for interpreting a *mythos* as true (Socratic) or false (sophistic). But throughout Protagoras' *mythos*, no mention at all is made of the human soul.

To continue Protagoras' story, Zeus out of fear of the extermination of the human race sends Hermes to mankind bearing reverence and shame (*aidos*) and justice to serve as ordering principles for cities and for friendship. (Why send reverence and shame if humans already were worshipping the gods, or is it that humans' previous piety was only founded on Prometheus' theft? Not only does the Protagoras *mythos* suggest a competition between the gods, but also an accusation that the gods can be to blame for the condition of humans.) Apparently, Hermes had the forethought to ask Zeus how these gifts were to be distributed. Should they be distributed to the few as the arts were, or should they be distributed to all equally? Zeus democratically commands that all humans are to have a share, otherwise cities could not exist if only a few were just and reverent. (No doubt Protagoras' divine analogue is but a sophistic appeal to the *demos* and their conventional ways of solving disputes, which sophists can thereby teach without reliance on blameworthy

gods.) Furthermore, anyone who has no part of justice and reverence (along with shame) will be put to death as a plague to the city.<sup>70</sup>

Why did not Zeus send reverence and shame and justice to mankind irrespective of the threat of their self-extinction? Does Zeus send these gifts to humans because they already have the stolen divine fire, and thus are not like other creatures that you might need to threaten with self-extinction? Is survival the key motivation even for these gods? In sum, does Zeus' dispensation represent justice itself and reverence/shame on the grounds that it is a fundamentally just dispensation calling for reverence/shame, or does Zeus just serve as an instrument, a Zeus *ex machina*, for dispensing these virtues that are necessary for political community? Protagoras never faces these questions directly, which is one of the problems of delivering a *mythos* in the way that Protagoras does. At best, there is an implanting of some original moral sense in humans. The everyday facts of humans praising and blaming is the evidence that Protagoras gives for this moral sense (*Protagoras* 325c–328b).<sup>71</sup> We are left with a picture of Zeus acting out of necessity, if the race of mankind is to survive, and this origin story conforms to our possession of conventional morality.<sup>72</sup> The whole *mythos* never rises above needs, self-preservation, and conventions, namely, what humans must acquire to ensure their mere existence. Thus, Schleiermacher wrote:

Now as to the myth brought forward by Protagoras, there is no need to number it as some have done, good-naturedly raising it to an exalted rank, among those of Plato's own; . . . For precisely as it is natural to one of a coarsely materialistic mode of thinking, whose philosophy does not extend beyond immediate sensuous experience, the reasoning principle in men is only viewed as a compensation for their deficient corporeal conformation, and the idea of right with the feeling of shame as requisites for a sensuous existence, and as something not introduced into the minds of men until a later period. Hence also the proof contained in this myth, because Plato could not give any other coloring to such a view, is very oratorically stated, as he does not so much spare investigations upon principles as make the want of them perceptible, since even what he has properly to explain is not connected with the course of the narrative, but is only adduced as a command of Zeus.<sup>73</sup>

Not unlike Hobbes' treatment of human nature, which also acknowledges that humans are political and moral by convention, self-preservation is the brute fact behind Protagoras' *mythos*. Justice and reverence/shame are mythical dictates of Zeus to be instilled conventionally; they have no other status.

Zeus' dispensation means that all humans have the potentiality, given this gift, to acquire justice and reverence/shame. Education can awaken humans' moral sense. The threat of death is issued at the very end of the *mythos*, because virtue (justice and reverence/shame) is not a given in human nature.

Humans now can be left to themselves to develop the potentialities of this gift in their own constructed political lives. Only if all humans have this potential will there be the possibility for political life, which sophists happily can instruct. Otherwise, humans would be bestial toward one another.

Perhaps the absolutely crucial matter in all of this is that Protagoras does not acknowledge justice by nature as opposed to justice by convention. If the justice given by Zeus is a potentiality, the next question is, to what end is this potentiality of justice directed? Is practical, political success the end, or does Zeus represent the possibility that justice by nature can be participated in just as one can imitate the divine? In one respect, justice by nature and humans who aspire toward the divine are inconsistent with the dispensation that all humans are given justice and reverence. Such a democratic and egalitarian understanding of justice and reverence/shame suits the demotic opinions of conventional, citizen justice. For Socrates, while everyone is eligible only the few can and will be philosophers, who know justice in itself, and in this way approach critically the divine with reverence/shame.<sup>74</sup>

In arguing for the teachability of virtue, Protagoras rightly has concluded that all humans by nature must be potentially disposed toward virtue, but Protagoras has failed to distinguish between different kinds of humans, the two different kinds of justice (conventional and natural), and the different kinds of virtue (*Protagoras* 323d–334c). This is the problem of delivering a *mythos* without the *logos* of dialectical critique. It does not follow that whatever is just by law and convention is just by nature. Is there any indication in this *mythos* that Protagoras has abandoned his well-known, relativistic belief that humans (and the conventions they make) are the measure of all things? This also is decisive when deciding if this *mythos* of Protagoras is sophistic or Socratic. Likewise, the meaning of the teachability of virtue changes depending upon whether knowing virtue is a matter of knowing man-made measures and conventions, or whether knowing virtue means knowing a perfecting standard that has an ontological status beyond convention.<sup>75</sup>

This is not to say that Protagoras was only a lover of conventions. As a teacher of virtue, Protagoras shared with Socrates a critical aloofness from particular conventions. Two modern defenders of Protagoras, Henry Wolz, and Lazlo Versenyi, elaborate upon this. Wolz argues<sup>76</sup> that *mythos* can uncover significant philosophical truths, and thus can be an inspiration for rational activity. *Mythos* can be verified empirically, since it does not carry us beyond common reason to some a priori, higher realm of truth or universals.<sup>77</sup> Protagoras' *mythos* exemplifies the empirical, existential fact that all humans have the capacity and capability of being taught virtue. *Mythos*<sup>78</sup> brings about an existential awareness or conviction and induces action regarding the importance of education for community life and justice. Protagoras goes to the lowest depths of political life (necessity and self-preservation) in order to ascertain

the empirical, root origins of community and political justice. In such plumbed depths where humans have no sure justice or community (in the *mythos* before Zeus' dispensation) one can stand apart from one's present condition and thereby see the importance of conventional norms. Protagoras' *mythos*, on the basis of this interpretation of Wolz, would function like Hobbes' and Rousseau's state of nature. What is more, the status of such origins is transempirical and only heuristic in value; it has no value in itself, but only serves the empirical, conventional condition in which humans find themselves. According to Wolz, the same is true of Plato's ideas, which are not to be pursued as absolute truths that can be contemplated and approximated. Their value is that they can, as postulates or constructions, tentatively give order to experience and provisionally explain the basic human condition to which one must always return.<sup>79</sup> In this fashion, there are only beginnings for Wolz and not ends (*teloi*) that can be sought or are known to exist. Wolz is modern man par excellence. It remains to be seen whether Platonic, philosophic *mythos* is only a heuristic device of postulations and extrapolations that need not rise above the low-down human condition of necessity, convention, and self-preservation.

Versenyi<sup>80</sup> likewise argues that Protagoras' *mythos* has only instrumental value in coping with present, practical problems. The measure or value of things to humans are self-preservation, needs, and technical excellence in living one's life here and now.<sup>81</sup> Whatever is good and just are always relative to what is appropriate or useful at a given time or place. The function of a teacher such as Protagoras is to be an expert (like a physician) who can diagnose what is better or worse given different kinds and conditions of *poleis* and persons. The teacher can also cultivate the endowments and potentialities of humans. In sum, both Wolz and Versenyi establish the conventional basis for Protagoras' *mythos*. Solely on the level of the conventional (*nomos*) are political and moral disputes adjudicable.

Protagoras really honors the example of Prometheus over Zeus. In the end, humans stand on their own feet, and thus are their own makers; there is no limiting norm or measure beyond make-do, pragmatic, human conventions. That virtue is considered to be only conventional in meaning is the grounds for deciding that this *mythos* of Protagoras is unSocratic, since it lacks any natural *telos* or end<sup>82</sup> that would explain the strivings of humans and that would also serve as a norm for such striving psychically and politically. Contrary to Protagoras, Socrates does not believe that Promethean humans simply are the measure of all things. Zeus is the philosopher par excellence for Plato.

### Reformation by Noble (Generational), Mythical Lies

It has not been unSocratic to have spent so much time on sophistic *mythos*. The interpretation of Protagoras' signature *mythos* indicates how one

proceeds with a *mythos*, looking for the basic principles and experiences that underlie the meaning of that *mythos*. Further, the persuasive potency (*dynamis*) of the sophistic use of traditional, conventional *mythos* cannot be ignored. It is a potency without limits, a kind of boundless chaos confused with democratic freedom. Besides Protagoras' reduction of humans to the level of self-preservation and needs, there also is the example of the Gyges' *mythos*. Both have powerful claims on behalf of a conventional, so-called "realistic" view of human nature. If any person were given a ring that made her/him invisible, would not human nature in its bare essence reveal itself to be tyrannical without limits regarding his/her own self-interests? On this account, the liberated soul is by nature tyrannical, pursuing its own desires without limit. In both the Protagoras *mythos* and the Gyges *mythos* the alternative is the establishment of solid conventions and institutions, if humans are not to destroy others and themselves.

Perhaps, this lesser, destructive truth about the nature of the human soul requires the mythical lie or fiction for the sake of the greater truth regarding justice and perfection in the human soul. If so, there is more than an obvious interrelationship between traditional *mythoi* portraying divine and heroic excesses and Socrates' "noble" (*gennaion ti hen* or one generational/traditional) lie concerning the *mythos* of the earthborn and humans of metals. In an act of political reformation regarding traditional *mythos*, Socrates moderates Promethean claims as much as one can humanly attain. This reformation is not merely by conventional artifice, although the *mythos* does require conventional sanction or endorsement by the political multitude, the *demos*. Before this multitude, the contest (*agon*) is waged between the upholders of tradition and convention, the sophists, versus the philosophers, seekers of norms beyond, such as Socrates who acknowledges divine norms.

At the lowest level of education before the *mythos* of conversion and ascent is the *mythos* of the earthborn and humans of metals. They have the dual function of answering the sophistic understanding of human nature and convention and of reforming (or just putting to proper benefit) the traditional mythical materials. As Socrates says, "Nothing new, but a Phoenician thing which has already happened in many places before, as the poets assert and have caused others to believe, but one that has not happened in our time and I do not know if it could—one that requires a great deal of persuasion" (*Republic* 414c). This so-called "noble lie" or fiction is the consequence of the educational program of Socrates, which will decide through rigorous, ongoing testing what persons are best fit by nature to proceed and to fulfill in their lives. Unavoidably, there will be persons of different natures who will be more suited and more fulfilled in certain occupations rather than others. In the best of regimes, the rulers will have to ensure that different persons get different deserts, as well as similar persons receiving similar deserts according to

the principles of distributive justice. To put it bluntly, in Aristotelian terms, justice deservedly means equals for equals and unequals for unequals.

Theoretically, the *Republic* in its entirety is devoted to clarifying the relationship between human nature, justice and equality, happiness, and the good of the whole. However, it is one thing to achieve rational assent to a concept of distributive justice among equals and unequals; it is another, more difficult thing to have even the best of persons (such as those who are most ambitious to rule) as well as the persons who cannot understand rationally and conceptually the problem of justice and equality assent to the practical actualization of distributive justice. Except for philosopher-kings, all other persons will be in a relative or permanent position of inequality or inferiority in regards to others. Since a city solely of philosophers is impossible, something directed more persuasively to the variable desires and wills of humans given their various conditions is in order. We can even wonder whether philosophers, as they are political philosophers, are addressed by this *mythos*. Yet it is clearly stated that this "lie" will be for guardians (possibly also for philosophers), and all others of lesser metals (*Republic* 414b). Is there a problem that the philosophers-rulers-guardians might forget the common origin they all share with other persons? This is the context for the lie/fiction/*mythos* regarding the earthborn and humans of metals. Additionally, we have to ask: in what way is this *mythos* a lie (*pseudos*)? It draws on mythical origins and need not be taken literally, since literally it is known to be untrue. Socrates does acknowledge the pragmatism of Protagoras, but Socrates' *praxis* is directed upward in light of final, fulfilling ends, not downward toward elemental desires, the lowest common denominator.

Socrates is quite hesitant to utter this lie in words, which he will use to persuade the citizens and rulers that their rearing and education since birth really were like dreams. Contrary to their dreams, humans really were fashioned and reared within the earth. The earth or land on which they live is their common mother and nurse, which means that they should acknowledge all fellow citizens as brothers and sisters given their common mother origin. (See *Timaeus* 23b–e and *Statesman* 271a for a continuation of this earth-bornness.) The biggest part of the lie is that one's memory of childhood and learning is an illusion or dream that never really happened. Perhaps this is especially important for the education of the rulers who will be quite detached from natural/ordinary, familial memories. The communism of wives and children and the eugenic policy also may be considered as noble lies, because these passages are introduced by a comment on the value of lies for the sake of the ruled and the truth (see *Republic* 459c).

The lie of one's earthborn origins acknowledges that either we have a fundamental, given nature from the beginning no matter what our birth and environment, or that we have become, upon reaching adulthood, determinatively

what we are no matter what our past has been. Just as excessive fear of death in the future is unseemly (the poets are criticized for portraying this in their *mythoi*), likewise excessive remorse about the past and its lost opportunities is inappropriate. But this makes the lie seem more like a reasonable truth (assuming that the best regime will neutralize all environmental differences and everyone will get to prove themselves over time as to their true nature), although it is true also that many (especially the well-advantaged) might not find this very palatable. It is more common for people to think they have infinite potential (today especially) concordant with their unlimited desires. In this light Socrates is proposing something quite radical, namely, the dismissal and forgetting of ordinary, conventional, familial, human coming-to-be on the basis of proportional justice for all.

We now see that humans are born with gold, silver, iron, or bronze natures, so the god has by necessity fashioned them. It is the function of rulers to distinguish these metals in offspring, since parentage and environment are not final arbiters of one's metallic nature. What is traditional, not noble (*gennaion* more fittingly means expansive and generational) about this lie or *mythos*, is its purpose: to make citizens and rulers care (*therapeia*) for the whole and for one another (*Republic* 415d). To rise above one's own, even above what one may have with others of one's own kind (i.e., metal), for the sake of each part functioning for the sake of the whole, is a great, expansive aspiration running very contrary to atavistic self-interest. This *mythos* acknowledges that humans are not self-sufficient, autonomous self-creators, but that no matter how unequal the different natures of people are (and this must be accepted as a given consequence of the development of everyone's true potential nature), nevertheless all humans are brothers and sisters, since they originate from a common source greater than any one person, greater than the sum of all persons. Through a traditional *mythos* (the Athenians did consider themselves autochthonous), it is easier to experience this oneness and wholeness with others given its more-than-human, divine source and origin. However, the problem (*aporia*) and danger of the *Republic* is its overriding drive to achieve unity or oneness at all costs in the name of justice.

The *mythos* is a lie in words about the metallic basis of equality and inequality in order to tame immoderate feelings and beliefs of injustice, envy, and inferiority concerning the actuality of inequality. (The concern about immoderate jealousy and ambition is explicitly recognized in the *Laws* 731a). Socrates distinguishes between a lie in words and real lies in the soul regarding what really is (*Republic* 382b–d).<sup>83</sup> Tales are lies in words that are useful as a preventive, like a drug, when we do not know the final truth. The human and political basis of the *mythos* of the earthborn and persons of

metals does not replace or supersede the *mythos* of divine judgment of souls. The basic reason for the *mythos* of the earthborn and persons of metals is the root experience of a paradox: we are unequal in our relation to others given our different functions in the *polis*, but we also equally share a common human home and a common human beginning. In addition, we are expecting fundamentally self-preservational and self-interested individuals to abandon and transcend their given nature. This *mythos* fulfills the political function of exemplifying a paradoxical experience, which on the surface seems to defy rational explanation and persuasion. Nevertheless, the dimensions of the *mythos* of the earthborn and persons of metals are political and traditional. The success of the *mythos* is dependent upon its acceptance as an unquestioned tradition. Politically, the *mythos* stands in need of a grounding in the human relationship to cosmic order and the divine. In at least one respect, this *mythos* points to the image of the cave. The political brotherhood that philosophers share with all citizens of their city (not all mankind) is grounds for compelling philosophers to return to the cave, to their common origin. However, the basic, foundational characteristic of this political *mythos* of the earthborn suggests something more than an imposed unquestioned tradition. Paradoxically, it takes a seeming contrivance and lie in words, such as this *mythos*, to arouse a common sense of participation, despite being equally in a comprehensive, intelligible order or whole (Plato's *kallipolis*) embodying justice by nature. At the highest reaches of philosophical seeking is the overriding apprehension of the One in the Many and at the lowest reaches the Many in the One.<sup>84</sup>

As we have seen, traditional and sophistic *mythoi* have a common basis in conventional opinion (*doxa*), which is more or less true or false, right or wrong. A philosophical rejection of traditional and sophistic *mythos* in no way should be tantamount to a rejection of the popular, political basis of true *mythos*. This is where *mythos* is found; this is its home and the philosopher recognizes that all polities will have a particular fund of *mythoi* that characterize the way of life of a particular, political group of people.<sup>85</sup> The philosopher brings to bear on traditional and sophistic *mythos* a combination of *logos* (critical, analytical clarification) and philosophic *mythos* (her/his own depths of experience that have passed through and beyond traditional and sophistic *mythos*).<sup>86</sup> It is within the political domain of reformulated *mythos* and the foundation of right order that there are diverse possibilities for action (*praxis*) for everyone from the non-knowing populace to the few philosophers. Philosophical *mythos* should not become some entirely private, esoteric, transcendent experience, which has no abiding reference to one's natural political relations with others. In this respect, *praxis* (action) and *theoria* (contemplation) have a continuity and a harmony.



## NOTES

1. See Glenn Most, “Plato’s Exoteric Myths,” in *Plato and Myth*, eds., Catherine Collobert, Pierre Destree, and Francisco Gonzalez (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 23. Most states that dialectical *logos* and poetic *mythos* are interdependent and complementary, yet different (I would say “distinctive”). Then Most goes on (for all the reasons in the world, but not for all the experiences) to subordinate *mythos* to *logos* on arbitrary etymological grounds: there is no *logomythos*, but only a *mythologia*. This is grammar, not argument or *logos*. *Logos* is a constraint (as Most states), but definitely not the horizon and end of itself (that Most states). Platonic *mythos* on Plato’s terms takes us into the “divine beyond,” where many commentators refuse to venture and try to fathom.

2. There is no assumption that these four sets of relations are the same kind of relations. Especially the temporal relation can be transcended in *mythos*. This will be discussed later.

3. J. A. Stewart, *The Myths of Plato* (Carbondale: Illinois State University Press, 1960 republication of the 1904 edition). Stewart’s late Victorian/Anglican translation of Plato’s *mythoi* would royally and gloriously fit into the old and now discarded Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Stewart does clearly and specifically assert that Platonic *mythoi* must be understood in the context of the dialogues where they occur. However, much of his commentary covers neo-Platonists, then-contemporary anthropologists of myth, and Kantian idealist terminology (contrary to Plato’s ontological realism), which is to say are not the philosophical concerns of Plato and the crucial, contextual, dialogical function of Platonic *mythos*. Nevertheless, Stewart has many other relevant insights worth pondering.

4. See Louis Couturat, *De Platonicis Mythes* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1896); G. M. A. Grube, *Plato’s Thought*; and G. W. E. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of the Mind*, trans J. A. Baille (New York: Harper, 1967), 129. Also see Glenn Most, “From *Logos* to *Mythos*” in *From Myth to Reason?* ed., Richard Buxton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), where there is a short history (especially of the romanticist Germans) regarding various allegorical interpretations, which Most dismisses on rationalistic Enlightenment grounds.

5. See L. Edelstein, “The Function of Myth in Plato’s Philosophy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* X (1949), 463–81. P. Frutiger, *Les Mythes de Platon* (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1930). Susan K. Gaffney, “Dialectic, the *Mythos* of Plato, Metaphor and the Transcendent in the World,” *American Catholic Philosophy Association Proceedings* 45 (1971), 74–85.

6. I do not mean that *mythoi* are an independent whole in themselves, since this would be contrary to the previously explained relation of *mythos* and *logos*. The most proper way to speak about *mythoi* is that they, together as a whole, speak to or about a whole—the whole of being, a person’s experience of his/her relationship to others and to the divine within the cosmic whole.

7. See Harold Tarrant, “Literal and Deeper Meanings in Platonic Myths,” in *Plato and Myth*, 47–66. Tarrant comes up with eight characteristics of Platonic *mythoi*, since he and others in this volume have such an unbearable time consistently

identifying a *mythos* in Plato. Perhaps Plato wanted it that way, if only because traditionally (see Homer) *logos* and *mythos* both meant “giving an account.” Only later does the compact, undifferentiated *logos/mythos* pair become differentiated by second-hand “philosophers.” Clearly for me, Plato found something fundamental in the Greek *mythos* experience, despite the necessity of philosophical reform, which is a necessary purging leading to true philosophic *mythos*.

8. Paul Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1962), 198.

9. This was also fundamental to the important work of Paul Shorey—for example, *The Unity of Plato's Thought* (Chicago: Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago, 1904) vol. 6, 127–214.

10. F. E. D. Schleiermacher, *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 14.

11. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 19, 22.

12. Shorey, *The Unity*, 130–31.

13. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 41. Catherine Zuckert in her magisterial treatment *Plato's Philosophers, The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) likewise chooses to order Platonic dialogues according to their dramatic context, rather than stylometric, chronological speculations. Indeed, this is better than pages and pages of controversial philological exercises to pin down when particular dialogues were written. However, if it is true in fact that Plato over time revised and amended his dialogues, even the dramatic context (especially if it is “historical” as opposed to “philosophical”) will not be a credible enough basis for drawing conclusions. Zuckert does not put much emphasis on Platonic *mythos*, despite the fundamentally mythical dialogues (*Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*), presumably because Platonic philosophy is rigorously *logos* based, or it cannot be “philosophy.” Accordingly, there is not much concern for the “divine” in Plato, and thus Voegelin is no more than one bibliographic reference in her book.

14. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 43.

15. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 96.

16. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 72–73.

17. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 71.

18. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 71–73.

19. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 75, 206.

20. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 124.

21. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 75, 314.

22. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 43.

23. A number of authors in Collobert, *Plato and Myth* get hung up on Plato the artist and manipulator of images for irrational (i.e., emotional) motivational designs. See Catherine Collobert, “The Platonic Art of Myth-Making: Myth as Informative,” Pierre Destree, “Spectacles from Hades. On Plato's Myths and Allegories in the Republic,” and Monique Dixsaut “Myth and Interpretation.” The latter author finds here the play of fantasy and fantastic stories! Yet Plato clearly rejected, in its own right, sensualistic *fantasmata* (*Republic* 598b, *Sophist* 236bff.). While this kind of interpretation has some credibility, it says more about Socrates'/Plato's interlocutors

as well as those authors' commentary, than it does of the dynamic flow of the human soul "to-and-beyond" via Platonic *mythos*.

24. Ibid., 276, 414.

25. See Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*. IV, *The Ecumenic Age*, 185ff. Also see Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 103ff., 128, 132, 136; *In Search of Order*, 27–29; *Collected Works*, vol. 28, 178–80, 184–89, 208, 226; *Collected Works*, vol. 12, 77, 119–20, 259, 279, 280–84, 290, 340, 337.

26. See James A. Arieti, *Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues As Drama* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1991) who goes to the extreme to discredit intentionally fallacious arguments (they are hollowers to him) in Plato's dialogues in the name of Plato.

27. See Catherine Zuckert who so contends in her *Plato's Philosophers*.

28. Kathryn Morgan uses this vulgar modern phrase in her *Myth and Philosophy from Pre-Socratics to Plato*.

29. R. S. Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 148.

30. See Voegelin, *Collected Works*, XII, 93, presumably referring to *Epinomis* 977a, 985c–d.

31. See the extensive, revealing work of Zdravko Planinc locating all the references to Homer in Plato's *Republic* and other dialogues in *Politics, Philosophy, Writing: Plato's Art of Caring for Souls* (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 2001).

32. Stormer, "Plato's Theory of Myth," 219 correctly sees this as the essence of the Platonic critique of traditional *mythos*.

33. See Edelstein, "The Function of Myth," 470.

34. J. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 24–6. The recent translation of Pieper's *Platons Mythen* (*The Platonic Myths*, South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 2011) unbearably Christianizes Plato, an unforgivable distortion if you are struggling to understand Plato on his own terms.

35. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 30, 33–34.

36. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 19, 25, 30–35.

37. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 19–22.

38. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 17.

39. Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 29–30.

40. A number of authors in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, cannot resist the temptation to allegorize and reduce: see Harold Tarrant, "Literal and Deeper Meanings in Platonic Myths"; G. R. F. Ferrari, "The Freedom of Platonic Myth"; Catherine Collobert, "The Platonic Art of Myth-Making: Myth as Informative"; and Pierre Destree, "Spectacles from Hades. On Plato's Myths and Allegories in the *Republic*," but contrary to this, with reference to Socrates' rejection of allegorizing, see Monique Dixsaut, "Myth and Interpretation" in the same volume.

41. Note that Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1450a4–37) technically uses the term *mythos* in the sense of a story or plot.

42. Intriguingly, all, if not most, of the authors in Collobert, *Plato and Myth* engage in another kind of "reduction" regarding Plato's *mythoi*, namely, that any reference to the divine and beyond can only have a here-and-now reference and meaning.

The Good cannot be ineffable, since it is spoken of! What intellectual agnosticism! See Appendix B for six kinds of reductionism (not treating *mythos* on its analogical terms), also called “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (A. N. Whitehead).

43. Somewhat surprisingly, most recent philosophical commentators on Plato's *mythoi* fail to acknowledge and explore the omnipresent (for Plato) *polis* and its primary political significance for order. Neither freedom nor “social” factors are front and center for Plato. Voegelin also shifts from the political (*polis*) to the social somewhat anachronistically.

44. See the following articles in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, which claim Protagoras' *mythos* in the *Protagoras* to be agreeably Platonic (despite the fact that Protagoras is the sophist who declared that “man is the measure” and despite Plato's rough treatment of Protagoras in the *Theatetus* regarding knowledge being perception): see Harold Tarrant, “Literal and Deeper Meanings in Platonic Myths”; Claude Calame “The Pragmatics of ‘Myth’ in Plato's Dialogues: The Story of Prometheus in the *Protagoras*”; and Gerd Van Riel, “Religion and Morality, Elements of Plato's Anthropology in the Myth of Prometheus (*Protagoras* 320d–322d).”

45. Contrary to Sir Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), Plato is not any totalitarian monster. Popper is dead set upon finding the roots of twentieth-century totalitarianism, writing his book in the awful midst of the Second World War. However, the lesson to be learned from Plato's *Republic* is the purposeful self-destruction of this political attempt to achieve absolute unity in an ironically ugly Kallipolis. See John Wild's *Plato's Modern Enemies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) for a rebuttal to Popper.

46. Frutiger's criterion for distinguishing *mythos* from dialectic threatens (if it does not negate) the continuity between *mythos* and dialectic (or *logos*). P. Frutiger, *Les Mythes de Platon*, 37, states that myth is only probable and does not have the certainty of dialectic. There certainly is a textual basis for saying that Platonic *mythos* is likely or probable, whereas the forms are apprehended as one, self-identical, and complete in themselves. Yet has anyone satisfactorily comprehended the forms of justice, beauty, courage, and so on? Can it be said that immortality and the idea of the Good have, or need to have, a demonstrative certainty in Plato? With Frutiger, the discursive function of philosophy resorting to both *mythos* and *logos* as means to the end of wisdom has been sacrificed in favor of the rigidity of modern logical reason before which all else is opinion and faith. Frutiger is guilty of anachronism philosophically.

47. Djemil Saliba, “Philosophical Symbolism and the Use of Myth among Arab Philosophers,” *Diogenes* 10 (1955), 66–79.

48. Too much emphasis on Plato the author and artist manipulating *mythoi* could lead to this conclusion, whereas we as readers need to listen to the *mythos*, temporarily suspending our seemingly relentless, certainty-driven, philosophical, dialectical *logos*.

49. That Plato and Socrates are in competition with the sophists and poets and the *demos* is quite different from R. C. Lodge's *Plato's Theory of Art* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1953). Lodge argues that Plato is a comparative philosopher seeking a judicious balance between the various views of his contemporaries. Lodge's book has valuable insights, but its overall plan makes Plato more of an uninteresting

reconciler, rather than a radical competitor who purges Greek poetry by reevaluating the very status and function of poetry (see pages 7, 28, 40, 123–24, 205). Nevertheless, it is not wrong (perhaps this is Lodge's intention) to understand Plato to an extent as within the historical, Greek tradition that purges, reworks, and retells the traditional mythical narratives. Nevertheless, Plato's philosophic *mythos* cannot be understood if it is confused with traditional Greek myths and sophistic manipulation of myths.

50. A grave temptation since the outset of this work has been to engage in a faculty analysis as regards *mythos* and *logos*. This would mean arguing that *mythos* is to *logos* as *thymos* is to *reason* or *nous*. As Plato suggests, it is not appropriate to divide up the soul into mutually exclusive parts, since the soul is a functioning whole (*Republic* 435c–444d). Furthermore, "desire" (*epithymia*) as distinguished from bodily appetites can be understood to pervade all three "parts" of the soul.

51. The following writings on poetry and imitation have been found to be useful: W. J. Verdenius, *Mimesis, Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1949); C. de Deugd, *From Religion to Criticism* (Utrecht: Inst. v. Alg. Literatuur-wetenschap, 1964); G. Sorbom, *Mimesis and Art* (Uppsala: Scandinavian University Books, 1966); H. F. M. Broos, "Plato and Art: A New Analysis of the *Philebus*," *Mnemosyne* 4 (1951), 113–28; W. C. Greene, "Plato's View of Poetry," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 29 (1918), 2–75; Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); J. Tate, "Plato and Allegorical Interpretation," *Classical Quarterly* 23–24 (1929–1920), 142–54, 1–7; J. Tate, "Plato, Socrates, and Myth," *Classical Quarterly* 30 (1936), 142–44; J. Tate, "Socrates and the Myths" *Classical Quarterly* 27 (1933), 74–79; J. Tate, "On the History of Allegorism," *Classical Quarterly* 28 (1934), 104–44; J. Tate, "Imitation in Plato's *Republic*," *Classical Quarterly* 22 (1928), 16–22.

52. See Pieper, *Platons Mythen*, 25–26 on the authorless nature of *mythoi* in Plato.

53. Sorbom, "Mimesis," 18–36 and also Tate, "Imitation in Plato's *Republic*," 16–22.

54. The term for "beneficial" (*ophelimos*) in the quote at *Republic* 607d has an ambiguous meaning—that is, it can mean only what is of utilitarian advantage, but it may also point to the Good as the foundation of all advantage.

55. Verdenius, *Mimesis*, 5–11.

56. Hesiod also was concerned with the problem of whether the Muses were speaking truly or falsely to humans. See *Theogony*, 26–29.

57. Verdenius, *Mimesis*, 13, 22.

58. See C. G. Rutenber, *The Doctrine of the Imitation of God in Plato* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1946), 18–26. Rutenber shows that the terms imitation, likeness, and participation all have the same meaning.

59. A good example of this destructive character of reductive allegorizing is Saliba, "Philosophical Symbolism," 66–79.

60. No wonder I am quite fascinated today with superhero programs, such as the DC comics *Arrow*, who realizes that killing the bad guys is killing him morally and psychologically, and therefore he must as much as is possible not kill the bad guys but turn them over to the authorities so that we all learn to abide by the rule of law. However, will many viewers see how revealing and commendable this is?

61. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 8–14 utterly fails to make this distinction between nature and convention, although he correctly depicts Plato's desire to reform the conventional educational practices of his time as they are reflected in poetry.

62. See Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, 114–25.

63. See Stewart, *Myths*, 212–22 for the controversy between Ast and Schleiermacher who find this *mythos* unPlatonic versus Grote and Stewart who find this *mythos* to be representative of *mythos* in Plato. Likewise, some articles in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, also uncritically accept the Protagoras *mythos* as Platonic. See Claude Calame, "The Pragmatics of 'Myth' in Plato's Dialogues: The Story of Prometheus in the *Protagoras*"; and Gerd Van Riel, "Religion and Morality, Elements of Plato's Anthropology in the Myth of Prometheus (*Protagoras* 320d–322d)."

64. Friedlander, *Plato, an Introduction*, I, 172 and Friedlander, *Plato, the Dialogues of the First Period*, II, 13–23.

65. Friedlander, *Plato, an Introduction*, I, 176.

66. L. Versenyi, *Socratic Humanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 23.

67. Vlastos, ed., *Protagoras*, ix, footnote.

68. Friedlander, *Plato, an Introduction*, I, 176–8. Friedlander's treatment parallels my own as he discerns the first level of *mythos* to be traditional *mythos* and sophistic *mythos*.

69. Friedlander, *Plato, the Dialogues of the First Period*, II, 13.

70. Compare this Protagorean *mythos* to the Socratic *mythos* in the *Meno*, since they both address the problem of whether virtue can be taught. Protagoras has an easy, simple answer, which Socrates would never agree with. Their use of *mythos* is fundamentally different in the way Socratic *aporia* differs from sophistic dogma.

71. Stewart, *Myths*, 218–19.

72. That Protagoras uses Zeus as a conventional contrivance in the same way as Protagoras uses *mythos* answers the question whether this is a Protagorean *mythos*, since Protagoras was an avowed agnostic regarding the gods. See Eric Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 93–94, 408–9 and A. Thomas Cole, "The Relativism of Protagoras," *Yale Classical Studies* 22 (1972), 30–35.

73. Schleiermacher, *Introduction*, 96–97.

74. If you are wondering what reverence/shame has to do with justice, note how reverence and shame address the proper human disposition and presence before the divine, which humans never can be simply identical with.

75. Friedlander, *Plato, an Introduction*, 15–18.

76. H. Wolz, "'Protagoras' Myth and Philosopher-Kings," *Review of Metaphysics* 17 (1963), 214–15, 221.

77. Wolz, "'Protagoras' Myth and Philosopher-Kings," 214–15, 221.

78. Wolz, "Protagoras," 222–25.

79. Wolz, "Protagoras," 226–34.

80. Versenyi, *Socratic*, 23–24.

81. Many authors in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, make it crystal clear that Plato's *mythoi* (only) have this-worldly bearings. See Monique Dixsaut, "Myth

and Interpretation”; Pierre Destree, “Spectacles from Hades. On Plato’s Myths and Allegories in the *Republic*”; Claude Calame, “The Pragmatics of ‘Myth’ in Plato’s Dialogues: The Story of Prometheus in the *Protagoras*”; Radcliffe Edmonds, “Whip Scars on the Naked Soul: Myth and *Elenchos* in Plato’s *Gorgias*”; Christopher Rowe, “The Status of the Myth of the *Gorgias*, or Taking Plato Seriously”; Annie Larivee, “Choice of Life and Self-Transformation in the Myth of Er”; Francisco J. Gonzales, “Combating Oblivion: The Myth of Er as Both Philosophy’s Challenge and Inspiration”; and Christoph Horn, “Why Two Epochs of Human History? On the Myth of the *Statesman*.” Can we presume that Plato would accept this nullification of the “divine beyond”? Yes, indeed, is *mythos* is no more than message, invention, garb, information, technique, instrument, and so on, as opposed to undertaking the offering that we enter into the experiences of the transcendent that the best *mythoi* beckon toward and pulsate with.

82. This is contrary to Stewart, *Myths*, 217. I am reminded here of the slogan on the walls of so many K-12 classrooms: “You Can Be Anything You Want to Be.”

83. Why is it that so many commentators only mention derogatorily the “noble” lie being a lie in words, thereby ignoring how this noble lie is not the same for Plato as a lie in the soul? See *Republic* 382a–c and 535e as the context for the so-called “noble lie” 414b–415d. Furthermore, to call this *mythos* (415a) a “noble” lie is a mis-translation of *gennaion ti hen*, meaning literally “the one generational/traditional” and obviously referring to the old Athenian belief of the first Athenians arising from the earth (earthborn). See Christopher Morrissey, “The Truth about Plato’s ‘Noble Lie’” on-line at: [theimaginativeconservative.org](http://theimaginativeconservative.org).

84. Does anyone doubt today in the United States with the educational promotion of multiculturalism and the demise of the melting pot of assimilation that we need to reconfigure *e pluribus unum*, giving due respect to the many as well as to our oneness? See my book, *The Reuniting of America: Eleven Multicultural Dialogues* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1996).

85. You can examine just about any country with a history and tradition and find a particular way of life (e.g., the United States’ American Dream) based on what has been invested with special pride.

86. Kent Moors, *Myth and Opinion in Plato’s Republic* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1976), PhD dissertation at Northern Illinois State University. Moors gives an excellent treatment of how philosophy functions to correct *mythos* so that it is characterized by right opinion, which then is the foundation for both political order and the highest endeavors of philosophy. But do not some *mythoi*, namely philosophic *mythoi*, point beyond right opinion?

## Chapter 4

# The *Mythoi* of Crisis, Conversion, and Descent/Ascent

The aim of this chapter is to examine certain representative *mythoi* in Plato regarding their content (i.e., their images, symbols, and themes), their functions, and their status. Once this is achieved, it will be possible to ask how and why such content is expressed mythically, whether this resort to *mythos* is indispensable, and whether certain *mythoi* themselves are indispensable. As indicated in the last chapter, after the break with false or deficient, traditional and sophistic *mythoi*, there are *mythoi* that function as a conversion and descent/ascent experience. Following these *mythoi* are *mythoi* that function in terms of the judgment of the soul and the analogical comprehension of psychic, political, and cosmic order. This chapter will explore the revelations<sup>1</sup> that are the consequence of the first of these two basic dramatic functions of *mythos*: the conversion and decent/ascent of the human soul.

A necessary prelude to the full exposure of conversion and descent/ascent *mythoi* is the *mythos* of recollecting basically found in the *Meno* (8–6), *Phaedo* (72–77), and *Phaedrus* (247–250, 274–275). This *mythos* of recollecting cannot be dismissed as merely befitting the shallow or lethargic mind of the sophist, Meno. It is true that the *mythos* of recollecting specifically addresses the eristic paradox of the learner posed by Meno in order to dumbfound Socrates. As a sophist, Meno is more the how person, namely, how manipulate others into believing something, whereas Socrates wants to know what virtue is before engaging how it may or may not be teachable. You could say the ontological substance necessarily precedes and outweighs the epistemological method (rhetoric here) educationally.

Generally, the *mythos* of recollecting is a lesson directed to Meno's problem of being unable to recollect what he may know about virtue (*arête*). However, the *mythos* of recollecting is not only a bone thrown to Meno to overcome Meno's dumbness and his purposeful eristic obstruction, both of which do not



allow for a dialectical examination of any proposed *logos* or “definitions” of virtue.<sup>2</sup> Rather, the *mythos* of recollecting is at one and the same time suited to Socrates’ interlocuter, Meno, and also is favorable, even integral, to the kind of experience that motivates dialectical inquiry. Therefore, the *mythos* of recollecting contains a crucial underlying experience regarding learning or coming-to-know, and it is most appropriate to embody this experience in the form of a flow and orientation within a mythical account.

Secondly, the recollection *mythos* naturally fits into other *mythoi* (most prominently the *Phaedrus mythos*) which express both conversion of the soul, dialectical descent/ascent to the transcendent forms, and the soul’s vision of cosmic order. Recollect that in chapter 2 recollecting was shown to indicate the experience of the soul’s dynamic affinity with the order of being, making it humanly possible to proceed from ignorance to knowledge. The very experience of recollecting in itself supports my presentation of Platonic *mythoi* in terms of the natural, analogical flow and continuity of experiences of the soul oriented toward the whole (e.g., the whole of virtue). In short, the *mythos* of recollecting and dialectical inquiry are not separate and exclusive ways of coming-to-know. Only in this way can we comprehend why Socrates asserts that “learning (*to manthanein*) and searching (*to zetein*) is wholly recollection (*anamnesis*)” (*Meno* 81d), namely, drawing us upward from the resources of our soul’s spiritual depth.

### ANAMNESIS IN THE MENO

The context of the *mythos* of recollecting is the *aporia* confronting Meno because of his inability to recollect what virtue is. There follows Meno’s further inability to see how anyone can come to know what they do not know, since this would require the ability to recognize something that one knows nothing at all from the start. Likewise, what one already knows, one does not need to come to know. Underlying this paradox of the learner (i.e., how a person comes-to-know) is an implicit, biased understanding that knowledge is sense-perception pure and simple, which one either incorrigibly has or does not have.<sup>3</sup> There is no mention of an identity between sense-perception and knowledge in the *Meno*, but the nature of sense experience and its relation to knowledge will arise in the *Phaedo* when *anamnesis* reappears. In any case, Meno doggedly wants to be given—that is, to be instilled with a usable definition of virtue. Meno’s understanding of teaching and learning is purely passive and manipulative. Meno’s mind would receive knowledge like a pitcher receives water. Such passivity is consistent with a completely empirical-observational, sense experience notion of knowledge, which on this level alone is privately experienced and incorrigible in itself.<sup>4</sup> Meno is a persistently

poor dialogic partner for Socrates; Meno simply resists or is unable to carry on a discursive, rational inquiry, and thus there is no conversion of Meno.<sup>5</sup>

This being the case, it is fitting for Socrates to mention what he heard from wise men and women who told of things divine (*Meno* 81a). This reference to hearsay and to an external, non-empirical source is an indication that a *mythos* is forthcoming. However, for Plato there is no sharp disjunction between *mythos* and *logos*, since in this case the *mythos* of recollecting will help Socrates deal with a *logos* involving the paradox of the learner.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, there is a pregnant Socratic pause after this utterance, as if Socrates were internally recollecting and inquiring in silence (*theoria* or contemplation?) what his mysterious source (priests, priestesses, and poets) reveals.<sup>7</sup> Socrates may also be wondering if Meno is fit to hear such a tale, since Meno simply wants to hear and to be told without any thinking activity of his own. When Socrates speaks again it is because the insistent Meno interrupts this paused moment of reflection. Socrates remarks that they (the priests, priestesses, and poets) spoke the truth and gave a rational account (*logos*). In other words, they have the rational powers, the depth of soul, and the trans-sensible resources that Meno lacks.

It remains to be seen whether this mythical account delivered by Socrates will be a dogma meeting Meno's demands for some indoctrinated knowledge. Meno, however, is warned by Socrates to judge whether they (priests, priestesses, and poets) speak truly (*Meno* 81a–b). They say that the soul is immortal and undergoes many reincarnations. This ought to elicit the utmost holiness in one's life. Quoting Pindar, Socrates tells of Persephone (daughter of Zeus and queen of Hades) who requites and restores those souls of noble and glorious kinds of humans who possess splendid might and surpassing wisdom such that mankind shall forever (immortally) call them heroes. In this fashion, Socrates calls on Meno's soul to reveal itself before the queen of Hades. Better now, dear Meno, than later in death.

It can be readily seen how a judgment of souls in an afterlife could become integral to the dimensions of *mythos*. In this case, such a judgment of souls is left undeveloped, except as a direct warning to Meno that the fate of his soul is at stake. On the premise that the soul is immortal and has undergone various reincarnations, it can be said that the soul has "beheld all things in this world and in the nether realms; she has learned (*mematheken*) of all and everything" (*Meno* 81c). Consequently, the soul is potentially able to recollect all that she learned before. Should the *mythos* of recollecting be understood literally as a belief in the afterlife? Or should it be understood figuratively to provoke Meno to reveal himself—that is, his soul? Neither of these *exegetai* alone is sufficient, even though useful to a point.

It is important to understand that recollection has two dimensions. First of all, recollecting includes a soul's experiences in this world as well as in the

realm when disembodied. It would not be inappropriate to develop this into a mythical image, which involves a going to and from, in-between this world and the next. Conversion *mythoi* in the *Republic*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus* as well as the *mythos* in the *Timaeus* about the soul in the next world elaborate such imagery of the soul's to-and-from activity. Also, this suggests the possibility of a mediation rather than a strict dualistic separation between two worlds, one of which is visible and characterized by sense experiences, while the other is invisible and intelligible. Secondly, recollecting is a learning beforehand, which might lead one to think that this implies some a priori, non-sensible knowledge. However, throughout the *mythos* the emphasis is on learning, searching, discovering, inquiring, and so on.<sup>8</sup> here and now, an ing-ing activity rather than some knowledge (*episteme*) in any fixed, static sense. The *mythos* of recollecting in no way dogmatizes any innate, substantial knowledge.

Hence, this *mythos* is particularly discomfiting and unsuitable for Meno. Meno wants to be taught what is recollected without the learning pains of arduous (life-long) inquiry. Consequently, it is not appropriate for Socrates to speak about the forms of virtues and how knowledge is attained by contemplating such forms, even though for potential lovers of wisdom<sup>9</sup> this could be the next step in a *mythos* of this kind. Even if the forms are approached through recollecting, this does not mean that they will be consequently fully known in some final way.<sup>10</sup>

It is not uncommon for commentators to designate Platonic recollection as a forerunner of the Kantian a priori condition for knowledge.<sup>11</sup> Rather than carry out this train of thinking (which would mean examining what Kant meant as well as Plato), it is best to say no more than that for Plato the forms are the immaterial or non-sensible, a priori condition for understanding and knowledge of the world. What is at stake is whether there is realistically (independent of our own fabrications) any ground or basis for intelligibility. By a priori, it is only meant that our minds are not blank containers at birth (Locke) to be filled with and imprinted upon by sense experiences in our environment. Better here to follow Schelling who argues for the ur-originality of *mythos* prior to any literal, conceptual, in effect, post-mythical knowledge. Still, the relationship between the forms and Platonic *mythos* needs further elaboration, since *mythos* does not simply posit the forms as a priori, but naturally, experientially, leads to them as basic to the clarification of our this-worldly origins and our conventional, common opinions. This leads us back to the very characteristics of the *mythos* of recollecting being somewhat, not uncritically, traditional and conventional, given the quote from Pindar and the Pythagorean tenet of transmigration. If Meno can be converted, which means the occurrence of some change or some insight within Meno himself and according to Meno's own willing and reasoning (not just by some external

Socratic teaching), then it would be possible to begin toward virtue in itself and the forms of virtue. This does not happen, if only because Socrates has to follow with the slave-boy demonstration to give evidence for the experience of recollecting. It appears also that Meno cannot be satisfied with merely repeating this recollecting *mythos* to his cohorts. Perhaps this would invite Meno's ridicule, insofar as Meno has been duped by thinking the *mythos* literally on his terms says more than it actually does. Given the Socratic method of teaching, Socrates treats Meno justly on both Socrates' terms and on Meno's own terms.

The *mythos* of recollecting is a *mythos* of passage suggesting some kind of conversion experience that will draw a person from the sensible world to the intelligible world. This passage is possible because, as Socrates states, within the *mythos*

for us all nature (*physeos*) is akin (*suggenous*) and the soul has learned all things; there is no reason why we should not by recollecting but one single thing—an act which men call learning—discover everything else; if we have the courage and faint not in the search since, it would seem, searching and learning are wholly recollection. (*Meno* 81c–d)

This is the basic, irreducible, mythical, analogical experience, namely, all nature is akin (see also *Epistle* 7, 344a–b). Implicitly, this is the mythical dimension of psychic, political, and cosmic order. Likewise, there is the imagery of a golden chain by which we can draw ourselves throughout the whole of intelligible reality (*Laws* 644d–645b). This flowing continuity between one thing and another allows us to proceed rationally and self-critically, searching and learning from particulars to the forms, and from the forms back to particulars. The journey of our soul symbolically is portrayed as a transmigration odyssey.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to Meno, we are not confronted with some absolute, invincible ignorance or nothingness (*tabula rasa*), which would be an abyss of no escape from the whatever here and now. That all nature is akin suggests that we are participants (consciously or unconsciously) in an intelligibly ordered world. (Contrariwise, the alternative chosen today is a wholly unintelligible world, such that humans have to construct their own reality intelligibly somehow.) We recognize, intuit, infer, that is we recollect, our kinship (a participatory likeness, not a sameness) with all nature. Within the *mythos* of recollecting, if we can by our own psychic drives enter into it, we experience this kinship, and it becomes the condition for our participation and action in speech and in deed. Thus, it can be understood why we inherently resort to analogies and paradigms (*Statesman* 277d, 278b) and to *mythoi*, which are analogies and paradigmatic; they express our soul's receptivity to our affinity with reality.

Prior to this recollection conversion, we experienced with the slave-boy the *aporia* of the Socratic *elenchus* that cast into doubt our opinions. By repeated questionings in a variety of ways, we come to understand (*dianoia*)—that is, we recover and recollect knowledge (*episteme*) by ourselves from out of ourselves (*Meno* 85d). The term “knowledge” is first used in reference to the slave-boy demonstration, although it is also brought into question by admitting that, without further questioning, the slave-boy only has true opinions. In fact, in this world and in the next, the soul of the slave-boy has only true opinions, unless he is further awakened by questioning to convert true opinions into knowledge (*Meno* 86a).

In this respect, “the truth of all things that are always in our soul” (*Meno* 86a–b) recognizes our souls’ potentiality ready to be awakened by searching and recollecting. Again, there is no innate knowledge placed in the souls of persons at any time here below or hereafter. Persons are solely responsible for the development of that latent, potential knowledge within them based on their created kinship with all reality, the basis for all intelligibility (*noesis*). Thus, Socrates politically, publicly invites Meno to undertake a joint inquiry. But this presupposes that Meno has overcome his forgetfulness and his distance from the *mythos* of recollection experience. Can Meno look into the interior of his soul and recollect a beginning? To those who do not have this experience of recollecting (those who slumber and those who do not philosophically dialogue with others), the *mythos* of recollection remains a requisite grounding for being awakened. But the *mythos* does more than rhetorically incite and energize its listeners. The *mythos* speaks through visible images of invisible things regarding the interior of the soul and its potentially continuous experiences, which are the belief in the immortality of the soul, the *dianoetic* way of recollecting, searching and learning, and the noetic apprehension of the forms. The *mythos* evokes such a mediating and meditative interpretation of the invisible through and beyond the visible. Indeed, there can be no other way, intelligibly speaking, unless we are our own constructors of reality from nothing.

The *mythos* of recollecting speaks to the problem of how and why we can learn and come to know. It does so by concretely depicting mythically an original time and place, an original when and where, of learning and knowing. Insofar as recollecting is mentioned in the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* and implied in the *Republic* (518b–d) and *Timaeus* (41e–42d), there is further elaboration of this mythical depiction of an original time and place for the experience of recollecting. In due course, after examining this temporal and spatial symbolic play of *mythos*, we will have to ask whether such mythical objectifications cancel themselves, such that our original ground is really no-time and nowhere, atemporal and aspatial.

In any case, at this time we need not get single-mindedly involved in the problem of a vicious/virtuous circle or infinite regress regarding recollecting

and learning. The original recollecting, learning, and knowledge is in the activation or waking of our potentiality (*dynamis*) to some end (*telos*). Meno does not consult his own soul's ability to learn, but looks to some external source to terminate his display of knowledge. Meno is a "right now" person. He has no patience for the very arduous path of learning and our very capability to learn and come to know, which presupposes some target to aspire to, which is the only condition for continually learning.<sup>13</sup> Our striving is meaningless without some intelligible end (*telos*), such as the forms, but this requires ongoing, psychic effort, not just positing such. The origin and ground are ever-present for philosophical discovery in our soul among souls. Recollecting, first of all, implies discovering mythically and symbolically what must have been learned in the past, not looking ahead to the future grasping of new knowledge.<sup>14</sup> In this way recollecting is the necessary preliminary discovery (surely not the invention or fabrication) of the transcendental, atemporal forms. But they are atemporal and this dissolves the opposition between old (past) and new (future) knowledge. Recollecting temporarily uses the time reference of the past, not the future, to avoid the danger of conceiving the soul as autonomous, self-sufficient, and self-creative.<sup>15</sup> The divine, not man, is the measure. The soul truly discovers its internal depths in the already present. The past also is negated as something absolutely determinative and innate to us, when we have to face our present condition of learning and striving, never mind our reincarnation, which would symbolize figuratively our having not reached contemplative, philosophical existence. Our human becoming involves a present and future, which will quickly enough become a past. Thus, the past (not the future) is our guide, but not uncritically.

The detractors from this *mythos* of recollecting (mentioned in endnote 2 of this chapter) find that there is no real, epistemological mileage, no hard knowledge payoff, that ensues from this *mythos*.<sup>16</sup> Ontologically, they care not about the basic, mythical, mediational experience of participating via the affinity with the flow and orientation of all intelligible reality discovered in the interior depths of the human soul. Yet this mediational and meditational experience explains our ability to recognize and achieve knowledge distinct from sophistry and explains our natural affinity with an intelligible, transcendent order independent of our own intellectual shortcomings. In this respect, Socrates has not invented or contrived the recollection *mythos*<sup>17</sup>; rather he hears the *mythos* from priests, priestesses, and poets, and this symbolically relates to the way he discovers (hears of) in his soul the affinity it has to all things in nature.

The *mythos* of recollecting shares with other Platonic *mythoi* the mythical experience of the soul's participation in a flowing, analogical order that has an originating source greater than, and independent of, human beings.<sup>18</sup> In more specific and precise terms, the recollecting experience is like recovering something we forgot since unknowingly, as if in a dream, we were

speaking and acting in ways that are a witness and a revelation (to those who are awake and desire to know) towards the affinity of all things and our human place in the order of these things. Recollecting is the sudden insight (*exaiphanes*) that all along it is right there before us (*Republic* 432d–e), inherent in our very use of language (i.e., the forms),<sup>19</sup> and displayed in the very actions of people around us. Does not Socrates continuously ask us if we have passed this test of intelligibility (*noesis*)? Yet we have to achieve this recollecting in our souls dialogically with others. Recollecting is the *logos* of a reflective, discursive flow carried through and beyond to achieve knowledge.

### THE PHAEDO

The *Phaedo* offers an account of recollecting that explicitly draws a continuity between the sensible and intelligible world. The account seemingly is non-mythical, although it does occur within the context of arguing for the immortality of the soul. In the *Meno*, the natural affinity that the soul has to all things in reality implies an affinity to the universal natures of all things. If our mind (*nous*) and language naturally tend to discover symbols and concepts, such as circularity and squareness, then our soul has a proper and natural affinity to universals that always abides independent of the coming-to-be and passing-away of material things. The immortality of the soul is founded on the natural extension of the nature and dimensions of the soul in its affinity for eternal universals. In the *Phaedo*, the symbolic, conceptual experience of equality functions to argue for the divine immortality of the soul.

Before examining this argument (*logos*), one should note the context in which recollection is first mentioned in the *Phaedo*. Cebes is reminded that Socrates is fond of saying that our learning is but recollecting (*Phaedo* 72e). Accordingly, this is an argument for the mythical preexistence of the soul given the soul's ability (*dynamis*) to recollect something learned in a supposed, symbolic, previous time before birth. Socrates responds by asking for proofs for this recollection argument, since Socrates himself ironically does not recollect it very well right now. Cebes then mentions what has to be a direct reference to the *Meno* slave-boy demonstration, which the reader is being asked to recollect. By questioning and answering and through the use of mathematical diagrams, knowledge and right reason are aroused and recollected in the souls of humans, which previously they knew not, but paradoxically must have been there in some way. Then Socrates asks Simmias if he is incredulous or convinced that learning is recollecting. Simmias is neither, since he is only beginning to recollect and wants to hear more. In this successive way, Cebes, Socrates, the reader and Simmias are prepared dialogically to encounter the problem of beginning to recollect. Indeed, Socrates provokes

the event of inward turning or conversion, no longer being just swamped by the *aporia* of common *doxa* and fleeting sense perceptions.

The basic groundwork and condition for beginning to recollect can now be given. First of all, recollecting may occur when something (e.g., the lyre) unlike something else (e.g., its owner) reminds us of that something else (its owner). The relationship is between dissimilars. Secondly, recollecting may occur when one thing is like another—that is, between similars, such as the relationship between a picture of someone and the actual person in the picture. We are led to consider whether the likeness (a non-identity) is more or less exact or deficient. Taking together these two possible conditions for recollecting, we can say that the recollecting experience involves a combination of similarity and dissimilarity. Again, the use of analogies and paradigms (involving originals and copies) and the use of *mythos* as analogous and paradigmatic is consonant with the recollecting experience.<sup>20</sup> We have to wonder at this point whether all speech regarding the final end of recollecting, the forms, is inherently characterized by an imperfect, analogical grasping of what is similar but dissimilar. This would say something about the nature of our speech (*logos* and *mythos*) but would not preclude the oneness and self-identity of any form in itself, if knowledge and wisdom can be attained.

The fact that the experience of similarity and dissimilarity is a condition for recollecting is related to the perception of equal things and the relationship of this sense-perception to the idea of equality in itself. At no point does Socrates suggest that there is a causal nexus between sense-perception and conceptualization. What is stressed is that sense-perception is a condition for being reminded, for recollecting the concept or form. The form is fundamentally different from but related to (via participation) its found-likeness in things. The sense-perception of things that appear equal leads us to the recollection and knowledge of the form of equality as existing self-sufficiently (*Phaedo* 74b–75b). Just as Socrates leads the slave-boy in the *Meno* via visual diagrams and images, sense-perception leads to the recovery of the form in itself. Sense-perception is not the origin or cause of conceptualization or abstraction, as would be the case for Locke. For Socrates/Plato the *aporias* of sense-perception provoke and evoke. Recollecting is the dialectical experience of recognizing similarity and dissimilarity (*Republic* 523b–525d), and Socrates says, not sense-perception itself, but via equality itself (and forms of this kind) we must of “necessity have previous knowledge of the thing [equality] which he says the other [the sensible] resembles but falls short” (*Phaedo* 74e).

Recollection does not negate the possibility of errors, since it makes knowledge possible not necessary.<sup>21</sup> Just as in the *Meno* where Socrates spoke of the going back and forth (between this world and the next) of the transmigrating soul, likewise in the *Phaedo* (75ab) it is simultaneously said that our



conception of equality in itself could only have arisen from an extension of our self-critical sense-perception in this world. We must have in some way experienced knowledge of the equal in itself (mythically in the next world or in preexistence) before we ever began to use our senses, if we are going to have a measure to judge our sensible experiences.

Transmigrating (to and fro) souls need to be taken mythically, not literally, since this represents a conscious, dialogic process here and now. But why do we need a *mythos* for recollecting? First, there is something mysterious about our human ability to draw remarkable insights from our now conscious, but previously not so conscious, minds. There is fertile inspiration involved, but also such inspiration must pass the test of public intelligibility (*logos* and *nous*). Hidden resources, the previously unknown, appear as if we had once upon an earlier time known that. Again, is not all cognition a recognition of what had just moments before not been consciously and clearly known. *Mythos* functions with its own symbolic language to promote and evoke discovery. No small matter. *Mythos* provides grounds, be it the forms, the Good, soul judgment, the cosmos, the *telos* of *theoria*, happiness, beginnings and ends, all mysteriously flowing from and back to the eternal beyond.

The temptation here is to subordinate *mythos* (as a means) to *logos* (the justifying end), rather than to see *mythos* and *logos* both being complementary, dialectical means (via medias) that keep alive and never deaden the ongoing search. Therefore, the mythical characteristics of recollecting are not reducible to some non-mythical, commonsensical, or propositional understanding.<sup>22</sup> First of all, this would break recollecting from the mythical continuum of which it is a part without considering the consequences of being cut off from the flow and unfolding of this continuum of discovery and learning. But, secondly and more relevantly at this point, there is a paradox regarding this experience of recollecting, which has and does not have a basis in sense experience. Recollection is not simply a conceptualization process that is the end product of *logos* proper. Contrary to the modern empiricist, constructivist argument, reason is not the manipulation of sense experience without which reason would be inoperative.<sup>23</sup> Nor does recollecting lead to the hypostatization of some separate intellectual, mental world that denies all reality to the material, physical world (the extreme form of philosophical idealism). Instead of some two-worlds dualism, the mythical understanding of recollecting preserves the understanding (albeit paradoxical) that sense-perception participates and shares in the forms because we (our souls) are the active participants in-between here and there, going back and forth via a participatory communion (*koinonia*) between here and there. Yet our recollecting experience reveals an intelligible order different from sense experience (albeit there are various degrees and qualities of likeness between the two). Instead of making the *mythos* recollection an allegory that can be translated into an epistemology<sup>24</sup>, we have to realize (as indicated previously) that we alone,

self-sufficiently do not constitute, through conceptualization, the finality of what we experience, although we alone are responsible for the reflective, recollecting, stirring of our own soul. That there is something more (a measure) than each of us singly or aggregately can comprehend is the irreducible content to which the flow and orientation of mythical experience points.

Therefore, in the *Phaedo* (75c–e) recollecting is the recovery of knowledge and this applies not merely to the equal but with the same force to the beautiful itself, the Good itself, the just, the holy, in fact to everything upon which our souls contemplate being, “the thing itself,” when we engage in questioning and answering. Since upon examination we find that persons do not simply have the whole of knowledge since birth, then it must be that our souls preexisted and acquired knowledge of the forms at some previous time before our birth or generation. This leaves open the mythically flowing account that what we are now learning would be a consequence of previous reincarnations as well as some preexisting, non-worldly existence. *Mythos* addresses the mystery of our creation, involving as it does our potentialities to learn. Mythically there are imaginative, symbolic stories of preexistence, transmigration, and reincarnation, if there is to be justice for our existence. It is not that *anamnesis* and preexistence prove the existence of the forms, but rather that the soul’s preexistence and recollecting accounts for our coming-to-know or learning, all of which is grounded in the forms.<sup>25</sup> The soul’s immortality is mutually dependent on the existence of the forms, and recollecting is the stirring of the soul in its affinity to the transcendent,<sup>26</sup> atemporal forms. Herein, Plato is philosophically and mythically striving and struggling with the nature of becoming (genesis, *Phaedo* 86a–c) and being (oneness, true reality, *to ontos*, *Phaedo* 100a), the temporal and the eternal, the many and the one.

## THE PHAEDRUS

The *Phaedrus* (249b–d) carries *anamnesis* and its mythical dimension one step further. We are mythically told that

the soul which has never seen the truth can never pass into human form. For a human being must understand a general form (*eidōs*) formed by collecting into a unity by means of reason (*logismoi*) the many perceptions of sense; and this is a recollection (*anamnesis*) of those things which our soul once beheld, when it journeyed with god and lifting up its vision above the things which we now say exist, rose up into real being (*ontos*). (*Phaedrus* 249b–c)

Consequently, all embodied souls equally had this experience of the intelligible realities (see also the *Timaeus* 41e), and they can recollect the vision of intelligible realities or forms by a rational process of collecting the

multifarious sense perceptions into a unity (see also *Philebus* 25a). This explains the rational process whereby the philosopher grows wings and has communion (thus the affinity described in the *Meno* and also in the *Philebus* 31a–b) with the divine, all of which is soul-perfecting. While this is an experience of philosophical, erotic ascent (which we must later explore in depth), nevertheless it is preceded by great difficulties (*aporias*). Just as ascent implies some kind of passage and correction as one goes from one object of desire to another, likewise recollecting proceeds toward knowledge and requires adjustments and qualifications.<sup>27</sup> For “it is not easy for all souls to gain from earthly things a recollection of those realities” (*Phaedrus* 249e–250a). In some cases, persons only have a brief view of the intelligible realities; in other cases, earthly distractions and involvements cause serious forgetfulness. Few persons (namely lovers of wisdom) achieve a totally fulfilling recollection. The early copies of such forms as justice and moderation are lacking in the light that is necessary for beholding them through the dark organs of sense. What they imitate is truly seen with difficulty (*Phaedrus* 250b). It is an essential part of conversion that a soul finds courage deeply within its psychic descent to overcome *aporia* and ascend.

A reinitiation in these mysteries is required (*Phaedrus* 249c–d, 250b–c). This reinitiation (see *Symposium* 211a–b) is an erotic conversion experience engendering an ascent from earthly darkness to heavenly light. It is not surprising that the *Phaedrus mythos* depicts this conversion or recollection and ascent in terms of *eros*, divine madness, and the eventual vision of beauty in itself. Philosophical *eros* is an inner dimension that a person has for soul-flow, or does not have. There is no immediate and direct plugging into the forms. The mythical recollecting experience is constituted by *aporia*, conversion, descent/ascent, and dialectical collection and division (see *Sophist* 264c, 266e). And then there is fruition mythically beyond (*epekeina*, *Republic* 509b). We recognize these experiences as a mythical drama and not as some literal, philosophical doctrine.

Are there grounds for arguing that the absence of *anamnesis* in many of Plato’s later dialogues (such as the *Theaetetus*, *Parmenides*, and *Sophist*, although *anamnesis* is present in the *Philebus* and *Timaeus*) is sufficient evidence that *anamnesis* can be demythologized without loss (or worse, labeled a bogus sophistry to begin with)?<sup>28</sup> In other words, why cannot we assign to *nous* the native endowment of apprehending and conceptualizing intelligible objects, the forms, without resorting to some mythical transmigration of the soul’s symbolism? This would go contrary to my argument that recollecting is part of the conversion experience, which is mythically portrayed and is continuous with the other dimensions of *mythos*. Nevertheless, we have seen that recollecting is a part of the dialectical collection and division process (as *mythos* and *logos* often work together). Perhaps

it is not always necessary to keep the mythical characteristics of recollection, if recollecting is effectively reducible to the rational learning process of recognition and insight. However, this learning process in its erotic and inner struggling, namely its aporetic dimensions, is not so easy to analyze rationally or to abstract out, in order for it to be readily experienced and understood. *Mythos*, at the least, is evocative and engaging, when it tells the tale of the psychic flow and orientation.

A brief discussion of the reappearance of recollection in the *Philebus* (34b–c) will help clarify the matter. In the *Philebus*, besides the use of the term “*anamnesis*,” there is another term, *memnasai*, which means to remember and refers to one’s powers of memory (see also the passages cited above, *Philebus* 25a, 31a–b). The terms *anamnesis* and *mneme* are differentiated according to distinct but related meanings; memory involves the retention of sense-perception and involves the soul’s working with the body; *anamnesis* is when the soul by itself recollects with no help from the bodily senses, although what is recollected may be instigated by sense experiences. *Mneme* also tends to be a searching now, before, and after *anamnesis* or recollecting occurs. This agrees with the *mythos* of recollecting in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*. There is a continuity between memory and recollection. Recollecting may awaken the process of memory, yet still proceeds to a transcendent reference, the forms. Memory may help recollection. The key point as regards the mythical portrayal of recollection is this invisible functioning of the soul by itself within itself as it apprehends the immaterial, atemporal forms. Without the *mythos* pointing to a transcendent source, why should not a person claim that her/his noetic powers are solely his/her own doing and contriving? In the same way, a person could claim that she/he alone dictates the method and process of learning for anyone directly to know and to follow. *Mythos* is not just a crutch (or throwback<sup>29</sup>) used to speak about the psychologically invisible and immaterial. The experiences portrayed and discovered within the *mythos* are a limitation placed on hybriatic intellectual claims, which will be made by persons who claim their own constructed knowledge to be literal dogma.

A very short *mythos* told by Socrates near the end of the *Phaedrus* 274c–279c involves this very matter of human limitations and the recollecting experience. Socrates distinguishes, via a *mythos*, between memory (*mnemes*) and being reminded (*hypomnesia*) when this involves the mythical portrayal of the invention of writing by Theuth (a Promethean figure). Will this new invention be made known and available to humans? The ruler god, Thamus (a Zeus-like ruler), has this decision to make. This *mythos*, like other *mythoi* in the Platonic corpus, is heard from the ancients, but its truth value is for us to ascertain through inquiry. If it is found to be true, then we are elevated beyond human opinions and mere convention (*Phaedrus* 274c).

In the *mythos* Theuth is the inventor, among other things, of numbers, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and most important of all, letters. Theuth comes to Thamus, the god-ruler of Egypt, to introduce this invention among Egyptians. Accordingly, Theuth is required to enumerate the uses of his invention. Especially does Theuth praise the invention of letters and writing, since it will presumably make humans wiser through improving their memories (*mnemes*). Thamus, however, distinguishes between Theuth's inventive genius and his ability to judge the benefit or harm these inventions will have on its users. Is not this precisely the distinction between Prometheus and Zeus? Thamus claims to be the judge qua ruler who has the superior foreknowledge to recognize that writing will produce forgetfulness (the opposite of recollecting) in the minds of those who depend on external means (letters) that are no part of themselves (*Phaedrus* 275a).

At best, writing only reminds (*hypomnesia*) humans and has the appearance of wisdom, not wisdom itself. Written words tend to be statically fixed (like dogmas) and do not respond to questioning. However, there may be a kind of speech (*logon*) that is the image of the living, breathing word and knows to whom it speaks and how to defend itself (*Phaedrus* 276a). No doubt this is the authorless Platonic dialogue imitating the Socratic life and would include the dramatic dimension of *mythos*.<sup>30</sup>

There are two permissible models of writing, one of which is for amusement, a kind of external playing with words that serves the function of being a reminder for the writer and others against the forgetfulness that comes with the passing of time and with old age. Serious discourse, on the other hand, uses the dialectical method and speaks with those who can help themselves and continue the process of investigation (*Phaedrus* 276e–277a). Serious writing, first of all addresses the word (*logos*) within one's soul and secondly, addresses other souls who have an affinity to wisdom. In this respect, the end of the *Phaedrus* (279bc) is a Socratic prayer; "to be made beautiful within my soul." Concerning writing, and we can include the telling of *mythoi*, Socrates is externally playful and engaged in an amusing pastime with words. This is Socrates' reaction to Lysias' speech and the character of Phaedrus, as well as his reaction to all the speeches on *eros* in the *Symposium* (198b–199b). But there is the internal dimension regarding such words, behind the magnificent and illusory appearances of oratory, which is a serious preoccupation with the dynamic nature of the soul and its various dimensions. First, this presupposes getting clear about the nature of whatever is to be spoken of (a definition of *eros* in the *Symposium* and a definition of the nature of the soul in the *Phaedrus*). Secondly, there is the exploration of the dynamics of whatever may be statically defined when one seeks or strives for its proper perfection through actualization. This is the typical, standard procedure whereby the first stage may lead to the second stage, *mythos*. The first stage is like a

purification or initiation that undertakes a critical exploration involving both what something is (a “definition”)<sup>31</sup> and an animated soul-examination of the person who will act and/or be acted upon.

The *Phaedrus* can be our guide for a recollective hermeneutics<sup>32</sup> of *mythos*, recognizing that there is an irreducible mysteriousness about the soul’s experience of recollecting. From where does it come, who is its author, and how can it be accounted for? While this is the pupillary depths of the *mythos* of recollecting, on the other hand there is the external, magisterial features of a *mythos*, which are words (objectifications) playfully directed to the awareness or non-awareness of souls. Or they are words that are vital reminders for the person who already has come to know. It seems to be the case that most *mythoi* will have both magisterial and pupillary functions, or they will be primarily magisterial. This is a consequence of leaving behind a written text, which is neither a dogmatic teaching nor a program to be operationalized. We are in as much danger if we take literally the concrete objectifications of a *mythos* (e.g., preexistence, reincarnation, the *kallipolis*, a place of soul judgment after death) as we would be by reducing *mythos* (demythologization) to a univocal, rational account (*logos* proper). To keep *mythos* “mythical” requires focusing on those distinctive experiences of the soul captured in and through *mythos*, especially our very human *aporias*.

## THE IMAGE OF THE CAVE

The mythical experience of recollecting (*anamnesis*) needs to be considered alongside the experience of conversion and descent/ascent as found in the image of the cave in conjunction with the erotic ascents of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. It will be shown how recollecting (whether erotically inspired or produced by questioning and answering) is consistent with the experience of conversion or turning around (*periagoge*). To turn around means to turn away from. Why turn? What do we turn to and what do we turn from? Do we overturn? Do we re-turn? Does turning or revolution have only a local reference, or does it have a cosmic significance? These are the questions that the imagery of the cave invites.

While there is no reference to the cave as a *mythos* (it is called an *eikona*, *Republic* 517a and certainly not an allegory), it is difficult to ignore its mythical potentialities not only within the *Republic*, but also vis-à-vis the erotic *mythoi* of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. Furthermore, Socrates in the context of the cave imagery alludes to a descent to Hades and to an ascent to the light, all of which can be labeled as mythical (*Republic* 521c). Treating the cave as an allegory or parable diminishes its place within the continuity of mythical experiences and also inhibits a scrutiny of the problems of the cave imagery

as an educational experience. If the cave imagery is an allegory or parable, then we are strongly motivated simply to translate the cave into terms of the static divided line.<sup>33</sup> Yet even the divided line is not static, but proportionally analogical. The cave should dynamically activate the analogical possibilities of the divided line. Treating the cave imagery as at least proto-mythical achieves this desired result. Finally, the cave is a moving image of happenings; a drama of the human soul's possible ascent.

There may be reasons for not considering the cave as entirely a *mythos*. It is transitional and not fully developed. It is preceded by the more-than-usual hesitancy of Socrates when confronted with having to speak about the idea of the Good (*Republic* 503c–508c). Socrates is being asked and even being compelled to speak about the very end of philosophic aspiration, before he has even established the educational way for the lovers of wisdom to achieve that end. The inadequacy of the situation (and his interlocutors as well) requires the inadequacy of something transitional, such as the sun and cave images. Yet if there is anything about which we should have adequacy and precision, it is the Good (*Republic* 504e). On the other hand, our very transitional, mortal, human natures prevent immediate fulfillment and perfection. The sun, divided line, and cave all serve as transitional incitements without forsaking the long, hard and possibly up-and-down (inside and outside the cave) road ahead for the true lovers of wisdom.

Oddly enough, as regards the cave image, the incitement to undergo conversion and break with one's present condition is more readily understood as something outside the imagery of the cave rather than within that imagery. The cave is addressed to us as an image activating our lowest faculty, *eikasia*. Yet we, as readers or listeners, are allowed to see what the cave prisoners do not see, the full range and possibilities of ascent from the cave into the sunlight. The most prominent question and problem of the whole cave imagery is why do some (not all) prisoners turn around and try to ascend out of the cave? Is it enough to understand that they are compelled to turn around and are forcibly dragged out of the cave?<sup>34</sup> It would not be enough just to tell the prisoners they exist in a cave, as if this alone might persuade some of them to risk the perilous, upward journey. Is there any internal incitement for the imprisoned (chained) to venture on their own out of the security and predictability of cave existence? Their cave existence is all they have ever known. Convention and habit, like gravity, weigh them down and cause inertia. The prisoners do not even know they subsist in a cave, until they have turned themselves around (*periagoge*). Even if some were able to release their bonds and liberate themselves on their own initiative, why do this if there is only the blinding, burning fire above them and not anything tangibly real to provoke wonder or exploration? Perhaps education leading from the world of shadows requires a stronger dose of compulsion (externally imposed discipline)

than we would normally assume. If our existence within the cave is primarily bodily, then it is our bodies that are dragged out, not our souls. Compulsion befits the body not the soul. Likely, escape from the cave may require a leader or a teacher, who previously surmounted subterranean illusion and ignorance. Presumably, the prisoners who are led out of the cave and physically dragged against their desires and will, were recognized as potential lovers of wisdom by their teacher. Or this physical dragging may be a form of early training and testing, a provocation which would decide on what level of existence persons are inclined to be by their nature (soul).

Reason (*nous*), our leader or guide, will rule despotically over our bodies and appetites. Wisdom entails the suffering of *aporia*, toils and labors, yet some persist even against their own contrary, bodily desires. In any case, this initial conversion and ascent has to overcome the painful, blinding flames of the fire by seemingly passing through this test of fire. There is no mention of any powerful, inner motivation such as *eros*, or even less likely, the dialectical method of questioning and answering, that would instigate an effort of soul to turn around and consider an ascent. Nevertheless, elsewhere (perhaps going past the fire in the cave) both *eros* and dialectic may lead to wisdom through suffering (*pathos*), be it the suffering of restraint, shame, immediate perplexity, or ignorance regarding what one thought one knew. There is an additional possibility, namely, that compulsion should be understood figuratively or mythically. In this regard, we are “compelled” by someone and something outside us to allow ourselves to be pulled by the forces “up there,” or there are forces down in the cave forcing us up: “Their source of the help is hidden; we can only say it is There.”<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps, this is the point where a brief interlude is fitting. The *aporia* that may instigate *perialoge* (instead of submission and ignorance) needs to be explored in its many kinds and conditions, not just as a problem of being captivated by the images of sensible reality, as if this were all that knowledge could be. Certainly, death and loss (in the case of Plato it was Socrates’ wrongful death sentence) can be the *krisis* (a testing time in Greek) that is a spur to carry on somehow in the vein of one’s teaching master. Inner turmoil (such as the death of anyone very close to us) causes a deep descent to Hades in terms of whatever transient life can mean. Is this life all that there is? Why do I even suppose the sense of immortality against the reality of mortality is some true indication of our soul’s immortality? In the depth of Hades, a person nakedly comes face-to-face with one’s own abyss of ignorance. Do a light flash and a path illumine a *perialoge* and ascent? Because light is an opening for the eyes to see, light alone can be a pull and draw on its own. Do poetry and sophistry disturb a person because they provide a false *paideia*, thus a challenge to moral rightness, instead of a life of routine survival and relativistic opportunism? The sense that there is something misleading and



faulty about poetry and sophistry is alone not enough to explain resistance to their powerful suasion and compelling illusiveness. They will persist to exist in one's soul in the form of a temptation, a fall, a derailment, and deformation that cannot just be easily purged. They have the power to become a person's full-blown ideology. And then there is the political (*polis*) problem, the seemingly inherent defect in human affairs, since so many political things continue to go awry (to put it mildly). Plato clearly saw and felt this regarding the Athenian regime. Thus, it is "mythically" portrayed in his declension of somewhat legitimate regimes (monarchy, aristocracy, and, democracy) into quite illegitimate regimes (tyranny, timocracy, and oligarchy). The overwhelming temptation is to wash one's hands of all political engagement and withdraw into the solitude of one's own philosophical musings. But this would be a dead end, not to have discussions with others that clearly help lead to one's own improvement (better to be proven wrong, then to prove others wrong, as Socrates ironically believed). And it truly is a perverse fantasy to think you can construct your own little separate world and not be affected by the real political world around you, because withdrawal already is an affect.

Your *periagoge* is marked by the recognition that you have a moral and political obligation to be politically engaged, if only in your teaching in a mini-*proto polis*, such as a school. Well before a higher order conversion, there is this lower order conversion when your chains come off as you abandon a private subjectivism and a false (sense-perception based) objectivism. The weight of convention, "the old man," is shucked off like barnacles in order to move ahead. An endless purification (*katharsis* and *therapeia*) is undergone. Somehow assertive courage and humble moderation intertwine in order to realize some justice in one's actions. The dialectical, analogical-mythical, contemplative (*theoria*) ascent begins. Endless contemplative recollecting (awareness and pursuit) stirs. On the model/form of beauty being the most enticing vision, a soul can have in the radiant light of the sun, you devote your earthly cave life to the potentially hazardous and always incomplete achievement of the *kallipolis* in speech, at least if not in deed. The paradigmatic life of Socrates can be the model for the pursuit of intelligibility (*noesis*) in light of the supervenient form of the Good, the most divine aspiration limited mortals can imagine in the drama of their human soul.

From the beginning, the image of the cave and its dwellers is declared by Glaucon to be strange (*Republic* 515a), a dream shadow existence wherein humans see nothing of themselves except reflections. Even the reflections from objects are of artificial things, as if puppets.<sup>36</sup> It is befitting that such artificial objects, the products of human invention, are displayed before the fire which is the gift of Prometheus. Would the Promethean Protagoras *mythos* have enabled us to go beyond the questionable, stolen gift of fire and its artificial objects? There is something transcending about this ascent from

the cave, especially if our experiences and opinions are still bound to conventional, traditional *mythos*.

Further, we wonder: how and why did human beings originally become so imprisoned? The cave has no answers, except that we are this way from birth, our bodies like gravity weigh us down, and our mortality is our predetermined fate. So, persevere. (The *Phaedrus* and *Phaedo mythoi*, because they are fully mythical, portray the “fall” of souls.) In any case, the departure from the cave, even though it involves bodily compulsion, does accord with our nature and educational experiences beyond the body (*Republic* 514a, 515c, 519c). Have not we all, when children, innocently fashioned little private worlds of our own? That we are compulsively led from the cave does not preclude the possibility that our leader or teacher will not engage us in persuasive conversation. There is a term for leading souls out of the bondage to *eikasia*: *psychagogia*. The teacher attempts to inspire pupils that they are nearer to true, full reality the higher they ascend, but also questions them as they traverse ordeals during the ascent (*Republic* 515d–e). Does this remind us of Odysseus’ travails? Yet is not the end point for Odysseus, returning home, returning to the cave of ordinary existence? But the ascent is long and hard, not only physically, but also intellectually (noetically). If pupils face the bright light too soon, they will flee in terror because of their own painful blindness. But they must be dragged up from the cave in order to begin the process of adjustment to the world of light. Such is the early paideutic experiences conveyed by *mythos*.

Once outside the cave, images and reflections (the faculty *eikasia*) will have proper, real objects enabling the passage from likenesses to the objects in themselves (*Republic* 516a). Appearances can now be contemplated according to their true nature, and this includes a contemplation of the heavens or cosmos and the causes of things (e.g., seasons) in this visible region. In this respect, the divided line is now actually outside the cave—that is, *eikasia* truly functions once one has escaped the false or misleading *eikasia* and therefore false or misleading *pistis* of the cave. Does leaving the cave mean transcending the physically visible to the psychic vision of the philosophically invisible in the blinding sun?

Likewise, only when one has escaped the cave is it possible for recollecting (*anamimneskomenon*, *Republic* 516c) the true condition of shadow guessing in the cave. Recollection is possible because what happens in the cave (now once outside the cave) can be understood for what it really was. Now a human soul has access to true origins or causes that were at a third remove inside the cave. However, existence outside the cave may more correctly conform to a *dianoetic eikasia* and indeed the study of astronomy in a philosopher’s education is at the *dianoetic* level on the divided line, where models and images are used hypothetically. The significant conclusion, no matter how the cave and divided line are analogically connected, is that there is a proportional

dynamism and continuity<sup>37</sup> between the four sections of the divided line, such that *eikasia* and *pistis* are not simply left behind as the condition of cave dwellers. This cave existence of *eikasia* and *pistis* naturally points beyond the cave, since they reappear outside the cave now in the form of true images and true beliefs. Thus, we find the image of the sun and visibility analogous to the Good and intelligibility (*Republic* 517b).

A problem remains: those who escape the cave are exceedingly unwilling to return to the cave. Their own good motivates them according to their capabilities to pursue divine contemplation exclusive of human affairs in the cave. To return to the cave would mean not only the pain of being blinded again, this time by darkness, but also possible severe mistreatment by the hostile prisoners who never escaped. To tell the still bound prisoners of the ascent and the world of light beyond the bodily protections of the cave and even to try to release them can bring ridicule, contempt, and the threat of death (Socrates knew so well). Why should the philosopher risk his/her life for those who resist liberation and education? Is it possible that the philosopher will have to risk suffering personal harm in order not to harm, through neglect and disadvantage, other potential philosophers? These are life and death questions that are ongoing, depending on the direction of one's conversion, either going from darkness to light or from light to darkness. If the gods care for us, all the more should the lovers of wisdom care for those potential lovers of wisdom.

What is this act of conversion or turning around, so central to the cave image? Just as one cannot put vision into eyes that are blind, neither can one put true knowledge into a soul that is not developing such powers (*Republic* 518c). This is consistent with the experience of recollecting. There is an indwelling potentiality in the soul analogous to that of the eye in the body that cannot be converted to light and pure visibility without opening the eyes and turning the whole body around. The soul likewise must be turned from the world of becoming to the world of being, from manyness to oneness, from appearance to reality, and from the sensible to the intelligible, even though words cannot describe how difficult and tremulous this conversion is. Also, like recollecting, this action of converting is continuous and persistent until the soul can (or cannot) endure the contemplation of that which is. The bodily dimension of imprisonment, with the soul being in the dungeon of the body, accounts for the physical compulsion that runs throughout the cave image. The soul must learn to rule the body despotically. This would also mean that the ascent from the cave does violence to conventional dispositions and practices within the cave (city). The lover of wisdom only conditionally is the good cave citizen.

Conversion is the art of turning souls around and directing them where to look and to come to know (*Republic* 518d). The inculcation by habit and by practice of the virtues of the body need not be discontinuous with the virtues of the soul or intellect (*nous*). But it is the latter that are decisive determinants

of the beneficial or harmful direction of the soul being a conversion of the soul upward, not an inversion of the soul downward. In other words, conventional courage and moderation are not a sufficient guarantee for the soul's health. The same ruling power of the soul (*nous*) keen on the vision of divine things can also be turned toward worldly pleasures and evils. Such would be the greatly ambitious (*thymotic*)<sup>38</sup> soul without philosophic direction and purpose.

While the best natures are compelled to attain the greatest knowledge through the ascent to the vision of the Good, contrariwise they must be compelled to reenter the cave of human, political affairs (*Republic* 520a). The first and last conversions are preceded by a compulsion, lest we think we have achieved some final state outside of which there is no action, be it in the dark, safe habitation of the cave or in the magnificent vision outside the cave. The latter must not be mistaken for the Isles of the Blessed (*Republic* 519–d). Conversion is followed by political action and participation, not contented rest or dogmatic slumber. In-between the first and last conversions is another conversion alternative: the free decision of the soul to pursue the love of wisdom outside the cave, or to forego it by inability, lack of effort, and this-worldly diversions.

In sum, the cave image should not be thought of as a *mythos* that carries us to some final, divinized end, such as the Isles of the Blessed. As in the *mythos* of recollection, which spoke of going to and from one incarnation to the next, analogously we are also compelled to go out of the cave and then to return into the cave. This compulsion may be related to the mere necessary fact of human existing (as opposed to immortal divine existing), which requires coming-to-be through education both here and there. There does exist a possible communion (*homonoia*) or community of existence (*Republic* 520a) between those outside the cave and those inside. There is no injustice to the philosopher in compelling her/him to return to the cave,<sup>39</sup> as if it were the case that she/he is spontaneously self-grown (*autofues*), and not indebted to anyone or anything from the beginning in escaping the cave (*Republic* 520b). The philosopher is like a god-send to the city and especially to other potential philosophers who alone can more likely escape the cave and city by living in a city ruled and lead by philosophers. Certainly, cities will be better governed if paradoxically there is something higher and transpolitical that draws the love (one is tempted to think of the *eros* not much mentioned here in the *Republic*) of the ruler toward the lover of wisdom not the love of ruling. Might the best rulers, given the Gyges' temptations, be the persons who do not seek and want to rule (e.g., Cincinnatus and Washington)?

The *Republic* as a whole and the cave image at the center of this whole excludes *eros*, except that the most erotic person politically is the tyrant. But is not *eros* defined by its direction leading to the conversion or inversion of the

soul? If so, this would leave a place for philosophic *eros*, although (purposely?) excluded in the imagery of the cave.<sup>40</sup> The inclusion of *eros* would necessitate a more elaborate account of philosophical ascent and *eros*. Outside the city in the *Phaedrus* this *eros* is let loose. Politically in the *Republic*, *eros* seems to need taming not encouragement at this stage of education. Is there a sense in which the philosopher's return to the cave (especially if we imagine that the philosopher is continually turning from and turning back to the cave) is perfective of both the philosopher and of human existence? Is there a greater fullness when being and becoming are encompassed, a fullness of contemplation and action, which would be diminished if the philosopher dwelt only before being, that which is?<sup>41</sup> In other words, does being (regarding coming-to-know, not finally knowing) more richly manifest itself as it appears or shows itself in the realm of becoming? Otherwise, there would be a radical break, without any affinity or bridge, between being and becoming. Or is that some great danger that the best (being) will contaminate and degrade itself by contact with the lesser (becoming)? So, should it be the case that the philosopher assumes divinity, being purely devoted to the contemplation of being? But is this pure devotion, while still having bodily existence in this world, presumptuous, hybridic self-divination, still imperfect, since it neglects the human participation of what becomes in what is? Even short of the best regime, would we counsel the philosopher to lead a private life remaining dutiful only to his own soul's self-perfection? The imagery of the cave does not satisfactorily resolve these kinds of questions. Therefore, these questions will be answered in the terms of *mythoi* that are yet to be examined—that is, covering *mythoi* that ascend to the transpolitical and more adequately pose the problem of the political in relation to the transpolitical or philosophically contemplative life.

The Socratic maieutic (see *Theaetetus* 160e, 184b) is *psychagogia* (*Phaedrus* 261a and *Timaeus* 271c), the evocative art of leading souls. The play of stories (not fancies or personalities) provides dramatic answers in action, going from *logos* to possible *erga* or deeds. (Aristotle will conceptualize this in his definition of *physis*, the nature of reality, from potency to act.) There is always the possibility of derailment in rhetorical excesses and waywardness, and mimetic deficiencies and autonomy. To find the measure or mean regarding courage/moderation (Aristotle will formalize this, but Plato for political purposes turns to *meson* or measure, rather than the transcendent Good) is ever the preparation for the philosophic (erotic/*philia*) goal toward the divine. Indeed, this calls for deep reflection, but “to know oneself,” or really one's soul Socratically, is not to make man (mortality and convention) the final measure. Mortals have enough to do politically to combine *sophrosyne* and *andreia*, self-control and courage. Beyond mortality is the philosophical to-live-to-die-for inquiring, manic, erotic soul. The *via medias* are *logos* and *mythos*.

## THE EROTIC ASCENT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The pilgrimage of the soul insofar as it is capable of ascent is further elaborated in the erotic *mythos* of the *Symposium*. While the erotic ascent in the *Symposium* still has recourse to a leader or guide, or the *daimon* of one's soul that everyone has, it is readily acknowledged why the soul itself strives to go beyond its present conventional, habitual, incarnate condition. Of course, there is no erotic necessity that leads one beyond the love of beautiful bodies, and from the beginning there may be strong conventional pressures exerted against the erotic person. Just as Lysias in the *Phaedrus* gives praise to the concealed erotic person, the so-called non-lover, many of the speeches in the *Symposium* (before Socrates' speech and Alcibiades' entrance) are quite restrained about the passionate, excessive demands of *eros*.<sup>42</sup> Many people settle down and accept the seemingly inherent fact of *eros* that it is temporary, conditional, transient, even unpredictable, in granting pleasure and satisfaction. However, to other persons *eros* is an experience of discomfort and *aporia*, of deficiency and falling short of grasping something solid, stable, and secure. This lacking erotic experience could goad and direct *eros* upward and beyond itself. The converted, redirected philosophic *eros*, would seek that which naturally fulfills the erotic drive (perhaps after many trials and errors). A corresponding kind of conversion happens with *mythos*, when the *eros* is poetic in nature, going from traditional flawed *mythos* to philosophic *mythos*.

A leader and guide is requisite to prevent acquiescence to this slumbering, ignorant acceptance of mere opportunistic life as it goes by in order to channel *eros* rationally, philosophically. Some sort of recollection and/or conversion is presupposed, whereby we apprehend an end existent for its own sake, independent of all our striving (since merely striving does not make or attain anything substantial necessarily). This end is the perfection and fulfillment of our longing nature. There is no immediate possession of such an end, but there is the searching of the whole soul, both its erotic and rational powers, for the ground and for the consummation that will make all erotic and rational endeavors meaningful and intelligible. *Eros* beckons a presentiment of completeness, but the ways of *eros* are partial and manifold.<sup>43</sup>

The *Symposium* reveals the extraordinary difficulty of speaking about *eros*. Can *eros* even be given a *logos*? What is *eros*? Is *eros* a "what," having a definable nature? The speeches preceding Socrates' speech are eulogies of *eros*, although, with the exception of Agathon, no mention (never mind any struggle) is made to explain the nature of *eros*. Socrates begins by honoring Agathon for knowing at least where to begin. However, in the end, Agathon is shamed for only descriptively applying all kinds of beautiful attributes to *eros* itself. The previous speeches are important as they represent the longing of philosophic *eros* to affix itself on something sure and solid, truly pleasurable

and rewarding. But only Socrates allows us to stand back to discern and to judge the multi-directionality and the mad, dynamic dimension of *eros* itself. Therefore, Socrates' speech begins with a *logos* or account of *eros* in terms of what it is and is not. Only thereafter can Socrates portray its actions (*erga*) befittingly in a *mythos* (*Symposium* 199c, 201e). *Mythos*, more than *logos*, is a realm of dynamic action and deed.

*Eros* is radically intentional by nature—that is, *eros* is always of something more than itself. *Eros* desires not what it possesses, but necessarily what it lacks. Even when someone says she/he desires what she/he has now, she/he means that she/he desires these same things to be forever. *Eros* itself fitfully desires completion, yet false, base *eros* seems insatiable. Socrates now asks Agathon to recollect (*anamnestheti*) what the ends of love are in general (*Symposium* 201a). Thus, recollecting in the *Symposium* serves, through questioning and answering, to be a way of clarifying the nature of *eros*, whether it is always incomplete, or whether it has an ultimate end. By recollecting, the gods become exemplars of erotic action vis-à-vis their relation to beautiful things. In truth, *eros* itself lacks beauty, and since good things are beautiful, *eros* also lacks goodness. *Eros* itself alone is fundamentally deficient. As Aristophanes' speech portrayed on the bodily level, our *eros* reveals we are not whole, even though we erotically desire and pursue wholeness.

Socrates continues his discussion of *eros* by calling upon the mantic woman of Mantinea, Diotima, a prophetess. Socrates says he learned from this prophetess, who is a go-between the gods and humans. Likewise, *eros* itself is a go-between ugliness and beauty, ignorance and knowledge. In-between ignorance and knowledge is false and true opinion, and this would account for the great diversity of opinions that are heard (such as in all the speeches in the *Symposium* about *eros*). Thus, *eros* is not a great god happy and beautiful, but a great *daimon* between the mortal and divine (*Symposium* 202e). Diotima, like *eros*, has the power of going back and forth between the human and divine, interpreting and transporting from humans to gods and from gods to humans. If *eros* can be said to be strongly definitive of human nature, insofar as human nature partakes of the mortal and immortal, and insofar as humans move between knowledge and ignorance via true or false opinions, then Diotima is a personified, mediating exemplar of our own *daimon*, a leader or guide within or outside our human nature, howsoever we choose. Through opinions, *eros*, and *daimones*, we shall know who a person is. Being intermediate and midway (the *metaxy*), Diotima (as well as opinion, *eros*, and the personal *daimon*) can go back and forth traversing and comprehending the whole (*Symposium* 202e). The evidence of Plato's *mythoi* reveals more and more clearly that *mythos* irreducibly depicts a going hither and thither, from here to there, from there to here. We are fundamentally *daimonic*, erotic, in-between beings in

search of our wholeness (which Aristophanes comically, erotically, but only bodily, portrayed).

This *daimonic* power befits a long tale about the parentage and birth of Eros. The tale symbolically grounds the origin of Eros in a union between Poverty (mortal want) and Resource (immortal scheming, cunning, wile), all of which is unauthorized.<sup>44</sup> This birth is achieved by the want (drunken-ness) of Resource and the devising of Poverty (*Symposium* 203b–c). While in actuality the parentage of Resource is forgotten through drunkenness (Metis, the first wife of Zeus is Resource’s mother and Metis is representative of wisdom and counsel), the offspring of this union, Eros, will potentially partake of such counsel and wisdom. Bluntly, this union could be depicted as “the inebriated penetration of richness into poverty.”<sup>45</sup> This *mythos* is a shocking reversal of the usual, traditional, mythical account. (Is this just “payback” on Plato’s part regarding traditional *mythos*, and/or can it be part of the reversal of the *kosmos*’ motion in the *Timaeus*?) In this instance, the mortal woman rapes the immortal male god. As if to repair this impious reversal, the offspring of the union, Eros, will be from the beginning an attendant and minister to the traditional goddess of love, Aphrodite, since Eros is begotten on the same day as Aphrodite’s birth. Eros by nature is a mixture of want and resource, who seeks fulfillment as a lover of beauty (*Symposium* 203c). If *Eros* by nature of parentage were wise not ignorant, beautiful not ugly, good not evil (instead of being radically between these), then Eros would be self-satisfied, without desire, and self-sufficient—that is, a Platonic god. If we keep clear this differentiation between Eros and Aphrodite, we will not confuse the lover with the beloved, and we will not confuse our own *daimonic* nature with the divine (*Symposium* 204b–c). However, we remain unconvinced by Diotima’s attempt to relate *eros* with *philia*, namely, that *eros* is a friend of wisdom (*philosophon*, *Symposium* 204b). How does provocative, dangerous, insatiable, wild *eros* become or serve moderate, gentle, caring *philia*? Does this have anything to do with Eros’ attachment to Aphrodite, who being divine is complete? Or how about grandmother Metis of wisdom and counsel, but at a greater remove from Eros?

More directly the question is: why is *eros* not endless, whirling, directionless desire dedicated to possession and domination (the *libido dominandi*)? Is there anything ultimate to erotic striving? Is there some *eidos* of *eros* (*Symposium* 205b) amidst the tremendous variety of erotic pursuits? But *eros* presents itself as pure, raw intentionality without any sure object. Generally, Socrates/Plato can say that all persons love or desire good things and love or desire to be happy. Furthermore, love loves the Good in some way to become one’s own forever (*Symposium* 206a). This is what happiness means, namely, to have always what one truly desires or loves. But, how do persons go about this and achieve this? Do not humans try to beget on the beautiful by body



and by soul? Love is not simply of the beautiful (*Symposium* 206e). Love is the engendering and begetting on the beautiful. *Eros* actively pursues divine immortality, not a passive appreciation of beauty, which may have been the case before *Eros* came to be, when Poverty chose to lay with Resource. This erotic action for the sake of immortality means leaving behind a new creature in place of the old. Poverty and Resource leave behind *Eros*.

It is worth noting here that *Eros* both leads to the divine and from the divine. Perhaps we can state that there is a human *eros* upward to the divine, but also a divine *eros* downward to humans. Voegelin refers to this as the “loving response” appeal of the divine,<sup>46</sup> a partnership in the quest. This helps explain what might drive a person to get up and out of the cave of human existence.

*Eros* also means protecting and caring for offspring as animals do. How does this brute bodily dimension correspond to the *eros* of the soul? We seek to avoid forgetfulness and to gain knowledge by practicing and caring for those souls we engender through learning. This means we erotically desire to learn continually via others. Humans also commonly seek to win immortal fame by doing noble deeds that may result in sacrificing their lives. The good life is better than mere life, and through the hope of immortal fame, self-sacrifice is a witness in action to the good life. But we are still left with the problem of evaluating the many manifestations of *eros* that teem within our bodies and souls. We still wonder what converts the grasping, claiming, possessive attributes of *eros* into the more sober and rational lover and friend (*philia*) of wisdom.

Diotima proposes that only a rite of initiation leading to the revelations of those properly instructed can prepare the way for an erotic ascent (*Symposium* 210a). *Eros* is our *daimon*, our own inner guide, as well as Diotima and Socrates. You shall know them by their loves, since we are all lovers. As indicated previously, *mythos* best occurs once *logos* makes its distinctions, definitions, and qualifications—that is, when we have been rationally prepared for action. From youth, we erotically encounter particular beautiful bodies, which engender beautiful speech (*logous*). From one particular beautiful body, we may proceed to the form (*eidei*) of beauty common to many beautiful bodies. We become lovers of all such beautiful bodies when they manifest the form of beauty. This pattern of moving from the particular and the many to the general and the comprehensive characterizes each stage in the erotic ascent.

Next, we advance to the inner beauty of souls, especially since this involves loving and caring for *logous* among the young. From discourse with many souls or citizens we are led to contemplate the beautiful, when and if it appears in customs and laws. The best customs and laws (*nomoi*) educationally bind persons together and exemplify a kinship among many called

community and friendship (*Symposium* 209c, 210c). Customs and laws may enshrine immortal deeds. On this level of community (the *polis*) our erotic passions are tempered by participation in customs and laws achieving a political *philia*. But these customs and laws are still particular, many, and external. Worse, they may become actually corruptive. Underlying or presupposing them is the knowledge of the virtues in general (*Symposium* 209a, 210c) that unite a people, if only because the regulation of cities depends on the virtues of sobriety and justice (*Symposium* 209a–b). To have proceeded from the multiplicity and particularity of *eros* to the friendship and love (*philia*) of wisdom requires a conversion from love of one's own (e.g., including one's own offspring) to a love of what is not one's own, which transcends one's own particular erotic strivings, although our own erotic strivings have brought us this far.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, there is yet “a certain single knowledge with a beauty yet to be told” that we must noetically apprehend (*Symposium* 210d–e). At the apex of this ascent is a sudden revelation (*exaiphanes*), a wondrous vision, beautiful in its nature and the final end of the rigorous, erotic ascent (*Symposium* 210e–211d).

Nevertheless, we need to remember some preceding remarks and hesitations. Diotima doubts that Socrates will be able to have these final revelations, although she does not deny there is this way or method to such revelations (*Symposium* 210a, 211b). Secondly, *eros* is not possession of the beautiful, but a begetting or engendering of the beautiful. It befalls us once we have experienced the vision of unique divine beauty to generate true examples or images (*eidola*) of virtue (*Symposium* 212a). This indicates in deed that we have truly seen and experienced within ourselves, in contemplation, the beautiful. In this way, one becomes a friend of the gods and immortal, but not a god oneself. This is the best our human nature can hope to find through *eros* that becomes *philia*, and it also means a return to the *polis*. What we possess in the end is not beauty in itself, but the vision of beauty in itself, which we may then actively reproduce through virtuous deeds. Also, what is this “*nous*” that has been activated by Eros? How does *nous* bridge the gap between beautiful objects and beauty in and of itself?

Remembering the close relationship between beauty and the Good, beauty is the manifestation of order flowing from the Good that is the principle of order and intelligibility (*nous*). Collectively, the virtues of sobriety and justice and courage and wisdom represent an order of beauty. Although our experience (*pathos*) of beauty is a vision of great wonder before which we are awe-struck, we are then sent back down into the cave of political life, insofar as we humanly are going to act in receptivity to this vision. We do not act upon the vision; it acts upon us, and we upon others, and the things of this world by reproducing images (*mythoi*) of virtue that partake in pure beauty. Surely *eros* has been the forceful, motivating thrust of this ascent to beauty,

but the depths of this experience, being an experience of the divine beauty (Aphrodite), makes for a gentle and moderate philosophic *eros*—that is, an *eros* reoriented by *nous* and the *philia* of wisdom.

Toward the end of the *Symposium*, Alcibiades bursts into this gathering or drinking party. Will we be distracted enough to forget Socrates' Diotima *mythos*? Does Alcibiades' ravaging *eros* represent a synopsis of the other speeches on *eros* in sharp contradistinction to Socrates' speech? There will be no easy converting and redirecting of *eros*.

### THE PATHOS OF MYTHOS

Perhaps the time has come to clarify the experience or *pathos* of *mythos* in accord with the action consequences of the mythical experience. First of all, it has been repeatedly stated that *mythos* provides no immediate, direct, easy access to some experience, divine inspiration, noetic insight, intuition or revelation. The way or dialectical *methodos* is long, hard, and roundabout, and this includes recollecting, questioning and answering, *logos*, and all kinds of trials including aporetic suffering. Nevertheless, at the summit of mythical ascent there is the ultimate *pathos*—that is, the sudden experience (*exaiph-anes*) of noetic insight. In this respect *mythos* is *dianoetic* since it leads up to *noesis*, and also *mythos* is *dianoetic* since it leads down from *noesis* in the reproduction of images of that noetic insight. The reproducing and collecting of such images makes possible the return to the noetic insight. And these images can also be thought of as actions of a sort, if not action spurring.

How then account for the first, original, noetic insight that did not have the benefit of already generated, reproduced images? If we were our own self-sufficient makers, and constructors of our world as well, then indeed *mythos* dissolves and needs only allegorical translation by some wise, self-sufficient person who utterly reduces *mythos* to some *techne*.<sup>48</sup> Be it noted that Diotima carefully distinguishes the *daimonic* person from the technocratic person (*Symposium* 203a). We have seen *mythos* disclose recollection, conversion, and erotic ascent, and we have been consciously led to return to originals or origins and, to put it differently, we are regenerated anew within ourselves. We can then actively participate in-between our origin and our end.<sup>49</sup> *Mythoi*, as generated images, are possible and natural because of our analogical affinity to a common psychic, political, and cosmic order, which acts as a guide leading us to the ground, our beginning and our end. Only as we have traversed the whole, natural, and continuous scope of *mythos* will this be clearer.

There is no claim that *mythos* itself is noetic for that would confuse the means of our soul (*nous*) with a particular mode of achievement (*mythos*). Nevertheless, it is via both *logos* and *mythos* as means that the luminosity of

the end provides us with a sudden, instantaneous, noetic insight. How can we speak about that noetic *pathos* (which is a prized *pathos*)? In writing about the *Gorgias*, Eric Voegelin recognizes:

*Pathos* is what men have in common, however variable it may be in its aspects and intensities. *Pathos* designates a passive experience, not an action; it is what happens to man, what he suffers, what befalls him fatefully and what touches him in his existential core—as for instance the experiences of *eros*. In their exposure to *pathos* all men are equal, though they may differ widely in the manner in which they come to grips with it and build the experience into their lives. There is the Aeschylean touch even in this early work of Plato, with its hint that the *pathemata* experienced by all may result in a *mathema* different for each man. The community of *pathos* is the basis of communication. Behind the hardened, intellectually supported attitudes which separate men, lie the *pathemata* which bind them together. However, false and grotesque the intellectual position may be, the *pathos* at the core has the truth of an immediate experience. If one can penetrate to this core and reawaken in a man the awareness of his *conditio humana*, communication in the existential sense becomes possible.<sup>50</sup>

The *pathos* of *mythos*, perhaps even the highest noetic insights, is common to all, if only they will awake and hear. This does not in any way suggest that all persons are potentially philosophers. Rather all humans have seen and can recollect the forms in various ways, since this is a condition for human existence, assuming no impairment. Therefore, all persons (like the slave-boy) have potential access in their power (*dynamis*) of understanding (*dianoia*), or in their power of acknowledging right belief (*pistis*), although not all persons will exercise fully their powers of intelligibility (*noesis*). *Mythos* speaks on the existential level of different possible learnings (*mathemai*), and *mythos* is meant to open the way for communication and political action.

Plato himself in the *Seventh Letter* directly faces the problem of speaking about such a philosophic, noetic insight into all of reality (*Epistle 7*, 344b). This occurs within the context of telling the story (*mythos*, *Epistle 7*, 344d) about the tyrant Dionysius and his philosophic capabilities. First of all, a man like Dionysius has to be tested by his philosophical mentor to ascertain whether he is suited by nature to take the laborious road of philosophy. Hence, the reappearance of the guide or leader from the cave image and *Symposium mythos*. Above all, philosophy requires a studious mode of life devoted to learning, remembering, and reasoning (*Epistle 7*, 340b–d). Failure to endure the labors of studying and the belief that such a course of study can be simply, verbally conveyed and written down reveal that such pupils do not know what the study of philosophy is, nor do they know themselves (*Epistle 7*, 341b–c).

For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul all of a sudden (*exaiphanes*) as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself. (*Epistle 7*, 341c–d)

Plato then proceeds to give an outline of philosophy as a whole, which is a true argument he would present to an aspiring student of philosophy (*Epistle 7*, 340b, 342aff.). This outline of study does not do what Plato said he cannot do (because of the *pathos*), nor does it do what in effect would do more harm than good to mankind (*Epistle 7*, 341d–e).

For any eventful experience, there are five phases that are necessary when attaining knowledge of that experience of trying to establish wisdom and truth itself finally in oneself. The three preliminary means to knowledge are the name (*enoma*), the definition (*logos*), and the image (*eidolon*) in that order. The example of the circle is used in the Seventh Letter. Fourth in order is knowledge, intelligence (*nous*), and true opinion which form a single whole in souls that attempt to express the real essence of anything such as the circle. The person of *nous* approaches most near in likeness to wisdom and truth in itself and does not venture to make unalterable words express her/his final apprehension. To do so would mean expressing the attribute not the essence of what is sought (*Epistle 7*, 343b–c). It is fitting to note that images (likenesses) and knowledge work together at this point, and *logos* and naming are subordinate. An action such as Plato's venture to Syracuse is an image of what he knows, and an account (*logos*) of what happened. The first four means to the end of wisdom are defective without the fifth that is vocally unutterable, since it is in the soul of the philosopher now in silent contemplation (*theoria*). If, however, a person has a natural affinity and is receptive, retentive, and long enduring, the truth of the whole of being (*ousias*) will burst out in the light of intelligence (*nous*) and reason (*phronesis*) to him/her who uses every effort within the power of mankind (*Epistle 7*, 344b). In terms of the circle, one can imagine this experience to be (*viz.*, the *Timaeus*) the contemplation of the circularly revolving heavens.

Plato himself calls this account of his encounter with Dionysius, a *mythos* (*Epistle 7*, 344d). What is most prominent in the *Seventh Epistle* is the instantaneous, ecstatic, noetic vision, which is more wonderful than can be wondrously imagined. It is not for the asking, nor for the making. It is not achieved by education alone but requires a divine gift of nature. It is the luminosity of being in speechless wonder. By hearing and following the words of *mythos* and *logos* we gather both the image and the knowledge of that which precedes, but does not entirely constitute, the ineffable, transcending, noetic experience.

## THE ASCENT OF THE *PHAEDRUS*

It is appropriate to understand that the *Symposium* proceeds entirely within the intermediate domain of becoming—that is, between nothingness and being.<sup>51</sup> On the basis of a this-worldly, immanent account of the erotic *psyche*, Socrates can lead us to the transcending of the domain of becoming. The *Phaedrus* goes further in its attempt to complete (as far as is humanly and Socratically possible) the psychic cycle of rising and falling, ascending and descending. In the process, the *Phaedrus mythos* prepares for the analogical binding of the psychic, political, and cosmic orders as a whole. The *mythoi* hereafter will attempt to portray this experience of the whole.

The *Phaedrus* begins with two lovers of speeches, Phaedrus and Socrates, responding to a speech by Lysias, a noted rhetorician of the day. Lysias has written a speech (which we hear spoken by Phaedrus) that pretends to defend the non-lover in opposition to the excesses of the erotic lover. This speech intends to persuade the beloved of the calculable benefits that accrue from yielding to the non-lover. Clearly, Lysias is the non-lover pursuing his beloved, Phaedrus. Contagiously, Socrates is as delighted and overcome by the speech as Phaedrus is delighted and overcome by Lysias' overtures. From the beginning the whole of the *Phaedrus* exemplifies being erotically possessed. But only insofar as Phaedrus is the threatening and forceful lover of Socrates will Socrates give a critique of Lysias' speech. Swearing by the god of the plane tree (who is Dionysus<sup>52</sup>, although he is not named until later in the *Phaedrus* 236d-e), Phaedrus threatens that he will never speak with Socrates again about any discourse, if Socrates refuses to consider Lysias' speech. Dionysus (*eros*) threatens Socrates' philosophic existence.

Socrates finds that Lysias' rhetorical manner is not satisfactory (*Phaedrus* 235a). It is a standard Socratic condition that what one is speaking about should first of all be dialectically (via definition and classification) clarified. This repeats what has happened prior to the *Republic's* cave imagery and the *Symposium mythos*, and it will consistently happen before most mythical speeches. (It did not characterize Protagoras' *mythos* and therefore caused problems of interpretation.) Therefore, Socrates' first speech intends only to address the rhetorical form of Lysias' discourse, not its content. But we wonder if Socrates can resist *eros* in defending the non-lover, while Socrates sits under the plane tree (*platanos* or Plato) with its Dionysian associations. Socrates proceeds to pull his cloak over his head in order to hide his shame. Apparently, to play the part of Lysias is shameful. Socrates calls upon those wise men and women of old from whom he has once heard something more. Socrates does not immediately state what this "more" is, but it is as if his ears had been filled like a pitcher receiving water (*Phaedrus* 235c-d; compare this

to *Crito* 54d). He even calls upon the Muses to aid his forthcoming *mythos* (*Phaedrus* 237a).

There has been one previous mythical reference (*Phaedrus* 229b–c), where there is mention of the traditional tale of Boreas' rape of Oreithyia. Socrates refuses to discuss this tale rationalistically and allegorically, since he has no leisure for such sophistic investigations of monstrous doings. Rather, Socrates pursues inquiries to know the character of his own soul, whether it be gentle (*praus*) and divine, or furious and full of desires. Do not *mythoi* speak to the soul of a person with a kind of revelation of that soul given its preoccupations? Does not Socrates want to separate himself from sophists such as Lysias, who characteristically give allegorical interpretations to impress crowds? Socrates now calls for a *mythos* or long speech. In the background are two examples: the erotic activity of Boreas and the seemingly non-erotic Lysias, both representative of traditional and sophistic kinds of *mythos*.

By calling on the Muses, is Socrates implying that the Muses can be held accountable for the kind of speech Socrates now will imitate, namely, a defense of the non-lover? If so, the Muses alone cannot be simply trusted (see Hesiod's *Theogony*, 27–8). Perhaps Lysias uses the gifts of the Muses as a front to persuade in a sober, calculating manner, all the while concealing his real, erotic desire for Phaedrus. Also, do the Muses traditionally remind us of Boreas' example? Or, on the contrary, if Socrates can expose Lysias to Phaedrus and reveal that there is an *eros* that is not necessarily excessive (which Lysias seems incapable of speaking about, never mind experiencing), then to call on the Muses and others is to try rhetorically to supersede Lysias for the sake of Phaedrus. There is the clear suggestion of a love *agon* in the *Phaedrus* of which both *logos* and *mythos* will have a part (*Phaedrus* 236b, 242b). In acknowledging the Muses and others who may possess one's soul<sup>53</sup>, this sharpens the awareness that human beings are capable of being overcome and carried away by passions (*pathos*) of the soul that are not easily accounted for (hence *mythos*), although this requires accountability (hence *logos*). Traditional and sophistic *mythoi* are particularly deficient on this score.

On its own terms, the first speech of Socrates is meant to give a better, formal performance than Lysias, without changing the substance of the argument. Socrates reveals that the non-lover, Lysias, is just as much a lover (*erastai*) as anyone else, but that an acquired craftiness of self-restraint (*sophrosyne*) conceals the innate, erotic desire from excess (*hybris*). When erotic desire rules over rational opinion (*logos doxes*, *Phaedrus* 238b) the outcome forces the beautiful beloved into servitude. The erotic lover will deprive the beloved of all the advantages and benefits that would give superiority to the beloved, especially the pursuit of divine philosophy (*Phaedrus* 239b). Socrates ends his speech abruptly without praising the non-lover. Only the excessive lover has been exposed as the wolf after the lamb. In fear of

being possessed of nymphs (i.e., in fear of becoming a Lysias) and not wanting to be further compelled by the beautiful Phaedrus, Socrates is ready to flee. Being observers of all this, we wonder (remembering the *Symposium*) whether the taming moderation of *eros* by *sophrosyne* is sufficient to lead to a different kind of love (*philia*) of wisdom.

This time, however, it is Socrates' *daimon* that prevents him from leaving without making an atonement and recantation to the gods. Not Phaedrus' external compulsion which caused Socrates to imitate Lysias, but the inner compulsion of Socrates' mantic soul demands purification and redress. If *eros* leads to a god or something divine, then *eros* cannot be outrageous in the fashion that the traditional Boreas *mythos* and the sophistic *mythos* of Lysias conclude. Both these kinds of *mythos* are characterized by the all-too-human dimension of the soul's existence.<sup>54</sup> Lysias' calculating, masquerading *sophrosyne* may even be put to vicious ends. Revealing that tradition and convention surely are at stake here, Socrates says he will undergo a purification, which Homer, who told the disastrous story of Helen and her erotic charms, knew not (*Phaedrus* 243a). However, the poet Steisichorus did recover from the blindness of ignorance by speaking truly of Helen. Now Socrates speaks with his head bare.

All of this implies something like an experience of conversion, although we need not assume that Socrates knew not what he was doing in his first speech. There may be a strong human tendency to walk away from an affair like that of Phaedrus and Lysias without being provoked and intimately involved in one's depths (note Socrates' resistance to divine inspiration, *Phaedrus* 241e). Before being carried away in this river of erotic speech (just like the ocean of the beautiful in the *Symposium*), Socrates will carry on a preparatory, discriminating classification and ranking of the kinds of madness. Thus, even the divine and the prophetic can be put to the test of virtue regarding their manifestations without the charge of impiety (if by impiety we mean any questioning exceeding due respect for tradition and convention).

There are four kinds of mania: (1) there is augury or the prophetic reading of signs (perhaps in this respect we should read knowingly the signs and symbols of the *Phaedrus*,<sup>55</sup> for example, the plane tree, what the various gods stand for, various oaths sworn in the dialogue, mythical figures mentioned, etc.); (2) there are sacred rites of purification and release,<sup>56</sup> which are superior to augury, since they have a divine origin not a human origin like augury (we have already mentioned that Socrates has considered purification and release as a conversion experience away from the all-too-human immersion in convention and tradition); (3) there is the possession and madness received from the Muses that arouses and inspires a gentle and pure soul to sing and make poetry and, as a consequence, educates later generations in the deeds of the ancients; such poetry may tend to be mere *techne* and sober craftsmanship (a



rebuke directed to Lysias suggesting that Socrates first speech can be distinguished from Lysias' in intent, if not in achievement); and (4) there is that distinguishing element that makes for true poetry or the new, if not reformed, philosophic poetry of the Platonic dialogues, namely, divine madness and inspiration.

Not much is said about this divine madness, except that our greatest happiness is given through divine madness (*Phaedrus* 245a–e). Does this imply that to experience true divine madness means that one does not tell of it? (Think of the silence in Plato's *Epistle 7*.) To speak may mean acting as if one were the divine being that could impart this gift of madness through speech. As a consequence, there may be something about the source of divine, erotic madness that inherently befits mythical expression rather than logical, rational exposition? Secondly, notice how the first and second kinds of madness neatly parallel the third and fourth kinds. Also, the first and third kinds of madness have human origins and human products, whereas the second and fourth kinds of madness share a common divine origin and manifestation. There is not a simple hierarchy from the first kind up to the fourth kind of madness. Perhaps there is an ascending degree of conscious awareness of one's own soul from augury to divine madness. But the possibilities of derailment are real and present at stage three, poetic madness. Witness Lysias' speech. In any case, all four kinds have a place and a function in this dialogue. You could call this a representation of the *logos* of *diarexis*, dividing out these four kinds, reminiscent of the four-part divided line.

It is not surprising that Socrates continues:

“we must learn the truth about the soul divine and human [the ranking of madness indicated above conforms to this specific distinction] by observing how it acts (*erga*) and is acted upon (*pathe*) [stage one and two of the ranking involves primarily being acted upon, whereas stage three and four are a combination of being acted upon and acting].” (*Phaedrus* 245b–c)

This divine-human pattern or analogue will occur throughout the *Phaedrus mythos* as its central core and structure. At this point, a hypothetical demonstration is offered of the divine immortality of every human soul. If the soul is immortal, then it must be self-moving and ever-moving, not simply moved by something else, nor at one time only moving something else. That which moves itself never leaves itself and is always moving (alive). It is the source, beginning, and principle (*arche*) of life or motion in all other things (e.g., the body) that possess motion. Furthermore, such a beginning, principle, and source of motion is ungenerated; it is its own beginning and is indestructible. If it were destructible, then it would never be again. All the cosmos and all generation therein would finally die off. If self-motion is the essence (*ousian*)

of the soul, why should it (and what evidence is there that it does) self-destruct? Only if the soul has a temporal beginning would it befit a temporal end, death. While Socrates never specifically mentions time or the atemporal, there is the reference to the soul as always moving (*Phaedrus* 245c–e), not being generated (*Phaedrus* 245d), being its only beginning and source (*Phaedrus* 245c–d), being without death (*Phaedrus* 245c–e), and in sum, via negation of the temporal, these are all the characteristics of the atemporal.

It follows that “concerning the immortality of the soul this is sufficient; but about its form (*ideas*) we must speak in the following manner. To tell what it really is (*einai*) would be a matter for utterly divine and long discourse, but it is within human power to describe it briefly in a figure (*eoiken*, *Phaedrus* 246a).” Instead of the very nature of the soul, we get a figure or likeness that is the *Phaedrus mythos* itself. However, we wonder why the previous definition of the soul as self-moving motion was not sufficient to depict the very nature of the soul. It suffices for now as an immortality argument regarding necessary characteristics of the soul if it is immortal. Note how the preceding paragraph is loaded with hypothetical “if . . . then” speech. In conformity with Socrates’ hypothetical method as elaborated in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, we are requested to follow the chain of consequences. From a hypothesis such as “if the soul is immortal,” can we accept the opposite consequences of the soul being mortal? Even this hypothetical method draws on our experience, *pathos*, which we may or may not enter into soulfully, of course, at our own risk.

Is Socrates suggesting that he has not seen the soul in itself and in its depths, as would be the case if the soul were finally autonomous, standing alone, and self-sufficient by nature—that is, self-moving motion in itself? This definitive description of the soul and its immortality will not be taken seriously as it stands until further notice about how the soul acts and is acted upon. Conceivably the soul could be acted upon (i.e., informed) in a way that would neither threaten its self-moving nature nor its immortality, nor diminish its responsibility for its own healthy or diseased condition. Also, if our souls are self-moving and self-initiating, then this truly is our soul-defining nature, assuming that we use this freedom healthily and wisely. The purpose of the *Phaedrus mythos*, following the introductory *apodeixis* (demonstration) that the soul is immortal, is to reveal the soul’s mode of existence, as it acts and is acted upon.<sup>57</sup>

This description of the soul as self-moving motion may be interpreted to be an attempt to generate within souls a recollecting of their soul as discarnate, liberated, and purely immortal. This is the very place in which the *mythos* begins. First, the souls of the gods (not humans) are depicted with the inherent powers symbolized by a charioteer and two horses. Alone are the horses and charioteers of the gods good and unmixed, unlike humans. (This part of

the *mythos* is reminiscent of the magnified lie in the *Republic* about different metallic natures and proper breeding.) Second, the human soul with its charioteer is described having horses of different breeds: one is beautiful or noble (*kalos*) and good, the other is the opposite. This accounts for the difficulty of self-direction and orientation that the charioteer of the human soul has.

Why are living beings immortal or mortal? If perfectly and fully winged, an immortal soul ascends, traverses, and participates in governing with care for the whole cosmos (including that which is soulless). If a soul has lost its wings, it descends gravitation bound, until grasping something solid such as an earthly body. This body then houses the soul's self-moving essence and the result is the body-soul composite. The composite is a mortal, living being. But it is only the individual soul that indicates our friendship (*philon*) and affinity to god. The condition of the soul's immortality is after the model of the discarnate gods (*Phaedrus* 248c). Yet, is not Socrates, via this chariot model, giving a bodily objectification even to the immortal gods? Socrates does recognize the human limitations of language. He knows he can only speak anthropomorphically (after Xenophanes) about the traditional Olympian gods. Also, the objectifications of *mythos* serve to make it possible for us to comprehend by contrast the invisible, namely the interior of divine and human souls. We should not prosaically worry about the embodiment of souls in the *Phaedrus*<sup>58</sup>, because it is a *mythos* not a dogma. And this is a signal to us not to literalize but to transcend the anthropomorphic. Even within the *mythos*, reason (the charioteer) grows wings and becomes self-propelled. This may mean that the wings,—that is, the *eros*, of reason (*nous*) finally will be sufficient. Or it may be the case that we should not forsake the unity of the soul by dividing its so-called three parts between the body and the soul, assuming there is no necessary functional continuity between the body and the soul.

Why does the soul lose its wings and fall? The natural power of the soul's wings is to ascend and dwell with the gods (*Phaedrus* 246dff.). The divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and all such perfections with which the soul communes (*kekoinoneke*) and is thereby nourished and grows. Thereupon follows the procession of the gods with Zeus as leader and first among gods. As the procession goes around, the various gods after Zeus arrange and care for various things, since that is their function and duty. A kind of divine justice exists in which Zeus represents justice in itself or just order as a whole, and the other gods are according to their proper, particular functions (i.e., they justly mind their own divine business). Twelve great Olympian gods follow Zeus, but Hestia (the oldest, most sacred goddess, goddess of the hearth and home, a virgin protectress about whom no stories are told by the Greeks)<sup>59</sup> remains at home in the house of the gods. Who replaces this goddess among the traditional twelve? Is it Dionysus who joins the twelve Olympians contrary to

convention?<sup>60</sup> If Dionysus is added to the twelve, what place and function vis-à-vis Zeus does Dionysus have? Again, the relationship between philosophy (with Zeus symbolic of the philosopher-king) and *eros* (Dionysus) is raised. Keeping Hestia at home and elevating Dionysus puts this *mythos* in the heroic, erotic tradition of Achilles, who won immortal fame by not staying at home. Nor is Socrates home at present, being outside the city walls.

There are blessed sights to be seen for whoever may wish to follow these gods who are without jealousy (*Phaedrus* 247a–b). Thus, another radical break with the tradition about the gods. The gods are not jealous; they serve and care; Prometheus has no cause. However, following the gods is easier said than done. The human chariot<sup>61</sup> of contrary horses is unable to follow the gods upward to the topmost vault of heaven. Only those chariots with disciplined horses can follow, albeit with difficulty. If they reach the top, they are carried round by the revolutions of the heavens, and they behold (*theorouσι*) all things outside of heaven. This is analogous to and the fulfillment of the sudden, immediate, pathetic vision that was depicted in the *Symposium* and *Seventh Letter*. Socrates dares to speak on the border of truth, whereas an earthly poet would be lacking the divine madness of the lover of wisdom, the lover of beauty, and an erotic, muse-ical nature. Accordingly, souls are ranked in the following descending order depending on their wing-power: (2) lawful kinds and warlike rulers; (3) politicians and businesspersons; (4) gymnasts and curers of the body; (5) prophets of mystic rites; (6) poets and imitative artists; (7) craftsmen and farmers; (8) sophists and demagogues; and (9) tyrants. It is not odd that the prophet is one rank above the poet, since the previous classification of manic persons revealed that the mantic art is divine in origin, whereas the poetic art of imitation is human. But why are the prophet and poet respectively five and six below the politician and businessperson and the gymnast and doctor? The latter two groupings represent a more conscious awareness and potential for order and leadership, such that the souls of the politician, businessperson, gymnast, and doctor are more accountable to themselves and less slavish. They also have an obvious, useful *technē*.

All in all, these types of humans could be symbolized as souls whose motions revolve further and further away from that luminosity which perfects them. Therefore, soul and *eros* are both characterized by an intentionality for that which perfects and fulfills them, assuming that these are the consequences of one's choices. These are the lots of humans for 10,000 years or ten lifetimes, after which they return to where they came (*Phaedrus* 248c). (The *Timaeus* will have more to say about this.) After each lifetime, a judgment is made in which rewards and penalties are handed down. Then these souls choose their lots for the next life. (This part of the *Phaedrus mythos* agrees with the *mythos* of Er.) Only the philosopher grows wings that allows

for continual communion (*koinonia*) through memory (*mneme*) with that which causes god to be god (*Phaedrus* 249c). The activity of the divine philosopher includes memory, but excludes recollecting (*anamnesis*), which constitutes the fallen human condition.

The ascent to the divine means discarding human interests, but the test is the power (*dynamis*) of the soul to maintain its communion with the luminosity of the beyond through at least 3,000 years or three lifetimes, going back and forth between the human and divine.<sup>62</sup> Up to this point Socrates has mythically accounted for the divine life and activity of gods and human souls, which may or may not partake in this revolving life in the cosmos and beyond. The fall or loss of wings has been portrayed also. It remains to complete the picture by mythically portraying the luminous ascent of such souls from their human condition to the divine summit.

Should this kind of mythical, symbolic terminology now be abandoned, since what went before about the gods and their procession through heaven really is only a dispensable model for human striving? There are no gods, but just great, heroic persons in history. There are no life cycles and reincarnations; there are only souls in this life who relatively rise or fall according to their earthly occasion. The *mythos* really takes place in this life, at this time, dependent on the relative openness or closedness of the inclinations and desires (i.e., the wings) of our souls. There may be some truth to this overly radical devaluation of *mythos*, lest we take the *mythos* too piously and too dogmatically at face-value. Socrates suddenly brings us back to earth again (*Phaedrus* 249d). It is only a *mythos* that our souls soared so high and have freely followed the gods. But we cannot pursue that vision too long in words. We exist on earth, radically in-between, striving to follow the procession of the gods or, at the other extreme, succumbing to the bestial slavery of the tyrant locked in his own prison house of erotic desires (*Phaedrus* 250e–251a). We cannot forget who we are and where we are in order to remember and thus, finally, to experience in the very being of our soul a conversion and an ascent. From beauty on earth, we remember true beauty in the heavens. Our wings grow and our soul ascends through participating in the inspired madness of the lover (*Phaedrus* 249d–e).

As emphasized previously, *mythos* is no facile, imaginary achievement worthy of only some literalization. Furthermore, this ascent through our sharpest of physical senses, vision, does not culminate in wisdom (*sophia*); the object of vision and of *eros* is beauty (*Phaedrus* 250d). It may be too much for an erotic love to behold the other realities (the Good, justice, etc.). There are enough problems of excess regarding our erotic tendency toward beauty. Especially the attraction to human wisdom and human beauty is self-defeating regarding the soul's ascent. Human beauty fades with time; one naturally longs for the beauty that does not pass away. Human wisdom in

all its possible conceit not only obstructs the dynamism of soul-inquiry and soul-development, but with age may become a hardened and intractable possession. Indeed, this is the very consequence of radically demythologizing and devaluing the *Phaedrus mythos*. We settle for the mediocrity of human know-how (utilitarianism and pragmatism), while carefully avoiding the life of the beasts. Yet, we never dare to rise and follow imitatively the procession of the gods.

Henceforth, Socrates begins to counsel moderation in the presence of Dionysian *eros*. The force of divine madness and inspiration opens up a vision that we might attain qua human souls. The attainment, however, is not the same as the vision which is sudden, immediate, and perfective, but only imaginatively final or absolute. We require that the vision be there as real, if all of our striving is to have direction and purpose (*telos*). Regarding our striving as human souls, the whole of the *Phaedrus* can be understood on two levels, namely, a dialectical analysis and a mythical expression, both serving the harmonization and mediation by *nous* of *sophrosyne* and *eros*.<sup>63</sup>

Lysias and Phaedrus, on the level of appearances, respectfully represent sobriety and erotic madness, which stand in need of guidance by Socratic *nous*. (Socrates' first speech frequently alludes to *nous*.) Consequently, there is a lengthy passage descriptive of those who are newly initiated in beholding good images of beauty (*Phaedrus* 251a–252c). Quite purposely, Socrates is graphically sexual, even homosexual (*Phaedrus* 251c) while souls suffer raging, erotic throbs and palpitations, pleasures and pains. Seemingly, this is a form of Socratic testing at its best; if you can get through this passage without succumbing to some bodily sexuality or whatever other earthly erotic attachments, then you may be able to join your soul to Zeus (*nous*, *Phaedrus* 252e), or one of the other gods representative of various aspects of love (*Phaedrus* 252a–253c).

Strangely, enough, the previous ranking of persons from the philosopher to the tyrant seems to have a counterpart in the procession of the gods. Is Ares (*Phaedrus* 252c) and his murderous love representative of the tyrant or the warlike king? Zeus specifically is related to the philosophical nature, and Hera exhibits the ruling nature as well. But there were only nine rankings of human lots with the Olympians. It seems impossible to match all the rankings<sup>64</sup> of human lots with the Olympians. Perhaps the only point being made is that every love has a god for its end and source of inspiration. A lover then seeks a beloved whose nature is an imitation or likeness of that nature of a god. Socrates says it is the desire of true lovers who act as leaders and educators of the beloved to be realistically like the god they have followed in the heavens. Having seen the procession in the heavens, the philosopher thereby imitates it on earth in the cave. Note that the *mythos* has been reduced and immanentized in the form of a revised imitation that falls short (as limitations

do) of the possibility and the reality of a chain of lovers and beloved being drawn up this way and that way. A reformation of the Olympian gods would realistically give sanction to the nature of our various desires as they lead to functions (variously ranked) that we perform according to our souls.

Consistent with the reality of the human, in-between (*metaxy*) perspective, Socrates provides a further mythical elaboration of the charioteer-horses model of the human soul. The key to the erotic ascent of the soul to beauty in itself (not wisdom) is the harmonious and disharmonious character of the two horses. It is taken as natural and given that a fallen embodied soul has two horses of antithetical dispositions. The horse on the right is white, handsome, upright, a lover of honor, moderate, modest, and a follower of true opinion. This horse is guided by command and reason alone. Such a horse is the good citizen or the good guardian. In the *Republic*, the proper relationship between reason or *nous* and *thymos* is symbolized in the *Phaedrus* by this relationship between the charioteer and the white horse. There is no explanation in the *Phaedrus* of how this relationship was achieved. Either the educational program of the *Republic* (and for that matter the *Statesman* and *Laws*) is assumed, or we are simply given an illustration of the soul by nature harmonious in reason and desire and moderation and courage. But there is also in this soul model the dark horse, crooked, heavy, not well-formed, a friend to *hybris* and pride, deaf and disobedient to the charioteer's leadership. This horse is defiant of limits and may represent the reservoir of appetites on the level of bodily necessity. However, it is most important to search for the unity of the soul and not analytically divide the soul into some trichotomy (represented by the charioteer, the white horse, and the dark horse). If one part of the tripartite soul is the irrational bodily appetites, then cannot we say that this part naturally dies off with immortality and an undivided soul? This dark horse is much too powerful and wily to be appetite alone without potential admixture with *thymos* and even reason (calculation). The dark horse is needed to counteract and relatively overcome the weakness of the white horse, when it initially comes to rising up and overcoming bodily gravity.

The charioteer is not specifically described; is not *nous* and reason invisible or only objectifiable concerning its intentionality? But we are told that the charioteer experiences and beholds the luminous, erotic vision, and the whole soul warms and yearns. The white horse is naturally restrained out of self-control in obedience to the charioteer, but the dark horse wants to leap on the beloved and darts forward forcefully to grasp and possess the beloved. For a while the charioteer and white horse stand their ground, but slowly they yield and approach the beloved and agree to do the beloved's commands. But the charioteer knows the beauty of the beloved is not for possession and domination (rape). The memory of the true nature of beauty and the attitude

of moderation befitting beauty in itself produces a sufficient counterthrust to the dark horse, forcing a falling back from the beloved.

The first approach and the first test is a victory for the charioteer and the white horse. Now the dark horse resorts to reproaches, instead of sheer force. It is cowardice and lack of manliness not to consummate the marriage with the beloved, remonstrates the dark horse. When the second time comes, the dark horse shamelessly forces them again to approach the beloved. Now the charioteer counterpulls even more violently until sheer pain prevents the unruly, dark horse from consummating its desires. Only after many of the same experiences does the violent dark horse learn to follow the role of wisdom (*pronoia*; *Phaedrus* 254e). Thus, the termination of these deadly, erotic, mortal desires.

To transcend the wild erotic lover is to accept the intimacy of conversation (*logos*), which is incomparable to other loves (including familial ones). The beloved is like someone who has caught a fever of love; she/he does not understand her/his own condition (*aporia*). There still is the possibility that the unruly horse of the lover will be indulged (*Phaedrus* 255e–256a) regarding its bodily and earthly desires. The conversion of the unruly horse represents the conversion of *eros* to *philia* (*Phaedrus* 255e), or the conversion away from erotic bodily and earthly attachments (related to beauty) to the *philia* of *sophos* (*Phaedrus* 256a–b), thus wisdom. The intimation is that an imitated life of happiness and harmony can be had on earth, but that this requires realistically the continuous modification and redirection of *eros* represented by the unruly horse. However, without the tremendous drives of the unruly horse (*eros*) the conversion to philosophy would not be likely at all. One respects and fears the single-minded persistence and endurance, the long-suffering and the willfulness of the unruly horse. However, only with the reformation (conversion) of the unruly horse does tyrannical *eros* pass into philosophical *eros*. No wonder Socrates and Plato tried to convert young, erotic, proto-tyrannical persons into responsible guardians, if not philosopher kings.

The charioteer, as the rational guide or leader, will be a teacher or the proper, inspired lover at the early stages of one's life (Socrates, the true philosophical statesman) or during mythical preexistence (Zeus). Accordingly, the confrontation between on the one hand the charioteer and the moderate, well-trained horse and on the other hand the wild, erotic horse is at the crossroads of the philosophical and political life versus sophistry and tyranny. Any life less than the pursuit of philosophy (even the timocratic life) will threaten the soul with the life of desire that most persons choose within the context of relative, conventional constraints, known as the *polis'* customs and traditions. The more this is followed the less impetus there is for the wings of the soul to grow and to begin their ascent away from the darkness of earthly desire.



Phaedrus is advised (*Phaedrus* 256c) to accept the friendship (*philia*) of a lover (*erastou*), to be the beloved of philosophy (the pursuit of wisdom), in order that in the end via conversion and ascent, Phaedrus may become the lover of a friend, the philosopher to another beloved. In this way, Phaedrus can direct his life solely to love (*philia*) and philosophical discourses (*Phaedrus* 257b).

Conversion is an ongoing drama, play, process, unfolding dynamic of the human soul between here-and-there-and-around (*periagoge*) coincident with the many movements of our soul's passive (*pathos*) experiencing and active (erotic) pursuing. For Plato, the principle (*arche*) of intelligibility (*noesis*, not to be confused with any rationalism or any ism at all) is the standard activity to distinguish the meaningful and purposeful (*telos*) from the degenerating and degrading disorder (*ataxia*). A manifold of metaphors, analogies, and *mythoi* are relevant to depict realistically a full life of inquiry (*zetesis*), and this especially means eschewing the psyche-killing, intellectual derailments of literalization, reductionism, and dogmatism (see appendix B). But it is not just on the higher intellectual plane, but also on the lower moral plane concerning poetry and drama (for us today it is film, television, popular music and dramatic performances), that there is the political/social/communal (*polis* to Plato) acquiescence to degeneration, as if in the name of democratic freedom, we should tolerate any and all assaults on the moral order. Is it that all is a whirligig for us, as well as for Plato, that we fear awakening from such a hellish dream state?

The *Phaedrus* does have a political dimension, although it may be a political domain in which the philosopher has to contend with non-philosophical rhetoricians for the souls of young people such as Phaedrus, who may or may not be potential philosophers.<sup>65</sup> The philosopher alone knows the truth required to lead the soul by the use of words (*logoi*) that are only resemblances or likenesses of the truth (*Phaedrus* 262cff.). The philosopher alone is not self-deceived, since she/he knows when to speak and when not to speak as well as to whom she/he is speaking (*Phaedrus* 272a). It should not be thought, however, that all uses of likenesses and resemblances, such as *mythos* and analogy, require some presupposed, full, perfect knowledge. *Mythoi* are not simply a utilitarian means by which the philosopher looks down on potential philosophers and, through the *mythos*, drags them up to the level of the philosopher. If this were the case, then *mythos* would be dispensable once a person joins the exclusive ranks of the philosopher. No doubt *mythos* may be the inspirational means to achieve a divine madness that releases the potential philosopher from conventional customs and habits (*Phaedrus* 265a). This would explain why Socrates says that his

two speeches were an example of the way in which one who knows the truth may lead his hearers on with playful words; and I, Phaedrus, think the divinities of the place are the cause thereof and, perhaps, also the prophets of the Muses, who are singing above our heads, and may have granted this boon to us by inspiration. (*Phaedrus* 262d)

And later Socrates also asserts:

We described the passion of love in some sort of figurative manner expressing some truth, perhaps, and perhaps being led away in another direction, and after composing a somewhat unconvincing discourse (*logos*) [the first speech], we charted a playful and mythic hymn in meet and pious strain to the honor of your lord and mine, Phaedrus, love, the guardian of beautiful boys. (*Phaedrus* 265b)

Is this Socrates' way of moderating the excessiveness of long speeches, which pretend and threaten, if only by their length, to be a dogmatic teaching? Phaedrus is a very suggestive, impressionable, and imitative type of young man. At the very least, Socrates is asking that we distinguish between what is only playful and what is playfully serious and truthful. The burden of interpretation and understanding that will lead to an active response to this experience of *mythos* depends solely on our own individual souls, once we hear the *mythos* and open our souls to its therapeutic guidance. Socrates is not presumptuous and overbearing regarding his own speeches, and this goes beyond the problem of the possible unfitness of his unknown audience. This *mythos* is primarily pupillary and not magisterial, in that Socrates addresses himself to the hidden nature of human souls, which leads above and beyond human souls. This involves recognizing our permanent, radically in-between, human nature and embarking on the journey between the abiding, tensional poles of here and there.<sup>66</sup> *Mythos*, as opposed to rationalistic abstraction or political operationalism, achieves a greater comprehension of the fullness of human existence.

There may be some dangerous consequences of taking "literally" some parts of the *mythos* that are explicitly sexual or homosexual. As an invitation to get caught up in sexual frenzy and passion, we are being tested, since inevitably we will be tested in real life given the erotic drives of our souls. The conversation between Phaedrus and Socrates is private. It is not addressed politically to the citizens or to the *demos* of any regime. It is addressed to those souls that have in common the longing for and loving of wisdom. Any *mythos* is radically deficient and mere words compared to the end of the soul's quest. But not to take the playfulness of the *mythos* seriously (e.g., the probing of the depths of the soul) is to rob speech of its analogical bearings and reachings.<sup>67</sup> And analogy is the proper relationship between

the human and divine. One has to search for the seriousness and truthfulness within the playfulness of *mythos*, without which there may be illusory self-satisfaction in the things of the world, and possible despair concerning the ultimate meaning of our strivings and hope. An even worse outcome for political prospects would be the presumption (Hegel) that any human can attain and reside in the divine.

Eric Voegelin contended that in the *Phaedrus* the soul now becomes the idea or form of the cosmos itself and therefore the soul is not the individual human soul, but an impersonal, cosmic substance.<sup>68</sup> This would conform to the so-called “world soul” or “all-soul” in the *Timaeus*. Therefore, the individual soul is but a specific particle of the total pulsating psychic substance, the cosmos. This suggests a kind of gnosticism in this Platonic dialogue. While it is true that the cosmic dimension comes on stronger and stronger when we pass from the cave image to the charioteer *mythos*, nevertheless this does not mean that the individual soul has become impersonal when immersed in the cosmos (unless Voegelin has in mind a contrast of the Greek experience with the Christian experience or a similarity with historically, post-Platonic developments). The communion between lover and beloved that occurs on the human and divine level is highly personalized depending on the nature of the human soul (i.e., one’s *daimon*) and the god or goddess to which your soul has affinity. This does not in any way suggest a full-fledged, developed idea of personal immortality in Plato,<sup>69</sup> but there definitely is room for a diversity of souls, which allows for a diversity of functions within the cosmos. Hence, the overall beauty of the cosmos. Plato need not become pantheistic. The utterly impersonal Good at the highest, final reach radiates upon and draws those personal souls toward the Good without extinguishing them in the process. Yet it seems that the divine, radiating Good is quite impersonal and anonymous.

Furthermore, there has not been a shift from the *polis* to the psyche when we move from the *Republic* to the *Phaedrus*, other than a shift in emphasis. The main focus in the *Phaedrus* is the soul not the *polis*; there never was “a rigid parallelism between the model of the soul and polis”<sup>70</sup> as Voegelin seems to contend, but instead a dynamic analogy. If anything, Socrates has brought the experience of conversion and descent/ascent closer to personal realization for potential philosophers by making beauty, not only justice and wisdom, the motivational center of experience (*pathos*). The philosopher-king has not disappeared,<sup>71</sup> since she/he may still appear given the therapeutic devotion to philosophical education. In the *Phaedrus*, we get a glimpse of the personal and non-political (not in the *agora*) experience of conversion and ascent that occurs in the mini-*polis* community of philosophers and potential philosophers. Clearly, the erotic philosopher must convert his beloved (pupils) to philosophic *eros*, and this is an obligation to others justifying the

mini-polis of the Academy and forestalling tyrannical *eros*. But the ramifications of this for public and political action (since it is not restricted to the contemplation of wisdom, nor alien to it) are tremendous. Rhetoric, friendship, *eros*, education, and *mythoi* are fundamental to the public character of the political community. Accordingly, we need to continue to pursue *mythos* as a continuous whole analogically integrating (not collapsing) the psychic, political, and cosmic dimensions of *mythos*. In this way, the natural continuity of the *mythoi* and the experiences of the soul directed by these *mythoi* will reach a greater, more inclusive, fruition within the whole of being, which is the realm of dynamic exploration for *mythos*.

The shift from the *Republic* (the central dialogue if only because it contains all the dimensions, at least incipiently, of the drama of the human soul) to the *Phaedrus* is not yet a turning away from the cave, but a turning around within the cave. This represents a turning from the public (*logos*) to the private (*eros*) and also the path of ascent outside the cave, if sexual *eros* can be reoriented and transformed into philosophic *eros*. In the *Phaedrus*, it is the shared love of speeches (public) that Socrates and Phaedrus have that leads them outside the city walls of Athens into a *mythos* realm to consider the speech of that very public sophist/rhetor Lysias who praises the non-lover, but really is concealing himself as the erotic lover pursuing his prey. Sophists exist somewhat hidden in the shadows<sup>72</sup> between the public and the private. You might say this is where Socrates the philosopher also is, thus the enormous difficulty of identifying the true philosopher from the sophist. Yet, can we state that the sophist truly cares (*therapeia*) politically for others?

Platonic *mythos* does challenge us regarding the everyday, routine business of getting on with one's basic life forgetful of the care of one's soul. Ironically and paradoxically, Socrates' first speech endorses Lysias' argument to expose *eros* for what it is in the worst sense: irresponsible, tyrannical passion quite harmful to the beloved because its seductive rhetoric preaches the manifold benefits of the non-lover. Socrates covers his head in shame while delivering this first speech to the overexcited beloved Phaedrus. All of this seems necessary to get to the measure or mean between the extremes of deficiency (the non-lover) and the excess (the erotic lover) symbolized in the second speech of Socrates, called the palinode. Thus, we have perhaps the most beautiful and dramatic *mythos* in the Platonic corpus of the two horses that the charioteer (aspiring lover of wisdom) must govern to attain the apex of human striving, joining the procession of the gods who encircle the cosmos apprehending the beyond! Ironically and paradoxically, Lysias is a preliminary, utilitarian measure and mean for Socrates, since he can be found and observed in the regular speechifying of Athenian public political life. Phaedrus' education begins with this critique of the status quo. Of course, Socrates cannot just leave it at that (the first speech), a rhetorical besting of Lysias on Lysias' own

terms, without making amends to the gods, especially the god Eros (now a god in the *Phaedrus*, but only a *daimon* in the *Symposium*), who so full of need, so driven for everything Eros lacks, needs to be reoriented and reformulated. Phaedrus is a young man (subject) hiding Lysias' speech under his cloak. He needs a better teacher (object), namely someone who cares enough about Phaedrus' soul in order to get beyond this crude subject-object distinction. At best, teachers may become friends (*philiās*) eventually with some of their students, since friends are relative equals. This is the *telos* in this world, namely, intersubjectivity, not subjects on objects and objects on subjects, when who dominates whom (e.g., Lenin's "kto kovo" erotic design). No wonder the modern revolutionary such as Lenin holds his heart between his teeth. The erotic Platonic/Socratic conversion is not at all the modern revolutionary transformation, which really is a deformation in Platonic terms. Who knows if Socrates "reached into" Phaedrus philosophically and erotically? Teachers usually do not know, since their students frequently are forgetful (see the prescient film, "Les Choristes"), regarding the seeds teachers throw out that may or may not eventually germinate.

There is a difference regarding the ironical (that can become a New York obsession and also a game among Straussians) and the paradoxical. The consequences of saying that life/existence is ironical are different than proposing that existence is fundamentally paradoxical. Irony suggests a sophisticated kind of knowing that you especially apprehend, like an inside joke, which never needs to be explained by those "in-the-know." Irony is a kind of play and state of mind that can become quite cynical and fatalistic (e.g., take that awful, now common, saying "it is what it is"). What is this "it," a whatever that goes unexamined? On the other hand, paradox invites wonder and explanation. It is a more meaningful and thoughtful playing (which some French intellectuals and G. K. Chesterton particularly enjoy). You cannot just walk away from a paradox. Since Zeno, paradox is a puzzle to try to solve. Take "knowing" (word) and "willing" (deed) and their paradoxical, psychic disjunction at the heart of who we are. How often do we will and do what we know we should not? The charioteer's dilemma is this transpolitical problem of governance with the two horses. (The chariot, a mode of conveyance, could represent the *via medias*, the rhetoric of *mythos* and *logos*.) Is not this whole charioteer *mythos* analogical as well as paradoxical, since analogy deals with similars and dissimilars in conjunction with but also clashing with each other? The Same and the Other are far beyond irony, yet not paradox. Take the two horses. It is easy to see the charioteer and the good, white, pure, agreeable horse, the perfect gentleman, while the other horse is bad, dark, unruly, and overbearing, needing the whip repeatedly. Yet where would the charioteer be without the dark horses' drives and demands? No wonder that Socrates (in the *Republic*) is more challenged by Glaucon rather than

Adeimantus. Without being driven, where would Socrates' philosophical *eros* be? Forsaken? Even just a glimpse of the procession of the gods and the beyond that the dark horse instigates is worth the experience. Lysias, Phaedrus, and the dark horse are necessary but not sufficient motivators to achieve some intelligibility<sup>73</sup> beyond the transitory. Notice that these two realms are within one world or cosmos.

Of course, giving in to the dark horse will result in the wings lifting up the chariot but falling off through overexertion and the madness in trying to conquer, dominate, and possess the beloved. *Thumos* unchained will risk everything, causing the chariot to crash and burn. Somehow educationally this *eros* has to be reoriented to the love (*philia*) of wisdom, not possession and domination. The Athenian mode of life is on trial here: the highly commercial and oligarchic, luxurious city instigated by Glaucon in the *Republic*. Will it be the relentless acquiring of material trophies (quite virile), or leisurely striving and playful pondering of transcendentals (quite ridiculous to Glaucon). It is no wonder that a Platonic dialogue (such as the *Republic*) is aporetic given the failure to adequately define and comprehend "justice," never mind the attempt to master *eros* politically (yet covertly, privately, thus paradoxically) by a eugenics policy that cannot avoid self-destructive incest. Communism literally and politically (not educationally) is tyrannical and incestuous, including the killing of one's own. The *Republic* needs the *Phaedrus* to expose the problem, the *aporia*, and only a *mythos* offers a descent/ascent (*katagoge/anagoge*) by way of an intermediary (*periagoge*), a conversion *mythos*. The *Phaedrus mythos* of the charioteer serves this function, but aporetically always falls short, for we are but mortals not gods. Still, paradoxically there is something divine in us humans.

## NOTES

1. By "revelation" nothing more is meant than the sudden insights or inspirations (*exaiphanes*) that come to a person not quite knowing how or wherefrom. Thus, Socrates refers to the Muses or to recollection (*anamnesis*). This also partly explains Socrates' ignorance, knowing that he does not know. Of course, there is no attribution here of any specifically Christian experience and understanding of revelation.

2. The detractors are Theodore Ebert, "Plato's Theory of Recollection Reconsidered," *Man and World* 6 (1973), 163–79; D. E. Anderson, "The Theory of Recollection in Plato's *Meno*," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 9 (1971), 225–36; and Cobb, "Anamnesis: Platonic Doctrine or Sophistic Absurdity," 604–28. All of them radically separate *anamnesis* from the activity of dialectical inquiry, in effect separating *mythos* from *logos*. The supporters of the relation of recollection to dialectic are R. W. Allen, "Anamnesis in Plato's *Meno* and *Phaedo*," *Review of Metaphysics* 13 (1959), 165–74; and Gregory Vlastos, "Anamnesis in the *Meno*," *Dialogue* 4 (1965), 143–67. It is

indeed wiser to understand *anamnesis* as not a doctrine or theory at all (the noun form, recollection), but rather a psychic flow, thus the verbal form “recollecting.” Plato tells us he has no doctrines. I take the liberty of calling *anamnesis* a *mythos* (since nowhere in the Platonic text is it called a *mythos*) because *anamnesis* is introduced in similar terms to Socrates’ sometimes reference to *mythos* being something he heard out of the past.

3. Ebert, “Plato’s Theory,” 173–74.

4. Vlastos, “*Anamnesis*,” 160–65.

5. The same can be said of Euthyphro and Ion, but also the belligerent Callicles and Thrasymachus, as well as the worn out Cephalus, Theodoros and Philebus. No wonder Socrates preferred young, ambitious men who were open to learning about themselves.

6. Many contemporary writers on Plato’s *mythoi* (see Luc Brisson, *Plato the Myth Maker* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), x, 9–11.) take it as definitive that a *logos* involves empirical verifiable evidence, while a *mythos* does not and cannot be verified. Perhaps we can call this anachronistic regarding any treatment of Plato, especially since *empeiria* in Greek means experience.

7. Klein, *A Commentary*, 92–93. Anyone who has read Klein’s commentaries on Plato’s dialogues cannot even begin to state his/her indebtedness to him.

8. Spending endless hours for two years in the dusty library bowels of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland learning Greek by way of Liddell & Scott, a course on ancient Greek, and the Loeb library edition of Plato’s dialogues, eventually I became aware astoundingly that in the Greek of Plato there are endless participles and gerunds (oftimes omitted or converted to nouns in translation). The Greek language actually has fourteen participle types, while English only has four. Discipline and drudgery sometimes payoff. Is not this the essential Socrates/Plato: -ing-ing along, wondering, searching, and so on teleologically for the intelligible?

9. So often today philosophers forget that they are lovers (*erastes*) of wisdom, not possessors of wisdom, pupils (the pupillary feature of Plato’s *mythoi*), practicing *theoria* (contemplation), not constructing theories and doctrines misrepresenting and hypostatizing the flow.

10. Thus, there is a status difference between recollection (a static noun) and recollecting (a verbal process). Plato/Socrates primarily focus on “process,” or I would prefer the *dynamis* or potential, unfolding, flow, and play of *mythos* and dialectic (*logos*) with others. Thus, imagine a Heraclitus dedicated to searching for Parmenides. The noun recollection invites fixed doctrine and dogma, certainly not the open, aspiring love of wisdom, a flow within, but on the way, preferably with others. Both language and our demand for precise, stable (clear and distinct?) definitions conspire to negate philosophizing, and yes erotic inquiry. In addition, to complicate matters recollection (*anamnesis*) refers to the past time and tense of what was learned, whereas recollecting (*memnemai*) refers to a present and future tense of learning.

11. See Allen, “*Anamnesis*,” 170–71 and Stewart, *The Myths of Plato*, 301–2. Stewart has the most glorious translation of the *mythos* of Er, as if it were part and parcel of the Anglican liturgy.

12. Insofar as the “self” has displaced the “soul” in modern times, then we can properly fear that this philosophical odyssey of the soul is not very understandable today. See in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*; Tarrant, “Literal and Deeper Meanings in Plato’s Myths,” 65, where in a footnote it is stated that the “self” means the “soul” in Plato, but there is no explanation of any philosophical consequences. Gadamer rightly contends that Plato and the Greeks had no modern sense of self. See Gadamer, *The Beginning of Knowledge* (New York: Continuum, 1989), 35, 79, 124.

13. I. M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato’s Doctrines* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), vol. II, 138–39.

14. Cobb, “*Anamnesis*,” 604–28. This article belabors the point that knowledge is newly found and that recollection denies this possibility. Presumably, this new knowledge is self-constructed in an act of vision contrary to recollecting, because it has no past. But the vision analogy is consistent with the *mythos* of recollecting, not the doctrine of recollection, because this temporally is a past (our origin) from an eternal source. Cobb denies all of this because he rejects *mythos* via literalization (e.g., he finds the *Phaedrus mythos* of the charioteer fantasizing, again literally speaking). Plato specifically rejects allegorical interpretation and fantastical stories. Likewise, *mythos* is not some literalized doctrine at all and again contrary to Cobb *mythos* respects the dialectical process of learning (while not being reduced to the dialectical alone) via the drama of the soul betwixt the temporal and sensible on one hand and the eternal and *noetic* on the other. Of course, modern philosophy can reject all this epistemology and ontology, but what is at stake is Plato’s understanding for our enlightenment.

15. Today, constructivism is the dominant theory in education and postmodernism, which has its roots in such modern political philosophers as Descartes and Hobbes. Clearly, Plato rejects any such “man is the measure” norm, as if we construct our own soul (which now is a “self”). Perhaps, at this point I can make a reference to Hans Vaihinger’s *The Philosophy of “As If”* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1924) followed up recently by Kwame Anthony Appiah’s *As If: Idealization and Ideals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017). I have occasionally used in this chapter the phrase “as if.” However, in the cases of both Vaihinger and Appiah they consider the “as if” to mean constructs and at best useful fictions for pragmatic purposes. We never can know and need not try to know the full reality of anything in and of itself. Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) viewed the changing of conceptual paradigms in the same modern sense of a constructivist epistemology. Relativism trumps any absolutism; accordingly, we all should become moderate and agreeable. The roots of this position go all the way back to Descartes’ dichotomizing of subject and object and Hume’s dichotomizing of facts and values. Clearly, this is not how premoderns such as Plato discerned things, since they started with the *noesis* (intelligibility) of reality, an intelligible order, namely, the ontology which epistemology (how we know) serves. Moderns deny any such knowledge of reality is possible, whereas premoderns acknowledge the human limits to achieving complete knowledge, but not the ever-present divine *noesis*. There is a significant difference between a disordered, world of idols, paradigms and fictions, and a world that may at least try to serve justice, virtue, the Good, and our



divine origins. Without the divine absolute, which makes humans relative, then the temptation to make absolute the human is hard to avoid.

16. Anderson, "The Theory of Recollection," 233–34.

17. It is very common today to encounter Plato as the poet mythmaker, usually meaning that Plato's *mythoi* are mainly a contrivance—that is, an instrument or tool. Thus, Luc Brisson, *Plato the Myth Maker*. See also in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*; Collobert, "The Platonic Art of Myth-Making: Myth as Informative *Phantasma*"; and Ferrari, "The Freedom of Platonic Myth"; and Rowe, "The Status of the Myth of the *Gorgias*: Taking Plato Seriously."

18. Susan Gaffney, "Dialectic, the Myths of Plato, Metaphor and the Transcendent," *American Catholic Philosophical Association Proceedings* 45 (1971), 82, 85.

19. Allen, "Anamnesis," 171–72.

20. See Norman Gulley, "Plato's Theory of Recollection," *Classical Quarterly* 48 (1954), 208–10.

21. Kenneth Dorter, "Equality, Recollection, and Purification," *Phronesis* 17 (1972), 199.

22. R. Hackforth, *Phaedo*. Trans. with commentary (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 74, 77.

23. Crombie, *An Examination*, 147.

24. In the Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, collection of articles, many of the authors (e.g., Tarrant, Collobert, Destree, Rowe, Larivee, Gonzalez, Moore, Morgan, Grasso, with the possible exception of Dixsaut and Brisson) cannot resist finding allegories, despite Plato's clear rejection of the meaning-absurd allegorizing practiced by some Greeks, most likely sophists. These contemporary authors are so driven because they seek some here and now, literal "message" derivable from his *mythoi*, despite the fact these *mythoi* are metaphorical and analogical and thus nondogmatic, defying non-symbolic treatment.

25. Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 74.

26. Since the term "transcendent" or "transcending" is used throughout this book, it needs to be said that no Christian, religious understanding is implied. To transcend is to rise above and to unite in common a diversity of particular experiences. The Platonic forms are transcendent in that they are noetic apprehensions of the atemporal and invisible, which still partakes of the temporal and visible. Because of this experience of partaking, oftentimes it is appropriate to speak of "transcending," rather than the transcendent, which could imply something exclusively, radically separate and other. Given Plato's *mythoi* the "transcending" should be left continually open for further elaboration through reflection and action. The issue remains whether such Platonic transcending is intracosmic and finite (see Drew Hyland, *Finitude and Transcendence in the Platonic Dialogues* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), or whether there is a transcending beyond being and the cosmos. The Idea of the Good beyond being and even the *apeiron* may very well be the non-finite transcending for Plato.

27. Terrence Irwin, "Recollection and Plato's Moral Theory," *Review of Metaphysics* 27 (1974), 764–71.

28. For the argument that the doctrine of recollection is intentionally sophistic, see Cobb, "Anamnesis." Robert Cushman, *Therapeia, Plato's Conception of Philosophy*

(Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 133–37 seems to think demythologizing recollection loses nothing in the process.

29. See C. Partenie, *Plato's Myths* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 8.

30. That the term “*anamnesis*” is not used in this passage may be related to Socrates’ interlocuter Phaedrus, who is an unrestrained lover of spoken words and written texts. One is not certain whether Phaedrus sees through the external performances of the three speeches in this dialogue, to that inner core that should animate Phaedrus, if he indeed has any philosophical potential. In other words, *anamnesis* is assumed throughout especially in Socrates’ palinode or recantation.

31. With extreme hesitation do I use this term “definition.” It is not a dictionary definition, nor any kind of definition that can be considered in abstraction from the *mythoi* that follow it. In the early dialogues, frequently *aporia* follows attempts at “definition.” We might say that Socrates is searching for the essence of whatever is under inquiry (e.g., virtues) or the necessary and sufficient conditions for *x* being *x*. Yet again, this requires dramatic confirmation through the living experiences of the soul—that is, through *mythos*, and/or through dialogic encounter and by way of the dialectical process.

32. This is a phrase and method used by Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection,” 192–93.

33. This is precisely what Frutiger, *Les Mythes de Platon*, 101–2 does when he states that the cave is established by a theory of knowledge (the divided line) and therefore is not a *mythos*. Frutiger also finds the cave to be an immovable state like a picture in which there is no action. Socrates/Plato in the *Republic* 596a–603b and *Phaedo* 110b–c treat the painter of pictures quite severely. Frutiger applies too severe a dichotomy between dialectic and *mythos* in Plato, and consequently he minimizes their collaborative interaction, not to mention the important dynamic movement of philosophy.

34. Many commentators on Plato’s cave not only call it a *mythos* rather than an image, but also do not see the key factor of force and compulsion both out of and then back into the cave!

35. Voegelin, *Order and History*, III, 62.

36. The puppets (*thauma*) will reappear in the *Laws* 644c and 664d.

37. Likewise, the *Timaeus* in defiance of logical dichotomies speaks of *eikos logos* thirteen times compared to only four times for *eikos mythos*. See Ella Grasso, “Myth, Image, and Likeness in Plato’s *Timaeus*” in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*. Plato advises that our souls catch the flow of discourse here.

38. For some reason some recent commentators (see for example in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, the essay by Kathryn Morgan, “Theriomorphism and the Composite Soul in Plato” confuse the souls’ *thymos* with the appetites and needs characterizing Plato’s city of pigs. It is the *thymotic* souls of Glaucon and Adeimantus who reject such a city, because it does not appeal to their ambitions, desires, and passions as young aspiring men. In the *Phaedrus* we learn that the rational part of the soul must win over the *thymotic* (spirited) part, rather than the *thymotic* part debasing itself by joining tyrannically with self-serving appetites. There is no simplistic, analytical

dichotomy of the soul into rational and irrational parts when the whole mortal and immortal tendencies of the human soul must be rightly ordered.

39. This is contrary to the arguments made by Allan Bloom, *The Republic of Plato*, 407–12. Also see Leo Strauss, *City and Man* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), 50ff.

40. Stanley Rosen, “The Role of Eros in the Republic,” *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1965), 451–75. Also, Alan Bloom finds the Republic to de-eroticize philosophy.

41. See Carol A. Kates, “Heidegger and the Myth of the Cave,” *Personalist* 50 (1969), 542–48.

42. Stanley Rosen, *Plato’s Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 34–35.

43. Rosen, “The Role of Eros,” 453ff.

44. If we were to understand this *Symposium mythos* as a foundational or aetiological *mythos* regarding *eros* and love, the daimonic and divine, might we not conclude that realistically “beginnings” somehow involve the illicit and violent, as well as the authorized and orderly? Do the origins of *eros* symbolically speak of the origins of mankind, insofar as humans are all endowed with the *daimonic*? How many regimes have their origins in war and violence, as well as in ordering their peaceful survival?

45. Voegelin, *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie Der Geschichte und Politik*, 266ff.

46. Is this true of Plato, rather than the Jewish and Christian tradition regarding hearing the loving call? In Voegelinian terms, the noetic is not the same as the pneumatic. The light shining for human *noesis* is not the same as the light of the Word. See Voegelin, “Wisdom and Magic of the Extreme: A Meditation,” in *Published Essays, 1966–1985*, volume 12, 362ff. and “The Beginning and the Beyond,” in *What is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings*, volume 28, 212ff.

47. While it may seem callous that there be something dearer to one’s self than one’s own offspring (especially when one has experienced the exhilarating joy of childbirth), nevertheless offspring have their own souls and thus their own lives. There is a point at which one remains no longer primarily responsible for who they are, while one always retains primary responsibility for one’s own strivings, as this points beyond one’s offspring and possessions. Yet, the more philosophically cared for and developed one’s soul, the more there is a responsibility to others.

48. Francis Bacon may have believed he was such a man-god. See Howard B. White, “Bacon and the Orphic Myth,” *Social Research* 37 (1960), 22–38.

49. See Rosen, *Plato’s Symposium*, 1.

50. Voegelin, *Order and History*, III, 29–30.

51. Rosen, *Plato’s Symposium*, 2.

52. Kenneth Dorter, “Imagery and Philosophy in Plato’s *Phaedrus*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 9 (1971), 282. It is also true that “the plane tree” (*platonos*) is a word play on Plato’s proper name, *Phaedrus*, 229a–b.

53. When Socrates does call upon an external source, be it the Muses or ancients, this usually is a signal that a *mythos* is coming and can be understood in part as characteristic of a person living in an oral not a book and paper culture. Socrates has no books of wisdom or file cabinet of notes to reach for and depend on. Socrates’ tale of Theuth and Thamus suggests that a written (not oral) culture may impair this ability to call upon some source (via recollection or the traditional appeal to Muses),

which is not just simply and wholly present to a person. Certainly, people still may have this experience today in serious dialogues with others (if not in a dialogue with oneself). In an oral culture the mind is more likely to be habituated and to be developed (all other things being equal) for ready access to the self-reflective depths of the soul.

54. Josef Pieper, *Love and Inspiration* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 26.

55. Dorter, "Imagery and Philosophy in Plato's *Phaedrus*," has done this in a literary interpretation throughout this whole article, 279–88.

56. See I. M. Linforth, "The Corybantic Rites in Plato," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 13 (1946), 121–62.

57. R. Hackforth, trans., and commentary, *Phaedrus* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972), 64.

58. See Hackforth, *Phaedo*, 75–77.

59. J. E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (New York: Harpers and Row, 1964), 127.

60. See Dorter, "Imagery and Philosophy," 285.

61. Much has been made regarding what the chariot alone symbolizes, bordering on obsessive allegorizing. See Kathryn Morgan, "Theriomorphism and the Composite Soul in Plato," in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*. Can there be a charioteer and horses separate from a chariot? That chariot would be a dead chariot, a thing, perhaps the body, or no more than the receptacle? Is not the chariot simply no more than a vehicle for transportation? The focus needs to be on the charioteer and the two horses.

62. Note that this flow of potential, continual communion is the textual and political philosophical basis for my grouping of the totality of *mythoi* in Plato's dialogues.

63. Morgan, "Theriomorphism," 287.

64. If at all possible, the ranking might look like this: philosopher = Zeus; politician = Hera; warlike king = Ares and Athena; merchants = Poseidon; gymnasts = Hermes; doctors = Aphrodite; poets and prophets = Dionysus and Apollo; craftsmen = Hephaestus; farmers = Demeter; sophists/demagogues = Artemis; tyrants = Hades.

65. This is contrary to Voegelin's historical assessment of the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, since after Socrates' death it is claimed that there will be no basis for direct political action. See *Order and History*, III, 135–39. I take it that Plato is more political minded than Voegelin.

66. Robert Zaslavsky, *Platonic Myth and Platonic Writing* (self-published, 2016), 5 correctly claims that *mythos* is primarily then and there unlike *logos* that is here and now. But Zaslavsky ignores "the above and beyond" central to Platonic *mythoi*.

67. Unfortunately, most scholars today are not aware of the magnus opus: Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, which helps tremendously to clarify the analogical status of Plato's *mythoi*.

68. Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 136–37.

69. For the attribution of personal immortality to Plato see P. E. More, *The Religion of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), 70–74 and W. R. Inge, "The Place of Myth in Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* II (1936), 141–42.

70. Thus, Voegelin contends, *Order and History*, III, 136.

71. Voegelin, *Order and History*, III, 138.

72. See John Sallis, *Being and Logos* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 447, 487.

73. D. C. Schindler, *Plato's Critique of Impure Reason* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008) prefers to use the term "absolute," while John Sallis, *Being and Logos* prefers the term "determinate" to characterize what Plato envisions. "Intelligibility" seems to me to be more open and true to the important meaning of *noesis*.

## Chapter 5

# The *Mythoi* of Judgment and Return to Political/Cosmic Foundations

In passing from recollection, conversion, and descent *mythoi* to the descent/ascent *mythoi* of the judgment of souls, we pass from the experience of *eros* (the strongest life desire) to the experience of death (*thanatos*), thus analogically passing from the *polis* to the *kosmos*, from herebelow arrangements to the after-life's heavenly order! Primitively, *eros* involves those kinds of bodily desires that occur when one body is attracted to another beautiful body. Of course, we have seen that by comparison philosophic *eros* is much more, if not other, than this in its *telos*. The erotic person strains, toils, and suffers, whether aware or not aware of his/her own radical deficiency. Awareness of deficiency, incompleteness, alienation (*aporia*, being other than what one strives to unite with) even after consummating one's bodily desires reveals that *eros* desires more than bodily fulfillment. Should *eros* be despotically whipped down, deprived, subjected, and exterminated, or can reformulated, reoriented, philosophic *eros* affirm for itself a place in the scheme/flow of things, not for mere life but the good life, which is worth living and erotically striving for as an end?

The *Symposium* and *Phaedrus mythoi* reveal the latter. The *eros* of beauty somehow merges with the *philia* of wisdom. We go from the aggressive youthfulness of life to the ordered, reflective maturity of age, drawing us nearer to unavoidable death (*thanatos*). The *eros* experience discloses our human existence as a field of pulls and chords (see the stringed puppets of the *Laws* 644dff.), placed as we are betwixt the bestial and the divine, depicting the real potentialities (*dynamis*) of our human nature. The death experience, insofar as the love of wisdom is the practice and preparation for death, provokes the recollecting of the soul sundered from the life imprisoned within the body. In the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic*, the Socratic experience of death occurs within the domain of the political, which has claims on the bodies and souls of persons. The life and death query is: are these claims justifiable?<sup>1</sup>

## THE JUDGMENT MYTHOS IN THE GORGIAS

The first words of the *Gorgias* are war and battle uttered by Callicles to Socrates in the marketplace (*agora*), where Socrates has been forced to spend his time. This prefigures the kind of discussion, a political war, that Socrates will have with Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles concerning the power or function of the art (*techne*) professed by Gorgias. From the beginning, Socrates is confronted with wielders of techniques. Techniques dominate the experiences (*empeiria* not *pathe*, *Gorgias* 448c–d) of our life and dictate the courses of conduct. *Empeiria* implies a habit or disposition, a knack or practice like cooking and cosmetics, which flatters its practitioners without having a basis in any knowledge or principles (contrary to the health and disease of the body that the gymnast and doctor study). A *techne* based on *empeiria* may lead to a form of self-flattery without substance (see *Gorgias* 462c–463d).

Gorgias' first words are that no one has asked him anything new and different for many years; Gorgias has such a versatile technique that he can persuasively answer any questions about anything. Gorgias is quite conceited. This leads Socrates to establish the battleground: *rhetorike* versus *dialegethai* (*Gorgias* 448e). Elegant and elaborate speechmaking runs contrary to discussion via short and pointed questions and answers. One or the other will have to demonstrate in this contest (*agon*) not only its superiority vis-à-vis the other, but also its capacity to be the supervening, ruling, political art above all other arts. Sophistic rhetoric makes the boast that all other arts are its slaves (*Gorgias* 452de). Socratic dialectic makes no bodily, ruling claims, although it replaces sophistic rhetoric, insofar as it is publicly and politically victorious over sophistic rhetoric. More crucially, the battle (*agon*) is between the somatic claims of sophistic rhetoric versus the psychic claims of Socratic discussion (*Gorgias* 463a–e). Which is prior, and which rules over which? It is a life and death struggle on both the political and psychic levels, including victory in death as well as in life.

Two things are happening throughout the *Gorgias* that naturally eventuate in the judgment *mythos* at the end of the *Gorgias*. First of all, Socrates is threatened with bodily abuse and death. This is the necessary outcome if the body rules the soul, and if rhetoric being the production of pleasures and gratifications really, not just seemingly, rules the people of a *polis* (see *Gorgias* 462cff.). Does politics deal with the good and bad condition of the soul, leaving the care of the body to gymnastics and medicine (*Gorgias* 464b)? If the soul in reality rules the body, then sophistic rhetoricians, who claim by nature bodily, tyrannical power to do as they choose (Callicles), or who claim relatively by convention to do the bidding of the *demos* (Gorgias), in reality have no rule over themselves (*Gorgias* 491d). Can Socrates persuade anyone (including Callicles) that they should first rule themselves (their own souls)

before undertaking to rule others? Note the unavoidable, Socratic paradox once again, that you have to know *x* in your soul before you can ever begin to know and explain *x* to others.

Secondly, not unrelated to threats to one's bodily existence, there is the patient and persistent Socratic effort to strip his verbal opponents of their military weapons. This is not a dishonorable stripping and looting of dead enemies on the battlefield, which more befits Gorgias' pupils who acquire rhetorical weaponry without any considered knowledge of right and wrong (*Gorgias* 455a). Gorgias believes that teachers are blameless when it comes to how their pupils use what is imparted to them. However, the teachers, by their own teaching or lack of it (*Gorgias* 457aff.), leave themselves open to being abused by their pupils, if rhetoric only grants unchecked, amoral power to its users. The kind of stripping that Socrates accomplishes produces shame in the souls of his interlocutors, if that is even possible. Such shame does not necessarily leave its victims helpless, defeated, and at the mercy of the victorious examiner. Socrates does not proudly walk away from his defeated opponents but continues to engage them even after they have enough, because they truly should want more. The *mythos* at the end of the *Gorgias* occurs when Callicles has enough of Socratic dialectical discussion. Yet Socrates persists, not in further inflaming wounds already incurred, but in finishing what he started (*Gorgias* 505d), giving order (*taxis*) to what happened on his own soul-searching terms. Before reaching this ordered end, we need to inspect the Socratic stripping action, since it reveals the soul shorn from bodily domination.

Gorgias is the first one to experience shame. This shame is a consequence of having to retract a previous assertion that rhetoric produces belief and persuasion without knowledge either of a particular craft (e.g., shipbuilding, medicine, etc.) or of right and wrong (*Gorgias* 454eff.). Gorgias holds that the art of rhetoric is meant (by its teacher, Gorgias) to be used rightfully. Yet this requires either a previous knowledge of right and wrong, or whether Gorgias can impart such virtue if his pupils lack it. Socrates challenges Gorgias, "For the sake of Zeus, as you proposed just now, draw aside the veil and tell us what really is the function of rhetoric" (*Gorgias* 460a). Gorgias stands exposed, but not by merely being caught publicly in a contradiction and having to concede. Rather Gorgias is revealed as a slavish man beholden to the conventional beliefs and opinions of whatever political community in which he teaches.

Polus, a student of Gorgias, now replaces Gorgias. He will not be shamed so easily, since it is simple to admit that everyone knows what is just. All of us can teach it to others. So far Polus is not ashamed of what is commonly, conventionally thought and believed. Socrates attempts to disgrace rhetoric by calling it a form of base flattery. It is not a matter of disgracing Polus, but



of prying Polus away from the gastronomical, deceitful charms (bread and circuses) of rhetoric. Sophistic rhetoric can give no account (*logos*) of the real nature (*physis*) of things (*Gorgias* 465a). But Polus is more impressed and persuaded by the very real power, in and of itself, that rhetoric has in cities. Socrates counters by asking whether this sophistic power does any good for those who have it. When Polus responds that rhetoric has the complete power of despots to do as one pleases with people and property, he is laying bare the erotic desires and propensities of his own soul. Socrates is confronted with the same problem he experienced with Gorgias, although it is now logically extended into the political domain, where persons supposedly have (all things being equal) common ambitions for ruthless power (*pleonexia*), assuming they can obtain it and get away with it.

The problem is to distinguish between what persons believe (*doxa*) to be best and what persons wish to be best, if they knew the Good (*Gorgias* 466d–e). Polus, of course, concedes (as does Thrasymachus in the *Republic*) that raw power without the intelligence (*episteme* or *nous*) that apprehends the Good for its user is no power at all (*Gorgias* 466e–467a). Naturally, Polus does not immediately understand the distinction between wishing and believing involving the noetic apprehension of the Good. There is no one in this dialogic situation that arouses any such philosophical reflection with Socrates. The more minimal task, which nevertheless is a great task, is to show how all things pursue or strive for the Good itself, the Good for its own sake. Thus, persons do not wish harm or evil for others, nor do they wish what is neither good nor bad. Polus, however, persists in viewing all human nature (including Socrates') as envious of those persons who can do as they please, be it by just or by unjust deeds. The base experience of the Gyges' tale is a political constant, devoid of the turn to the best noble regime for a model of imitation and reflection.

If there is any hope for Polus and for human politics, the argument has to be proposed and defended that, if necessary, it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. To do wrong is the greatest of evils, especially if one goes unpunished (*Gorgias* 469cff.). In the end, it is a question of happiness (*eudaimonia*), because all persons including Polus agree that happiness is ultimately decisive in life. In this respect, stories and accounts of tyrants and despots and their many fawning admirers is not sufficient evidence of what would make us happy. If our object is to know truth and reality (*ousias*), then we must be our own witnesses together (*Gorgias* 472b–c, 474a–b). Accordingly, both *logos* and *mythos* speak to individual souls, but not indiscriminately to any souls. You have to enter into the argument related to the story of your own life, and you have to enter into the story (*mythos*) related to this argument in order to make your soul decision in light of judgment. Even if there is no actual afterlife judgment (*mythos*), it is still better to engage in

self-examination and judgment now. Nevertheless, many will need to believe in and undergo the otherworldly, nextworldly judgment of naked souls, who can no longer hide who they really are.

Conceivably, the consequence may be a conversion that turns the life of the soul and political life upside down (*Gorgias* 481c). No matter how politically precarious, we are bound to suffer evil, if necessary, rather than to do it. The conversion of the soul has priority over the revolution of the body politic. The latter, without the former occurring first, has all the potentialities of using the means of one's injurious enemies and becoming indistinguishable from these enemies. The awful problem (*aporia*) is that people become like that which they suffer. If they do not take suffering justly, then they tend to become unjust in retaliation: "The patient receives an effect of the same kind as the agent's action" (*Gorgias* 476d). There has to be something (the Good, an ultimate happiness, and justice in itself) beyond mere living and rolling the dice, if we are not to become as unjust as those who penalize us unjustly. How else could we avoid being made worse by being unjustly injured? If this is the Socratic teaching in the *Gorgias*, it is revealed in deed, not just in words.

Polus makes a crucial concession on the basis of convention (since Polus still is not totally beyond shame) that allows Socrates to establish his point. Polus concedes that shame and doing wrong go together. The shameful is either painful or evil, or both. Doing wrong is more shameful, since it is more evil than painful. Doing wrong may be pleasant according to Polus, yet Polus senses in some way that you do not really get away with wrongdoing. On the grounds of conventional shame regarding injustice, Polus is trapped into admitting in words (not yet in his soul) that doing wrong is more evil than suffering the pain of wrong.

It follows also that it is better to suffer justly the punishment of having done wrong, since to suffer for the good is to one's advantage. To be most happy would mean not acquiring evil at any time, and never having to suffer through punishment (*Gorgias* 478c–d). A man's first duty is to accuse himself (not others) of desiring injustice, and to bring to light, unveil and expose, the conditions of one's own soul (*Gorgias* 480b–c). In sum, Socratic advice is to become conscious of the inner depths and order of one's soul. Socrates has to tell Polus bluntly to strip himself naked and to undergo a process of self-revelation and self-conversion, if only because one cannot at all be sure that this discussion has really begun to touch the soul of Polus and consequently his unavoidable relations with others.

All the while Callicles has perceptively understood that Gorgias and Polus stand defeated only because of their concessions to convention (*nomos*). Callicles blames Socrates for purposefully confusing *nomos* and *physis*. Perhaps this is what Socrates and Callicles share in common, since Callicles, the man

of *physis*, is known to be a lover of the Athenian *demos* (*Gorgias* 481d). Both men appeal to nature given the deficiencies of convention. In the best of Calliclean worlds, the strong person by nature would have the tacit approval of conventions, or she/he would dominate such conventions. As for Socrates, he is not such a lover that he would expose the conventions of a *polis* like Athens (especially the conventions of honor and shame) to a revolutionary upheaval for the sake of revolutionary, tyrannical power. First of all, these conventions may be properly grounded or groundable in what is really good and right by nature. Secondly, a body politic may survive the worst of injustices by a last-minute appeal to the conventions of decency and respect before the eyes of others. You do not impose a revolution on the collective souls of persons, nor do you foment a political revolution because you have some dogmatic, ideological teaching, be it political or private, to espouse.<sup>2</sup> A call for spiritual regeneration is not a dictate or else! Yet the most promising of persons, who may turn out to be the worst of persons, do need to be heard more than Gorgias and Polus.

For Callicles (unlike Socrates), nature and convention are avowed to be antithetical. Nature claims that it is right for the better to have advantage of the worse. The better by nature are the stronger who break the bonds of convention that are against nature. Instead of being the slave of convention, the natural person revolts and becomes the master of others (*Gorgias* 483a–484a). The practice of philosophy (namely Socrates' activity in the *Gorgias*) is unfit for a person who will have to act in the political arena, and it is contrary to one's usual perception of another person's character. Noble action, political success and victory, and the good things of the world require abandoning philosophy, since it would leave us incapable of knowing what to do and doing what has to be done in the political world. *Praxis* (deed) trumps *theoria* (contemplation). In effect, by speaking to Socrates, Callicles raises the existential question: who is Socrates, this lover of wisdom? Socrates acknowledges that he now meets the real test and judgment of his soul regarding his life's work (*Gorgias* 486e–488a) and inner being.

To begin with, Socrates wants a clarification of what precisely Callicles means by natural justice. Again, a critically clarified and analyzed account (*logos*) of what is being proposed naturally precedes *mythos* to guide *mythos*. Does Callicles mean that the superior, the better and the stronger are the same (*Gorgias* 488c)? By superior, Callicles concedes that he does not mean the weight of numbers; otherwise, a mass of feeble slaves would be superior to one, naturally strong, superior, and better man. Furthermore, in what way is a man superior, better, and stronger? He is wiser. Wiser regarding what? In political affairs, he is wise and courageous, not soft of soul. These are the persons who ought to rule cities by nature. Socrates wonders whether such persons stand in need of ruling themselves. Is there any need

for soul-mastery that comes through *sophrosyne* (*Gorgias* 491d–e)? Callicles balks over whether this natural person should in any way be denied complete freedom to pursue her/his desires, even with the support of force to ensure his/her own excellence and happiness. It would appear that both Socrates and Callicles have in common at least some erotic desires. The issue is whether the lover (*philia*) of wisdom will truly benefit erotic persons, and whether *philia* and *eros* are reconcilable? Socrates suggests that *sophrosyne* (at least in part) would be the tempering agent and virtue that allows for self-rule and the conversion of *eros* into love (*philia*) of wisdom. But certainly neither a conventional *sophrosyne*, nor a *sophrosyne* that is cowardly.

For Callicles, happiness is the total unshackling of the desires so that nothing can be excluded as an object of desire. Happiness cannot be anything other than the constant wanting and desiring of one's own pleasures (*pleonexia*). Socrates is reminded that he once heard a wise man say that we are dead in this life within the tomb of our body when it rules over our soul. Our soul becomes like the leaky jar in the fable (*mythos*, *Gorgias* 493a), depicting the soul as a sieve that can never be filled and satisfied. The uninitiated in Hades (the tomb) are like this, unable to hold and remember anything in their souls (the sieves). Could such a fable induce Callicles to change his mind (i.e., undergo a conversion) and choose the orderly (*kosmios*) way of life, instead of the licentious, insatiable life of pursuing desires (*Gorgias* 493c–d)?

Callicles refuses to acknowledge that the constant need to fill one's soul with the ever-fleeting pleasures of desire is a distressing, painful life. For Callicles the person who has moderately fulfilled his desires is too similar to the dead man who no longer feels any pleasure or pain. Socrates and Callicles are speaking about life and death as a whole or at least various kind of life, which are declared to be either really alive or really dead, depending on whether the pleasure of the soul or the pleasure of the body defines one's nature and disposition. This naturally leads to stories (*mythoi*) that magnify ways of life so that they can be seen and judged. The life of the catamite seemingly would best describe Callicles' preferences. Still, Callicles refuses to concede that there are good pleasures separate from bad ones. Life is an exciting roll of the dice regarding multitudinous pleasures.

In two ways, Callicles is forced to see the necessity of determining and choosing healthy (good) instead of unhealthy (bad) pleasures. First, good things are not the same as the pleasant, nor are bad things the same as the painful. According to Callicles, the pleasurable and the painful go together. For example, when one is thirsty, one relieves one's thirst by drinking. Yet nothing is good and bad together simultaneously. The assumption is that there is no distinction between soul and body regarding pleasure and pain (*Gorgias* 496e). Callicles concedes this assumption. Conceivably, there could be a pleasure of the soul that was purely good and not the consequence

of relieving a pain (e.g., contemplation), but Callicles refuses to tend to his soul as distinct from this body. Secondly, both good and bad persons, great persons and fools, are capable of receiving pleasure and pain equally; in fact, bad persons or fools may have more pleasure than the good person or great person. It cannot be mere quantitative pleasure alone, but its quality (whether good or bad) that is decisive, even if you accept Callicles' definition of the good or great person.

Thus, Callicles is compelled to agree that it is for the sake of some good in itself that we act, including our pursuit of pleasure that is not for its own sake (*Gorgias* 499e–500a). Still, we have not decided what course of life as a whole is best, philosophy or sophistry. Taking Socrates on one hand and Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles on the other hand to be the respective models for alternative ways of life, we can say that the life of the philosopher alone critically differentiates what is to the soul's advantage (health), whereas the sophist pursues bodily pleasures and gratifications without much care for his own soul. Such a sophistic rhetorician is enslaved to his own body and to the gratifications of the body politic (*Gorgias* 502b–c). Is there a sophistic rhetoric that exists that aims to make the souls of citizens virtuous, irrespective of their conflicting personal desires and interests? No such rhetoric exists; but if it were to exist, it would cause a regularity and order (*kosmou*) through laws, whereby justice and temperance could be achieved in word and in deed (*Gorgias* 504a–d). Ever since *Gorgias* 493c Socrates has been intimating some analogical kind of psychic and political order or *kosmos* that would give form (*eidōs*, *Gorgias* 503e) to the activity and functions of the soul and *polis*. Callicles refuses to partake in the *mythos* (*Gorgias* 505d), which would bring analogical, personal recognition to the search for the just psychic, political, and cosmic order.

Remembering that *mythos* points to an ordered way of psychic, political, and cosmic life, Socrates argues that the virtue of everything is a matter of orderly arrangement proper to each particular existing thing and proper to the whole of existing things. The presence of order makes each thing singly and wholly good (*Gorgias* 506e–508a). The perfection of a good person is her/his happiness, when she/he abides by the practice of moderation and justice. There is a cosmic and divine ground for individual and political order.

Where there is no communion (*koinonia*), there can be no friendship (*philia*). And wise men tell us, Callicles, that heaven and earth and gods and men are held together by communion and friendship, by orderliness, moderation and justice; and this is the reason, my friend, why they call the whole of this world by the name of order (*kosmou*), not of disorder or dissoluteness. (*Gorgias* 507e–508a)

Simply saying this is not enough, even though it does provide a direction and a *telos* for the soul and the *polis*. We need to pursue further the consequences

(*Gorgias* 508b). The worst peril would be an inability to rescue ourselves, our friends, and our city from doing wrong and from escaping punishment, if we were all to give in to wrong-doers. How can this rescue be achieved? Callicles would advocate power (*Gorgias* 509d–510b). Should the object of such power be to preserve one’s own life and that of one’s friends and one’s city as long as possible (*Gorgias* 511b–c)? Is mere life and the saving of life at all costs the highest good? Since “not one of us can escape his destiny (*heirarmenen*), he should then proceed to consider in what way he will best live out his allotted span of life” (*Gorgias* 512e). The condition of having great power in the city means possibly becoming enslaved to its regime and the demands of the *demos*. However, a true statesman establishes a genuine friendship (*polis* participation) with the *demos* in terms of the Good and the just, both of which perfect those who participate in it. (In Aristotelian terms, power and empowerment are partly necessary conditions, but never sufficient conditions for personal/political betterment.)

Whenever Socrates mentions Callicles’ *eros* for the *demos*, he is referring also to Callicles’ *eros* for his lover Demus (*Gorgias* 481d, 513b–d). This erotic pursuit of a personal, private pleasure, Demus, needs transformation into the pursuit of *philia*, namely friendship with oneself, one’s friends, and one’s city. This is a conversion from the somatic to the psychic, from mere biological, sexual living to the procreation of the good life that conquers death. As a dialogue, the *Gorgias* is for the most part oracular, since there is no real *philia* participation possible among warring opponents. Socrates only can invite inquiry with others, and Callicles refuses it. This inquiry includes the radical indictment of the body politic, Athens, for failing to produce any good statesmen (*Gorgias* 517aff.), who would speak to the soul, not just to the body, of its citizens. Speaking means gently persuading, and not using power and violence such as Callicles proposes. Given Socrates extremely condemnatory and revolutionary public remarks about Athens, it would not be surprising if Socrates himself were stripped of everything he had and put to death (*Gorgias* 521c–d). A tremendous claim goes along with this: Socrates alone attempts to practice the true art of statesmanship (*Gorgias* 521d) with no other self-protection than avoiding unjust words and deeds before humans and gods (*Gorgias* 522d).

Socrates is on trial. His apologia may or may not be utterable, depending on where we see this trial occurring. There are three possible “places” for his trial. The first obviously is in a court of law in Athens, a real definable place. We know that this actually, historically happened to Socrates. The charge was impiety, treason, and the corruption of youth. The second “place” is no place at all, namely the trial that goes on in the soul of a person whose whole way of existing suffers the accusation (made by Callicles) of failure and feebleness. In the very first lines of the *Apology* Socrates wonders who he is, given

the existential disparity between his knowledge of himself and other people's knowledge of him. There is a trial in the soul because we have cared, and will go on caring, for others such as our fellow citizens. The third "place" also is no literal place except that it is a mythical, symbolic objectification of a place in the nether world, Hades, where souls receive their judgment. It is the trial in the soul that mythically mediates the trial here in this world and there in the next world.

"Hear then a beautiful speech (*logou*) which you will regard as a *mython* [Callicles], but I regard it as an account (*logon*) which I intend to tell as the real truth" (*Gorgias* 523a). The story begins with Homer's account of the division of rule over the world between Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto. Since that time of times (Chronos) there has been a law concerning humankind, still holding true among the gods, that a just and holy man will upon death go to dwell in full happiness in the Isles of the Blessed. The unjust and impious must go to the dungeons of Tartarus to pay the penalty. However, not until Zeus' reign was the procedure for the judgment of the dead (dare one say, philosophically) corrected. Pluto and the overseers of the Isles of the Blessed reported to Zeus that the souls of the dead were being judged contrary to merit, since living men had the function of judging persons immediately before they died. An obvious reference is being made to Socrates' own judges. Zeus (the philosophic Zeus of Plato) corrected all of this by requiring that humans on trial now will be stripped of their clothes, their beautiful bodies, their ancestry, and wealth. Humans will be tried dead not alive. No longer will humans know beforehand when they will die; Prometheus has put an end to this. (Plato's Prometheus now serves Zeus for the sake of human souls.) Also the human judges will be replaced by judges who also are naked and dead. The divine lineage of Zeus, his sons Minos, Rhadamanthos, and Aeacus will be the judges, who are by their own natures fit to behold and to judge the souls of the human dead without bodily and earthly distractions. Witnesses may be called to testify regarding the injustice or justice of a person's life. Consequently, Zeus and his lineage represent a new Platonic order of justice surpassing human, terrestrial justice, derogated by sophistic, legal rhetoricians. Plato's mission after Socrates' death for impiety is to reform the Olympian gods in the mold of philosophical piety, thereby countering any charge of impiety against Plato himself.

In the *Statesman*, the passage from the age of Chronos to the age of Zeus will be given fuller meaning regarding the trial of human souls. The symbol of Zeus suggested in the *Phaedrus* 250b now is further elaborated to make Zeus, a representative not only of philosophy as a way of life but of philosophy as a way of death. In death, the soul may be liberated from or purified of the distracting needs and passions of the body. That soul that has pursued philosophy in life now is free to pursue its perfection. The judgment of the dead

(those freed from the body) occurs in a meadow where two roads divide mankind. One road goes to Tartarus, the other leads to the Isles of the Blessed.

Death is revelatory of the condition of the soul after it has shared an earthly existence with the body for better or for worse. The soul is judged according to its pursuits (*zetema*), experiences (*pathemata*), and natural gifts. Just as the body at death may be scarred with wounds and all the marks of its existence, the soul also is upright or bent, beautiful or ugly, in proportion to the life it has led. Any punishment of souls will be only to make them better (remedial). If souls are incurable, they will be made a perpetual example (deterrence) to the rest of mankind regarding the fate that awaits those who are driven without limit to injustice. Despots and kings and any of those in power who have perfect freedom to do as they please are the ones, in most cases, who are incurable and must justifiably suffer unrelenting torment. Only a few good persons survive the holding of great political power (*Gorgias* 526a).

All this is Socrates' advice to Callicles given the contest (*agon*) that occurs within this earthly life. But the *mythos* is not beyond critique and not an end in itself: "There would be no wonder in our despising it [the *mythos*] if with all our searching we could somewhere find anything better and truer than this" (*Gorgias* 527a). It is quite common for Plato to characterize a *mythos* account as tendential, in tension between our soul's here-and-there life and death. Consequently, the function of *mythos* is a *via media* to aid in our wondering and searching, and *mythos* is a likely story (an analogous *via media*) that perhaps another poet could imagine better and differently. If the best and the brightest Greeks of the day could begin to practice virtue and be good within, they could become excellently, politically involved (*Gorgias* 527d). But will they undergo the dramatic catharsis of the *mythos*? Do they live now in the awareness of their judgment at death? Can they now in this life see as clearly as the dead see themselves and others at death?<sup>3</sup> Listen to and learn from this figurative, afterlife *mythos* for it to have impact in this life.

The antipolitical nature of the closing part of the *Gorgias* is a consequence of the failure of communication between Socrates and the people of Athens.<sup>4</sup> Athens did put him to death. Even when Socrates' opponents are intellectually and rhetorically defeated, they remain unpersuaded in their souls. Their strongest desires are to serve either human conventions (*Gorgias*) or raw animal nature (Callicles). The *mythoi* of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, the cave imagery, the Phoenician tale and the mythical-like experience of recollection are nullified by this impasse, since they presuppose some common understanding and *pathos*. The *mythos* at the end of the *Gorgias* attempts to penetrate the resistance of Callicles, Polus, and Gorgias by reminding them of their inevitable death and pointing to a transcendent order and community of persons in the Isles of the Blessed. Its negation is Tartarus, the abyss. Without some longing affinity with such an order or community, by way of



recollection, conversion, and judgment, then the erotic approach to beauty and the noetic apprehension of the Good are denied.

The worst and most dangerous interpretation of this *mythos* would be some literal, this-worldly, political dogmatism that institutes the final judgment of souls here and now. This would destroy the analogical, irreducible character of the *mythos*. Only in the soul's afterlife of *mythos* is there a final judgment for those souls thrown into Tartarus and those welcomed in the Isles of the Blessed. Otherwise, any judgment is not final and the status of political existence is still open. This may explain Socrates' apparent antipolitical tone, which is modified only if the best of persons begins a soul-examination with others that will be an educational exemplar of what the rest of the citizens should imitate. With the utmost of care and caution via *mythos* do we tentatively proceed to immanentize the judgment of souls here in this world before the determinant judgment in the next world. Plato is careful to state in his *theo-logia* that the gods cannot be bribed, yet the gods exemplify care (*therapeia*) about humans. To allegorize or to literalize this *mythos* is to refuse to listen to the *mythos* any longer in one's own soul. We should not play or barter with the *mythos*, calculating how we can get the best of this world and the next as Cephalus does.<sup>5</sup> Nor are we warranted to impose the *mythos* by operationalizing it politically in history. Only by way of an ongoing *therapeia* of the soul, a philosophic education, do we envision a just end (*telos*).

### THE JUDGMENT MYTHOS IN PHAEDO

In the *Phaedo* the catharsis of death is more explicit, since Socrates is not just threatened with death in the presence of his enemies, but now will suffer death in the presence of friends. Also, in going from the *Gorgias* to the *Phaedo* we pass from politicalized, somatic, tyrannical *eros* to *philia* and the affinity of like for like that exists in a healthy community (*polis*) of friends. Yet the *Phaedo* is not solemn and mournful, albeit it is Apollonian (*Phaedo* 58b, 60d, 85a) not Dionysian. Socrates takes pleasure in telling stories that befit the approach of death (*Phaedo* 58e, 60b–62a) during the time between his bodily prison in this world and Hades. Thus, the *Phaedo* is a fundamentally mythic dialogue.<sup>6</sup>

That Socrates will tell *mythoi* is not the same as making or composing *mythoi* in the fashion of an Aesop (*Phaedo* 60b–61b). In fact, the mention of Aesop is purely on the bodily level of sense experience. The marvelous interchange of pleasure and pain (when one comes after the other) should have provoked a fable from Aesop, states Socrates. On the other hand, Socrates, who is the soul discoverer of that music<sup>7</sup> that is philosophy, would have

spoken of that pleasurable activity, which is not necessarily preceded by pain and which is good and choice-worthy for its own sake. This is the pleasure that comes with happiness. Later (*Phaedo* 69a–c), it will be suggested that a purification of this exchange of pleasures and pains is possible. Perhaps there is a *mythos* that when told is a ritual of purification.

For now, Socrates reveals that he had dreams in the past, as well as recently, that advised him to cultivate the Muses. True to Socrates' habit, he has begun to test (via *logos*) the meaning of this dream (just as he tested the Delphic oracle and just as he tested the Muses in the *Phaedrus*), since the Muses may or may not speak truly because of the person who interprets them. The dream throughout his life counseled him "to make music and practice it" (*Phaedo* 60e). Socrates now wonders whether he should have practiced poetry in the narrow sense, rather than philosophy. It is too late to change all that, and the best Socrates can do now is to put Aesop's *mythoi* into verse. But the point of all of this is addressed to the poet Evenus: if one is moderate (*sophronei*), then follow Socrates as quickly as possible (*Phaedo* 61b).

Is there something immoderate or erotic about the productive activity of poetry that comes from the Muses and is untrue to philosophy and the delivering of speeches? Is erotic poetry (i.e., not traditional poetry, but the reformed poetry of the *mythoi* in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*) more befitting life at its fullest, concordant with philosophy and the practice of death? *Eros* seems to be at least initially attached to the bodily life of vigor and prowess, whereas the love of wisdom transcends the life of the body for the sake of the life of the soul. This would mean practicing the art of dying or bodily release. Does Socrates propound a strict body/soul dualism? Why then does Socrates present the procession of gods with bodies in the *Phaedrus*? The problem here is the philosophical navigation and negotiation between the visible and the invisible, the temporal and the eternal.

If philosophy is the art of practicing death, why should we not take our own life for the sake of the life of the soul? Socrates will speak only from hearsay, and yet one must be eager to hear if something appropriate is to be said (*Phaedo* 61d–62a). It has been said that it is not permitted to take one's own life, and this is an invariable law in human affairs, which does not permit of exception like other laws. Even if it were better at some times and for some persons to die rather than to live, we should not take our own life (*Phaedo* 62a–b). The reason is that we dwell in a kind of prison, which does not allow us to free ourselves and run away. The gods are our guardians and we are their possessions. (This agrees with the imagery of the puppets in the *Laws* 644d.) However, Cebes wonders why we would want to be ready and willing to die, if this means terminating the service that we perform in this life owed to the gods. But this assumes that death is a final end of all life and a final break of earthly existence. In other words, it assumes that the only existence is earthly

existence. For Socrates death is a journey to “other wise and good gods and moreover to persons who have died” (*Phaedo* 63b). In death, something good is intended for the Good. Simmias wants Socrates to share this good that good persons have in common. But, again, this assumes that Socrates and his friends share in common a desire for death and a common worthiness before death’s judgment. In sum, the gift of life, which is not our own to give and to take, is burdened with the problem of self/soul-examination. This will require exploration in the remainder of the *Phaedo*. At least, we can conclude that it would not be correct to attribute anything suicidal and simply world-denying to Socrates’ beliefs and deeds. The body and this earthly existence are not to be negated and vilified. Socrates is not a gnostic.

Before mythically addressing the philosopher’s pursuit of death, Socrates will once again prepare the way for *mythos* through establishing an agreed-upon definition. Death is the separation of the soul from the body, wherein the soul exists alone by itself. This is reminiscent of the understanding that the soul recollects alone by itself, and that the soul has the power (*dynamis*) of self-moving thought. The soul that communes with itself no longer communes with the body, except as this is necessary for the fulfillment of basic needs to keep us alive herebelow. But the death of the body releases and liberates the life of the soul. Most people think that a life without bodily pleasures is as good as being dead. However, this precludes the yearning of the soul toward full reality (*ontos*), which is achieved by the soul alone without dependence on the demands of the body. The perfect reality of the soul is the knowledge of justice in itself, beauty in itself, and Goodness in itself (*Phaedo* 65d–e). The body is an evil for the soul only insofar as it enslaves the soul with its desires and inner contentions. To this extent, there will be no leisure (*scholē*) left for the pursuit of philosophy. If this is the case, only when we are dead will we be perfectly free to pursue wisdom, if we so desire. Otherwise, complete knowledge cannot be acquired at all. Can there be any affirmation of this-worldly, bodily existence, if our soul has an end that completes itself beyond this world?

The journey or odyssey of the soul is based on the good hope that when the soul undergoes purification and release from the body, there will be fulfillment and perfection in the love of wisdom. In this life, the philosopher makes him/herself ready for this end by practicing the art of dying in preparation for the other world (*Phaedo* 67c–68b).

And I venture that those men who established the mysteries [most likely the Orphics] were not unenlightened, but in reality had a hidden meaning when they long ago said that whoever goes uninitiated and unsanctified to the other world will lie in the mire, but he who arrives there initiated and purified will dwell with the gods. (*Phaedo* 69c)

Thus, Socrates is not grieved or troubled by the imminence of his death. Death perfects the life of the soul. The life of the body alone means the dying of the soul. The life of the soul (being) means the dying of the body (becoming).

These introductory remarks about the life of the soul are made with hardly any interchange with any of the (at least) fifteen persons in the presence of Socrates at this time. Cebes and Simmias, however, assert that persons generally disbelieve that the soul has a further (never mind an immortal) life. Therefore, Socrates proposes some grounds for holding that the souls of persons who have died still exist. First, if they did not exist, they could not be born again (*Phaedo* 70c<sup>ff.</sup>). This rests on the assumption or hypothesis that the living are born only from the dead. Two further elaborations or consequences are drawn from this hypothesis. In nature are not things generated from their opposites? The opposite of dying is coming to life again, just as the opposite of falling asleep is waking up. Without this back and forth dialectic of nature between opposites, nature would be one-sided, static, and dead. Another way of putting it is that life and death are not separate states but interrelated conditions. In this respect, there is not a radically either-or dualism between life and death, soul and body.

Secondly, if there were not this circle but a straight line of generation, in the end all things would come to a stop, swallowed up in the deadness of chaos (*Phaedo* 72c). There would be no continuity between this world and the next; there would be no intelligibility and meaning to the journey of the soul through this world in terms of the affinity the soul has with existence in-between this world and the next. This clearly does not result in an iron-clad demonstration of the immortality of the soul. There is no logically necessary demonstration that resolves finally what is the mystery of the soul. Yet the status of the argument is more than a pious belief. If we succumbed to the common fear (*Phaedo* 77b) that the soul is dispersed upon death, either into a nothingness or into a hell of aimless wandering, this would nullify the here-and-now meaning and intelligibility of soul-body existence. If there is no meaning and intelligibility (*nous*) beyond this soul-body existence, then there is no reason to make something better of this soul-body existence. The passage on recollecting in the *Phaedo* (previously considered) is a crucial turning point. Meaning (intelligibility) can be given to bodily existence in terms of sense perception only in the context of a life-long journey passing through and beyond the body. The body is an evil (a defect and a deprivation) in and of itself only insofar as it either rules the soul or denigrates the life of the human soul altogether.

Socrates continues to draw on the experiences of his friends. If this fails, at least he leaves behind a memory of that which might generate<sup>8</sup>, upon reflection, the experience of the soul's immortality. In this latter respect, Socrates sings and charms, but not to thwart continual searching (*Phaedo* 78a) within

one's soul among others. This hearing<sup>9</sup> of the charms of Socrates may guide the soul and keep alive the soul's searching and questioning.

What naturally suffers dispersion and change, and what is not liable to this? It is likely that those things that are compounded and composite are naturally liable to decomposition, whereas that which is simple may be unchanging and the same. In our dialectical process of questioning and answering, we apprehend the self-same essence (*ousia*) of that which is (*to on*), equality, beauty, and so on (*Phaedo* 78c–d). They are grasped by the mind's reasoning (*logismoi*) and paradoxically are invisible (*aeide*; *Phaedo* 79a). On the other hand, the senses perceive the things that constantly change and are visible. Is not the soul more akin to these invisibles, when the soul inquires and reflects unhindered by the body's wandering in the sense world of change?

Furthermore, the soul is by nature more fit to rule the body and is closer to the divine by its governing capacity. At least the ruling art presupposes some kind of political superiority of knowledge, mastery, and constancy. In effect, the soul is relatively more like the unchanging, the divine, the immortal, and the indissoluble. Should we not expect the soul to depart from this life to another place that is like itself, invisible (*aeide*), namely Hades (*haidou*; *Phaedo* 80c). Thus, Socrates makes use of this pun between the invisible, the ideas, and Hades to draw an affinity that can be heard and remembered. Only if the soul is defiled and contaminated by its bodily habitation will it shrink from, avoid, and fear its natural perfection. Homer correctly depicts the after-life of the soul flitting about aimlessly in the world; but these are Homeric souls weighed down and burdened by earthly attachments (*Phaedo* 81c–e).

The *Phaedo* has its own description of a conversion and ascent, but now it is in terms of deliverance and purification more akin to the apparently non-erotic cave imagery than the *mythoi* of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. The first requirement is that one be a lover of learning (*philomatheis*), who realizes that his/her bodily habitation is an imprisonment, which threatens to become the condition of wallowing in ignorance and pursuing pleasures of the flesh. As philosophy takes possession of the soul, it gently encourages the withdrawal from a dependence on the use of the bodily senses and an exhortation "to collect and concentrate itself within itself" (*Phaedo* 83a). This deliverance from the body finds its lasting purification in the noetic apprehension of realities (*ton onton*) in themselves. Both orderly moderation and courage are required to be true lovers of knowledge.

First of all, Socrates counsels that we should not become haters of arguments (misologists) and haters of persons, because of the distressing number of arguments of persons who persuade us sometimes truly and other times falsely. We are not now in the condition of knowledge and truth, but we should not stop striving for the sake of our death (*Phaedo* 90e–91a). The reality of death is terrifyingly near, yet Socrates keeps the argument very much

alive (*Phaedo* 89b). The harmony argument is quickly dispensed with, insofar as Cebes must choose whether our soul preexists because we learn by recollecting, or whether the soul is a harmony with the body that does not preexist the composite condition. Cebes chooses the former because it is a hypothesis (*Phaedo* 92d) that has consequences he can accept, namely, that there are essences that exist which the soul recollects through an affinity with them. As for the latter alternative, Socrates points out that a soul that has a bodily harmony is indistinguishable from other souls regarding their degrees of virtue and wickedness. Mathematically, there can be no degrees of harmony in souls with the body. You cannot say that someone is more or less soul.

Simmias' analogy of the soul with the old weaver is much more difficult to overcome. Socrates relapses into an autobiographical account of his youthful investigation of nature to know the causes of everything. To enter into the coming-to-be (genesis) and passing-away (degeneration) of things means for Socrates becoming lost and confused regarding knowing the cause of anything. Then one day Socrates heard Anaxagoras' argument that *nous* arranges and causes all things for the best that anything can become. But when it comes to realizing this power or principle of *nous*, Anaxagoras introduced other causes, the material elements, which made for only a physical, not a truly intelligent (*noetic*) account. To put it bluntly, Anaxagoras expounded the necessary, but not the sufficient ground, for anything being as it has become. He was "unable to make a distinction and to see that in reality a cause is one thing, and the thing without which the cause could never be is quite another thing" (*Phaedo* 99b). In sum, Anaxagoras had no noetic apprehension of the Good that comprehends and holds all things together (*Phaedo* 99c). (The *Timaeus* is a project of comprehending the cosmos according to *nous*. Anaxagoras is saved by the *mythos* of the phenomena comprehended in the *Timaeus*.)

Short of this revelation, Socrates undertakes a second route (*deuteroplous*) in quest of the final cause (*Phaedo* 99d). This secondary method relies on the hypothesis that there is such a thing as absolute beauty, absolute Good, absolute equality, and so on and deduces consequences from this hypothesis. This is an indirect investigation of reality (*ta onta*) by recourse to reasoning, but it does not deny or preclude access to reality (*Phaedo* 99d–101e). Without knowing how or the way it happens, Socrates holds that all beautiful things participate (*methexis*) or have communion (*homonoia*) in beauty itself. Such essences as beauty in itself or greatness in itself will not admit their opposites outside this world of pure being.

At first glance, this seems to contradict what was said earlier about opposites being generated from opposites. However, previously the reference was to concrete things and elements in this world, and not a reference to that which exists in itself, the idea (*eidōs*), which accounts for the participatory

order and arrangement among things and elements. The presence of an idea gives essential form to a thing, without which it would not be that thing. Whereas previously we were speaking of the opposites dying and coming-to-life, now we have gone beyond that physical process of generation, which is going beyond the necessary conditions for living and dying, to the sufficient conditions for there being life at all, namely, the soul that is the principle of life. That the body accompanies soul, since the soul gives life to the body, does not mean that the death of the body means the death of the soul, if we hold that the principle of life never admits its opposite. The immortal is not destructible or perishable by contact with the body. Socrates concludes by reminding his friends to examine carefully all hypotheses that have been made so far, if one is to follow and agree with the argument given (*Phaedo* 107b). The hypotheses have been that we learn by recollecting, that we recollect ideas that are unchanging, that the soul has an affinity to these ideas via recollection, and that the soul is in itself immortal and does not perish through bodily contact.

With this extensive preparation and care given the soul, Socrates now can take us on the journey into the next world of judgment (*Phaedo* 107c ff.). If death were but an escape from everything, it would be a great reward for the wicked. Since the soul is understood to be immortal, there is no escape from the consequences of a person's education and a person's way of life. Does Socrates intend that this story is to have only this-worldly claims, which are necessary and useful for the furtherance of the moral virtues? In this way, a *mythos* would have a conventional, utilitarian worth regarding the behavior of those people who need to be threatened by punishments and encouraged by rewards, since just punishments and rewards may not always be readily forthcoming in this world. The *mythos* would be politically advantageous, but a lie since it is an unsubstantiated (perhaps not even capable of being substantiated) projection of the soul. Such fond dreams either have a pragmatic value regarding piecemeal political/moral reform, or they permit a kind of reflection that gives us the pleasure and satisfaction that everyone "gets theirs." Therefore, the story is a lie in words beneficial to those who need to be ruled, and especially for those who are not able to acknowledge the rudimentary, philosophical, playful status of such stories.

These kinds of questions and considerations are crucial to the understanding of the *Phaedo mythos* and the *mythos* of Er in the *Republic*. The decisive factor is whether these *mythoi* are resorted to arbitrarily and without continuity with the philosophical investigations of the soul that are underway. Or, perhaps, the continuity is subphilosophical, which at best might prepare the way for the philosophical investigations of the soul. If so, *mythos* would not be naturally continuous with the drama of the human soul and the limits (and beyond) of what can be philosophically understood and analogically stated.

Let us first travel with our personal *daimon* on the journey that occurs after bodily death. We are led to a place of judgment. The path to this place of judgment, Hades, is neither simple, nor straight, nor direct. There are many roads or paths. The orderly (*kosmoia*) and wise (*phronimos*) soul follows its own guide and understands, but the soul that is full of desires flits about and only by force and violence does it follow its appointed *daimon* (*Phaedo* 108a). When this latter soul arrives where other souls are, its manifest impurity and wickedness causes this soul to be avoided and shunned by the other souls as if it is a contagion. No one willingly associates with these forlorn, desiccated, utterly alone souls. But necessity carries these souls to their fitting habitation. (All this necessity, force, and violence reminds us of the cave image in the *Republic*, which also may be thought of to be a quasi-judgment *mythos*.) Contrariwise, the souls that have led a pure and orderly life naturally find gods for companions and guides, and dwell accordingly in the underworld Hades. In terms of the *Phaedrus mythos*, we imagine a diversity of associations between humans and gods, since there is a diversity of gods in the procession led by Zeus. This at least suggests the possibility of personal immortality according to one's realized, chosen *daimon*. (Note in later *mythoi* Plato will have a lower path into the underworld of Hades for the corrupted and an upper path into the heavens for the virtuous.)

For the other more or less corrupted souls a guide conducts them to that place where they will receive their due deserts. Another guide brings them back after many long periods of time. This guide reminds us of the nameless guide, who forcefully leads us out of the cave and compels us to return to the cave. Perhaps death and reincarnation analogically, not literally, explain the compulsions associated with the cave and the body. Only the perfected souls naturally and freely guide their own lives without the need any longer of an external guide. (The allusiveness of various *mythoi* when they are juxtaposed suggests that there are variable levels of interpreting *mythoi*. There is no mythic dogma.)

As befits the dwellings of these souls, there are many wonderful (*thaumastoi*) regions of this earth. The size and dimensions of these regions never have been discussed in ordinary discourse. In other words, the description of the form (*idean*) of this earth that Socrates will elaborate is from no ordinary or even terrestrial perspective. Socrates is persuaded that the earth is round and in the middle of the heavens. The earth needs nothing other than the heavens on all sides to be a sufficient counterforce to keep the earth in place and homogeneous. The heavens impart this equilibrium to the earth. How could one be persuaded of this, except insofar as one has left the depths of the earth's hollows and then is able to reflect back from the outer, upper earth to the inner, lower earth? Thus, souls stand betwixt the heavens and the earth and see the heavens imparting their likeness (*homoioteta*) and equilibrium



to the earth (*Phaedo* 109a). Out of this vision we can imagine a measure (*to meson*) envisioned.

The earth in which we live has many regions and many hollows of various forms and sizes. These hollows contain water, mist, and air, but the upper earth itself dwells in a pure heaven where the ether and stars are. The upper earth is as pure as heaven. We think we live on the surface of the earth, but we are as mistaken as someone who lives in the depths of the ocean and thinks he lives on the surface of the sea. Our habitation within these hollows should not make us sluggish and feeble and therefore incapable of rising from the hollows (the caves) into the fairer, purer upper regions. If we were to acquire or grow wings, we would have the ability to see the upper world and the real heavens, the real light and accordingly the real earth. But in the lowest depths of the earth nothing of any worth grows, nothing is perfect, and there is but endless mud and mire. By comparison, our world in the hollows is beautiful. But in the world above our world, there is incomprehensible, wonderful beauty. This is the earth that we see from above. So far there is an ascent from the Orphic muddy mire of the sea, to the hollows of the world, to the upper earth, to the heavens looking down on the world. As we look down, we see a single continuous effect of diverse, beautiful colors. There is a proportion (*ana logon*, *Phaedo* 110d) between the lower earth (hollows) and the upper earth seen from above. Thus, the earth is a sight to make its beholders happy (*eudaimonon*). In this respect, one might say that visible, sensible things have their idea or form in this upper world. Mythically, there is more than just the moral and mathematical ideas. In fact, this upper world is an ethereal paradise. People have no diseases, they live longer lives, and their sight, hearing, and wisdom (*phronesei*) is superior to ours. Further, they have regular intercourse (*synousias*) with the gods through speech, prophecies, and visions. Here a soul's life fittingly is a quite happy one.

After ascending from our habitation in the hollows of the earth, now we will descend into the subterranean river channels beneath the hollows. Besides everlasting water there are rivers of fire and streams of mud. An oscillation within the earth moves all of these rivers up and down. The biggest chasm boring right through the whole earth is Tartarus. All the oscillations of the rivers flow in and out of Tartarus; but there is no bottom or foundation for these streams and rivers. The oscillations occur like a blasting out and a sucking in of air. The passages in and out of Tartarus are torturous and coiling. The titanic river of Oceanus encircles the whole region. The river of woe (Acheron) carries the souls of most of the dead to a lake, where they remain an allotted time before being born again. Between these two rivers flows the river of fire (*Pyriphlegethon*). A fourth river called the Styx seals the oaths of the gods and is fearful and wild. The last river is called Cocytus, wailing. There is nothing beautiful about these awful rivers in the depths of Tartarus.

And the rivers of woe, fire, and wailing are encircled by the oldest of Titan gods, Oceanus, who conjures the terror of endless chaos. The physical imagery of the *Phaedo* judgment *mythos* has obvious moral consequences. This passage from the physical to the moral (we remember Socrates' critique of Anaxagoras) is achieved without engaging in any fantastic<sup>10</sup>, unreal, unbelievable depiction of the universe.<sup>11</sup> There is a physical order analogous to the moral order appropriate to the *psyche*. (In the *Timaeus*, the *demiourgos* will fashion a cosmos by way of an analogy to the intelligible paradigm of the cosmos.)

There is as much physical diversity as there is moral diversity among humans. To be caught up in the dream of this *mythos*, as if dreaming it would make it not so real, is averted by portraying the awful depths of Tartarus. The various rivers in the depths perform the function of a cathartic cleansing in a way that is perfectly natural and eminently just for individual souls. This *mythos* is neither a contrived fantasy nor a comforting dream, insofar as it draws on the reality of experiences regarding life and death that humans share in common in their political way of life.

After the dead souls are judged, those that lived neither nobly nor basely go to Acheron for purification. They pay the penalty for wrongdoing and receive rewards for good deeds. This mythical description makes it possible to experience visibly, in the depths of Tartarus, those punishments and rewards. If souls committed a particularly heinous crime, they are thrown into one of the rivers previously mentioned. They remain in these rivers until those whom they have outraged forgive them and allow them their freedom. The incurable are thrown into Tartarus never to emerge again. In contrast, those souls who led virtuous lives escape the depths and dwell upon the upper earth. If they purify themselves by philosophy, they pass on to even more beautiful abodes that are not described in the *Phaedo*, although we distantly experience such heights in the *Phaedrus mythos*.

Having recounted these things, Socrates argues that we ought to acquire virtue and wisdom in this life. We take the risk that something like the after-life judgment is the true fate of our souls. The *mythos* is not an end in itself, which cancels out any concern or care for political, bodily existence and action in this life. The story has been purposely lengthened to extend the spell or charm over us (*Phaedo* 114d). Each in his/her own time and each in her/his own way according to the conditions of her/his soul will take this journey. Thus, through the judgment *mythos*, the soul reaches a consciousness of its own health, which has a basis in this life, in the form of a springboard that critically transcends ordinary, daily, conventional living. *Mythos* inherently involves drama and journeying, not some fixed moral catechism.

The *Phaedo mythos* occurs among friends in exclusion from the political world of contention. Socrates' death is a departure from old friends, but there

also is the expected arrival or revival of friends in the next world. Politics requires friendships, if there is to be any action in common. The topography of the upper world in the *Phaedo* does not suggest any political order in the context of such problems as war, just distribution and assignment, rulers versus ruled, and other contingencies and necessities. But political order is not reducible to pragmatic problems of ruling in an indeterminate and imperfect world. There is political order in this upper region of the *Phaedo mythos*, if only through the glaring contrast with those disordered souls that wander alone in the private hell of their own making. The visions seen by the narrator of the *Phaedo mythos* presuppose that well-ordered souls are friendly according to their common experience of intelligible order in their psyches. Psychic order is mythically objectified by the ordered political relation between all of those souls and their affinity to the cosmic order around them. There is every indication (see also *Apology* 37c–42a) that Socrates plans to continue his conversations and investigations in the next world.

But what is the status of these mythical topographical objectifications? There is no suggestion that political and cosmic order is constructed<sup>12</sup> by the psyche, although it most certainly is the personal psyche properly ordered that achieves this vision. The *mythos* of Er will further reinforce the soul's experiential non-autonomy and non-self-sufficiency, without denying ultimate responsibility and accountability to the personal soul.

The interpretative understanding that has been reached so far regarding the affinity of the soul for political and cosmic order (in *anamnesis* and in the *Phaedrus*, *Gorgias*, and *Phaedo mythoi*) points to the underlying irreducibility of *mythos*. We do not know how we happen to be in this world, and we lack immediate accessibility to the source or agency of this happening (coming-to-be). (The *Timaeus* will address this, but not answer it; *mythos* functions as an address, not as some final answer or resting point.) Further, we discover in the midst of this happening or coming-to-be a grounding outside becoming, which explains our affinity for a common, public participation in political and cosmic order with other persons. And more important, the order of our own souls is open to reflection and examination in the depths of our soul, since we have this experience (*pathos*) of affinity, communion, and participation. We are not just isolated, selfish individuals, with only a contingent, calculating relationship with others. The dimensions of this experience have manifold consequences: there are the heights of contemplation when the soul engages in its own inner dialogue; there is the reaching out to others in deed to extend this contemplation or to carry the burden of someone else, freeing them from that which is dragging them down, but there is no escape from whom we are, unless we act to be what we can become. Insofar as *mythos* is action-generating, it allows us to escape and transcend (within determinable, intelligible bounds) from whom we are, weighed down in our conventional, daily lives.

*Mythos* at its best for the healthy soul is not reducible (in the same way some metaphors and analogies are not reducible) to common or traditionally accepted opinions, although, of course, *mythos* may degenerate into some sterile, conventional, status quo formula. *Mythos* functions on many different levels and speaks to many different people. The differing fates of souls in the judgment *mythos* likewise symbolize the different degrees to which political and cosmic order can be internalized in a person's *psyche*. While philosophers may pass beyond *mythos* in terms of their noetic apprehension of the eternal forms, still they necessarily pass through *mythos* to get there, and return to *mythos* to embody the passage back into the cave. *Mythoi* are not simply for the enfeebled non-philosophers. *Mythoi* are integrally continuous with philosophic aspirations. As such, philosophic aspirations have a diversity of manifestations, approaches, and habitations (even though there is only one final end). *Mythos* is representative of the whole continuity of this diversity or manyness directed to that one, perfecting end or *telos*, the Good. We can know it in our actions and we act upon our knowing. *Mythos* and *logos* are complementary via media to the beyond (*epekeina*, *Republic* 509b).

### THE MYTHOS OF ER IN THE REPUBLIC

The *mythos* of Er must be placed in the context of a dialogue about justice and political order, descent, and ascent, the just, beautiful city in speech, and the Socratic deliverance of the soul in deed. The *mythos* of Er is not just a descent to Hades depicting the judgment of souls<sup>13</sup>, but it is an ascent which, like the judgment *mythos* in the *Phaedo*, enables the most noetically attuned souls to see the very ground of cosmic order. This vision of the model (*paradeigma*) of cosmic order and rule goes beyond the terrestrial depiction of order in the *Phaedo*. Furthermore, the *mythos* of Er erases the mythical references that Cephalus makes about rewards and punishments, replaces the Gyges *mythos* about human nature as it supposedly really is, and goes beyond the *mythos* of the earthborn and humans of metals, insofar as this latter *mythos* attributes to the natural condition of the soul its generation out of the earth.<sup>14</sup>

The *mythos* of Er leaves humans responsible for their own choices of life. This supervenes the lie in words of the *mythos* of metals, where the god assigns a metal to each soul before being born out of the earth. No one anymore can say the gods are to blame for human choices. Thus, the *mythos* of Er reaffirms and gives substantial grounds for what Homer had said (but only said) at the beginning of the *Odyssey* about gods and human fate. The *mythos* of Er overcomes the consequences of Homeric poetry, which is thoroughly criticized in Book Ten of the *Republic* for being corruptive of the soul and its desires. Homer was both an educational and political failure in the area of

action and achievement. Homeric characters are mostly a model for shameless imitation. But what if a reformed poetry can make a case for itself and justify its presence in the best regime (*Republic* 607c–608a)? What if poetry becomes a model worthy of imitation when it dialogically and mythically explores the right order of the soul? Plato impugns poetry, because it settles for semblances and phantasms far removed from the knowledge of the truth (*Republic* 598b–600c). But what if a reformed poetry were to use *mythos* to help bridge the gap between likenesses (becoming) and the thing in itself (being)? In other words, there may be a kind of poetry which makes manifest and readily visible, analogically through likenesses and images, the invisible heights of philosophical aspiration and achievement.

The *mythos* of Er replaces the Gyges *mythos* about human nature. The Gyges *mythos* presumes that the power of invisibility or undetectability would arouse the desires of any person who obtained unlimited power to pursue to the utmost whatever one desired (*pleonexia*). The *mythos* of Er bares the souls of such persons and shows their eventual fate. They are so disordered and hateful to themselves that they are unfit for even animal association. In this respect, the *mythos* of Er performs an important function. The shortness of this-worldly life and its unpredictability regarding just rewards and punishments proportionate to the true nature of persons' souls makes it difficult to see the consequences of virtuous and vicious action. *Mythoi* of judgment confirm apocalyptic justice; you get what you are; finally, your deserts are consistent with whom you have become throughout your life. *Mythoi* of judgment satisfy the longing for a final reckoning of justice, but they foremost reveal how your actions, dispositions, desires, and thoughts really form who you are.

Just about everyone who writes about the *mythos* of Er<sup>15</sup> is misled by Socrates' remarks that since we have examined justice in itself and injustice in itself, now we can go on to the extrinsic matter of rewards and punishments befitting each (*Republic* 612b–c). Actually, these rewards and punishments in the *mythos* of Er are not extrinsic at all, but are integral to the very soul of the person who has been just or unjust, now that we have tentatively established the best regime, which will be just in speech (*logos*) and in our souls, and now that we face judgment in the afterlife. Justice and injustice finally have their own rewards. We have reached the point where we can see this and speak about it, even if we cannot ourselves definitely realize this in deed herebelow for all humans. All our own actions should be discerned in this light. The best regime draws us as close as we can come to the judgment of souls after death.

Prior to the *mythos* of Er, Socrates gives an account of the immortality of the soul. Glaucon is amazed that Socrates proposes to do this. Yet, we have seen how understandable and intelligible this argument is before the telling

of a *mythos*. One need not be unimpressed by the failure logically to prove immortality once and for all. *Mythoi* do make sense (the intelligibility of *nous* still operates here) in the context of what holds Good beyond the short time we spend in this life (*Republic* 608c–d). The body’s evil (disease) and the passage of time waste the body away and destroy it. However, we are not to assume that the body and the soul are the same or intertwined. Nor does the evil peculiar to the body destroy the soul, since bodily evil can be alien to the soul. For example, does the death and destruction of the body make the soul more evil and wicked? Is there a one-to-one relationship in our experience between bodily afflictions in this life and impurity of soul? Also, the soul’s own evil of injustice does not destroy the soul. If it did, the unjust would be released from their self-contrived evils. This in itself would not be just, if injustice were not a terrible thing, but were merely destructive of its possessor (*Republic* 610d–e). In effect, the unjust soul would attain a reprieve and not its proper destiny. The *mythoi* of judgment inform us that in the end you have to live continually with yourself (thus, the model of reincarnations), whomever you have become.

If the soul is immortal, it will be best known in its very nature, when it is not marred by its composition with the body and all its impurities, diversities, and accumulations. Socrates alludes to the monstrous image of the sea-god Glaucus, who is so heavily barnacled by all that has battered him in his long existence that his original nature is no longer visible. But what if this wild-looking creature were to apprehend and associate with that which it truly yearns? Following the gleam of its yearnings, the sea-god raises itself out of the sea and is stripped and cleansed of all of its bodily accretions. The imagery of the *Gorgias* (stripping) and of the *Phaedo* (cleansing purification) comes together in this Glaucus story. The true, real nature of Glaucus is made manifest, be it a nature manifold or simple. The pure vision of the soul unmarred by countless evils is the aspiration of the lover of wisdom (*Republic* 611e).

The tale of Er (or Eros?), son of *Armeniou* of the race of *Pamphylou* will not be the tale told to Alkinou (*Republic* 614b). This is to say that Socrates will tell a tale different from the fabricated tale Odysseus told to Alcinoos when among the Phaeacians.<sup>16</sup> Socrates will tell of a different visit to the underworld, Hades, which will be a frightening descent only to those unjust souls that deserve to wander in the depths. Other just souls ascend from the earth through an opening in the heavens. Both those souls that ascend and those that descend are made to wear signs describing all that has happened to them. Just as in the *Gorgias* judgment *mythos*, the path upward is on the right and the path downward is on the left. Er (or Eros), we are told, is a courageous warrior who has been slain in battle. Thus, Er typifies the hero and the erotic soldier<sup>17</sup> who, being from the Pamphylian race, represents every (*pan*) race (*phyle*)—that is, Everyman. Perhaps it is fitting that an erotic soldier

be the guardian-like messenger to mankind speaking of this other world, as opposed to the philosopher who would truly not return from this other world. Er may represent the potential among erotically disciplined guardians (such as Glaucon) to become lovers of wisdom. Accordingly, Er best serves as an abiding, mythical intermediary.

Er, on behalf of Everyman, is asked to observe and to listen to everything that occurs (*Republic* 614d). The reader of Platonic *mythoi* can also be directed to pay attention to prominent symbols: spatial and temporal symbols, directional symbols (up and down, right and left), journey and passage symbols, symbols of motion (the revolving sphere), and sound, number, and color symbols. Also, the basic elements function as symbols (fire, water, air, ether, and earth). They all represent the directional forces of psychic order and disorder, since *psyche* alone is the source of all motion and order. Thus, the *mythos* of Er in particular is symbolically complex and elaborate.

To return to the *mythos*, Er sees a continuous procession of souls: those that were judged going up and going down, and those to be reincarnated coming back down and coming back up. All of them undergo long journeys, and consequently, they are now glad to rest at a meadow where a festival is occurring. (This festival is obviously different from the one promised down in the Piraeus at the beginning of the *Republic*.) All of the souls become acquainted and tell stories of the different things they saw and experienced in the heavens or in the bowels of the earth. Dreadful is the lamenting and suffering of those who journeyed for a thousand years beneath the earth. Those who traversed the heavens tell of delights and beautiful visions beyond words. Depending on the deeds done in this life, a soul is rewarded or penalized tenfold times (*Republic* 615b). The tyrant Archaeus is singled out because of his many murderous and unholy deeds: he will not come back again. At the mouth of the opening in the earth, where humans come out who paid for their crimes through cathartic suffering, there are savage guards. The mouth of this opening bellows at the sight of the incurably wicked (most of whom were tyrants; some were private persons). Thus, these guards bind, flay, and drag the incurables and finally hurl them into Tartarus. With great fear and trembling do the wicked souls approach the mouth of this opening, expecting release, only if the mouth does not bellow its irrevocable judgment. A bellow would be an anti-musical sound completely antithetical to a harmonious, beautiful city in speech.

After seven days of rest in the meadow, these souls again journey for four days to the place where they can see a straight light resembling a pillar<sup>18</sup> extending from above throughout the heavens and the earth. In color, it resembles a rainbow, but it is even purer and brighter than any rainbow ever seen before. After another day's journey the souls can see:

at the middle of the light the extremities of its fastenings stretched from heaven; for this light was the girdle of the heavens like the undergirders of triremes, holding together in this manner the entire revolving vault. (*Republic* 616c)

We arrive at the very center of the universe.<sup>19</sup> Thus, we can now see how the light functions as the chains of heaven binding the earth. (As in the *Phaedo mythos*, the earth remains at the center of the cosmos.) Perhaps we can assume this is the light and radiance of the Good, or the Good's sun.

So far, we have a somewhat static picture of the relationship of the heavens and earth. The introduction of the model of the spindle of necessity stretching from the extremities allows us to picture the turning orbits of the eight whorls. But there are problems with a harmonious understanding of these two images: the static axis and girdle of light (being and beyond?) and the moving spindle of necessity (becoming?).<sup>20</sup> We may suppose that the light also functions to make visible the spindle that turns. The eight circular whorls fit into one another (i.e., they are concentric).

It is believed that the eight whorls symbolize the five planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus) and the Sun and Moon in that position of order with the first being farthest from the Earth, which is the eighth whorl at the center through which the shaft of the spindle is driven.<sup>21</sup> There are different ordered sequences for these whorls regarding their breadth, brightness, color, and swiftness of revolution. All in all, we only see a model of the spindle turning when it rests on the knees of Necessity. The seven circles or whorls spin gently and slowly in the opposite direction to the whole of the spindle. One might speculate (in light of the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus*) that only when a god takes over the wheel of the cosmos will a counterrevolution occur, which is no longer in the lap of Necessity and which would be a model of an even more perfect harmony and governance (see *Statesman* 269c–d). Above each of the rims of the moving circular whorls Sirens stand and utter a note for each of the eight revolving whorls. Thus, we have the music of the spheres forming a single harmony (*Republic* 617b). We may imagine a spinning woman actually spinning yarn from fiber. The spinning yarn would represent the eight whorls.<sup>22</sup>

The most important thing to remember about all of this (the symbolic analogy, not allegorizing) is that the souls choose their own lives and have them ratified by all of this cosmic machinery of order. There is sufficient reason to believe that there is an order of equilibrium and balance mathematically determinable that is manifested by the revolutions of these planets according to their volumes, color, and velocity.<sup>23</sup> The souls that see all of this, whether they are fully aware or not, are being educated and attuned regarding the just order of the cosmos, which they should internalize.



Around this spindle of Necessity sit the three daughters of Necessity, the Fates: Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos. Lachesis sings of the things that were, Clotho of the things that are, and Atropos of the things that are to be. Clotho helps turn the outer circumference of the spindle with her right hand, while Atropos helps turn the inner circles with her left hand, and Lachesis helps each of them. Traditionally and mythologically, Lachesis carries the globe or scroll and determines the length of the thread of life; Clotho carries the spindle and spins the thread of life; and Atropos carries the shears and cuts the thread of life.<sup>24</sup>

The souls are first summoned before Lachesis who symbolizes the record of their past lives. A prophet takes from Lachesis' lap the lots and patterns of life. The prophet then announces: "Now is the beginning of another cycle of mortal generation where birth is fraught with death" (*Republic* 617e). Twice, once visually in order to be seen and now verbally in order to be heard, the souls are reminded of their past and of the accumulations incurred invisibly throughout the cycle of birth and death. No *daimon* casts lots for a soul: according to its own nature a soul will choose its own *daimon*. By lot (quite democratic and egalitarian) it will be determined who selects a life first. Once chosen this life will be by necessity one's next life. There is some advantage in drawing a lot that enables one to choose well before the last choice, but only if you know what you are doing. Those who chose early, too quickly, and unwisely become an example to later choosers that care and moderation are crucial. No matter, the key point is that "virtue has no master" (*Republic* 617e), and this includes Necessity. Although we are born into certain irreversible and necessary conditions (e.g., ancestry, environment, bodily conditions, etc.), we still are free to choose to serve virtue and excellence. The virtuous life is not simply chosen beforehand as a pattern of life; rather it is earned and won through a lifetime of action and self-examination. God is fundamentally blameless or without cause regarding these initial choices; god only ratifies the consequences of what has already been chosen.

In this brief, mythical way, Socrates alludes to the free will/determinism problem and the question of theodicy. Both involve the paradoxical existence of freedom, choice, and responsibility along with determinism and necessity, and finally just, divine rule. The *mythos* is meant to engender philosophical reflection about these paradoxical problems, while putting them in a context that would count as a comprehensive and just order of being. Would giving a *logos* of these problems be sufficient, and even more sufficient than a *mythos*? Neither alone seems adequate. Certainly, the clarification of *logos* is helpful and even required, but without the *mythos* there is neither the underlying soul experiences and events, nor the symbolic, paradigm of the cosmic whole from within which to begin to understand and reinforce the paradoxical nature of freedom and necessity.

*Mythos* exists in terms of a likely *cosmology*. There are determinable soul consequences for having a cosmology or not. In this case *mythos* is the condition and justification for raising questions to be treated by *logos*, if possible. The danger of *logos* alone is that the demands of consistency tend to dogma, such as forcing a choosing between the opposites, freedom or necessity. Yet an absolute, unbounded freedom (an empty freedom) is meaningless, since the choice of freedom is not truly free, if it operates randomly. It is a part of the human condition that the world is constituted by greatly fixed and unchangeable necessities, yet this should not become an excuse for diminished responsibility. Nor should it engender an attitude of despair.

After all the lots are drawn, the prophet spreads out various patterns of life on the ground (earthborn) for the souls to choose. The life patterns are more numerous than the assembled souls, and there is a great variety of human and animal lives from which to choose. While souls have to choose what would necessarily be their condition in life, “there was no determination of the quality of soul, because the choice of a different life inevitably determines a different character” (*Republic* 618b). There was no life of the philosopher to be simply chosen. Certain prerequisites might be favorable to such a philosophical life, but it (like virtue) has to be earned over time. Also, quite realistically, there is a commingling of wealth and poverty, sickness and health, and intermediate conditions, if only because fate and chance have to be added. There is no life that is consistently and continuously complete, without the ups and downs of fortune.

At this juncture, Socrates interrupts and interprets what has occurred so far. The supreme risk for mankind is in the seeking, the inquiring, and the learning in order to discover the person (i.e., guide) who will enable him/her to distinguish knowingly the good life from the bad. Er is the messenger from the dead; Socrates, by his interruption, is the philosophical leader among the living. We need to observe what Er sees and to listen to the words of Socrates, since we will have to make choices. The condition and the degree of awareness in our souls will be decisive. Also, there are a variety of conditions of life that affect the goodness of life, as well as different dispositions of soul that make for good and evil choices. From all of this one blends a life based on reasoned choices ever mindful of establishing the just nature of one’s soul. This means choosing the life resting in the mean between excess and deficiency, if persons are to have the greatest happiness (*Republic* 619a).

Throughout the *mythos* of Er one is reminded of Aristotle’s *Nicomachian Ethics* (e.g., the mean, choice, the voluntary and involuntary, happiness, justice, the good life), yet how radically different is the Platonic treatment in style and form. Do not we naturally have readier access via the *mythoi*? Being dramas of experiential happenings of the soul, *mythoi* activate us in certain directions toward a fulfilling end (*telos*) precisely because these

*mythoi* are experientially identifiable, activating dramas for all those open to such. They are more memorable, more graphic, and more evocative and persuasive when they portray our souls. Nevertheless, Aristotle's *Nicomachian Ethics* satisfies our rational desire to expound and to develop discursively. Without the former, the latter might be unappealing and un compelling, because devoid of the experiential rendering of diverse inclinations. Without the latter, there would be no recognition of the discursive qualifications that come through questioning and inquiring. Socrates' interpretive interruption (*logos*) reinforces the importance of the continual interaction of *logos* and *mythos*.

The choosing of lives is now underway. The first soul greedily grasps, without sufficient examination of her/his destiny, the horrible life of greatest tyranny. When she/he takes the leisure to inspect his/her choice, she/he wails and blames everyone but her/himself. She/he was one of the souls who had come down from heaven, since her/his previous life was in a well-ordered *polis* that enabled her/him to practice virtue by habit, but not by the deepening pursuit called philosophy. No wonder we need to keep *mythos* and *logos* together, and why conventions need to be intelligibly grounded in knowledge. Many of those who came from heaven and were conventionally educated never experienced the greater wisdom that comes through suffering/learning (Aeschylus). Consequently, they choose life patterns without sufficient care. The same cannot be said of those who suffered down in the earth. Thus, for the most part, there is an interchange of good and evil among the souls, and this makes a whole lot of experiential/rational sense. Their choices are naturally determined by the habits of their former lives, and what they learned or failed to learn in the afterlife. Those who love wisdom return to this world via a happy journey between the two worlds. Perhaps the strangest sight of all is the choice of bird lives (instead of human lives) by Orpheus and Thamyras. The Homeric heroes Ajax, Achilles, and Agamemnon likewise choose non-human lives out of hatred of the human race.<sup>25</sup> The buffoon Thersites chooses the life of an ape, and Odysseus flings away all ambition and adventurousness in favor of an ordinary, citizen life minding his own business. Plato (like Dante) seems to be having some fun and symbolically settling scores here. On the basis of an analysis of the souls of the Homeric heroes, Socrates can depict their fate. This is a parody of the Homeric heroes and the Homeric sense of conventional rewards and punishments in some afterlife.<sup>26</sup>

Once all the souls make their choices, they go before Lachesis to resolve their *daimon*, which completes their individual choices of life. Clotho then ratifies the destiny of these souls, and Atropos spins the web that makes it irrevocable. (Again, this conjures up the weaving metaphor in the *Statesman*.) Having thus passed beneath the throne of Necessity, the souls journey to the Plain of Forgetfulness, undergoing terrible heat on the open plain.

At the River of Forgetfulness all souls are required to drink a measure of water, but some souls are without practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and drink too much. These souls will be least able to recollect all that they saw and all that happened to them. The next day these souls are born like shooting stars. However, the wounded soldier Er returns to the living to tell his tale without having to drink the waters of forgetfulness.

Socrates declares that the tale is saved and it will save us who believe it (*Republic* 621c). We need to be guided throughout our life by the recollecting of the immortal life of the soul. The soul can endure the one-thousand-year journey through all the extremes of good and evil, and it will have its inherent reward through persevering on the upward road and practicing justice through wisdom (*phroneseos*). Thus, out of the *pathos* of the *mythos* of Er there is a call to contemplation and action.

### THE MYTHOS OF POLITICAL FOUNDATION IN THE STATESMAN

With the *mythoi* in the *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, it is possible to see *mythos* in its most comprehensive scope and mode, the cosmos. In this context of cosmic order and disorder, we are asked to recollect the presence of the philosopher—that is, the psychic order of the lover of wisdom that has been achieved through the *mythoi* of conversion, ascent, and judgment. The *Statesman* does not cancel out or supersede the *Republic* concerning the best political order of the philosopher-king,<sup>27</sup> although the *Statesman* does begin by suggesting that there is no simple, mathematical analogy between the sophist, statesman, and philosopher (*Statesman* 257a–b). In other words, the royal statesman or king will not be of equal worth, nor simply three times the worth of the sophist. Nevertheless, the philosopher-king hovers in the background (just as Socrates gives way to the Young Socrates in this dialogue) insofar as the statesman is defined to be the person who has the knowledge (*gnostiken*) or the intellectual science (*gnostikes epistemes*, *Statesman* 257d–260a) of ruling. The statesman is more akin to, and therefore participates in, this scientific knowledge of judgment, rather than just the practical science of commanding (*Statesman* 259d, 260a).<sup>28</sup> This is the first dialectical division of the *Statesman*, and we wonder whether this political division constituting rulership and the achievement of political order has a prior dialectical division as regards cosmic order. It will become evident that the *Statesman* presupposes the *Timaeus*, but by examining the *Statesman* first (political order), we will be better prepared to understand analogically the *Timaeus* (cosmic order). We can then return to the consideration of political action and actualization in the *Critias*.

As expected, *mythos* is once again commonly preceded by some kind of dialectical clarification or examination of whatever is the topic under discussion. The case is the same in the *Statesman*, where the Stranger exercises his powers of dialectical division with the Young Socrates in order to imprint upon the statesman the seal or mark of a single form (*idean, eide*; *Statesman* 258c) separate from all other classes. This division proceeds by natural bifurcation, starting with the division between the practical and intellectual sciences (*Statesman* 258e). Statesmanship, royal rule, and kingship are one and the same, and being sciences, they ought to possess knowledge or intellectual science. There follows a lengthy division of intellectual science to the point where statesmanship collectively is the science of commanding and tending tame, walking, hornless, biped, featherless, living beings that gather in herds on land. In sum, statesmanship is the tending of humans in common (*Statesman* 267d).

Obviously, this division has not been carried out without amusement or play.<sup>29</sup> At one point, there is the laughable consequence that the statesman tends a herd of pigs (*Statesman* 266c–d), which is reminiscent of the city of pigs in the *Republic*. Secondly, the preoccupation with those that the statesman cares or serves almost causes us to forget that the statesman himself is a king and deserves to be thought of as a sort of charioteer (*Statesman* 266e), which is clearly reminiscent of the *Phaedrus mythos*. Consequently, and most devastating of all, there has been the failure to distinguish properly the statesman from a host of contenders among the herd that claim to be herdsman of humanity (e.g., merchants, farmers, gymnasts, doctors, et al.).<sup>30</sup> This, in turn, is reminiscent of the brief story about the beleaguered pilot of the ship in the *Republic*, who is no match for the sophists who drug the *demos* and gain political power. The *Statesman* is full of allusions to other dialogues. In particular, the *Gorgias* brings to mind (recollection) a political situation in which the true statesman, Socrates, is threatened with abuse and death for not flattering the *demos*. Also, there is reference in *Statesman* 268b to the true herdsman, who knows the midwife's science, reminiscent of the Socratic art of midwifery in the *Theaetetus*.

A new beginning (*arche*) and a different road is required, if the argument (*logos*) is not to end in disgrace. The Stranger resorts to a great, ancient tale that one (namely the Young Socrates) should attend to as if a child. The old tale told to the young involves the ages of the cosmos from its youthful beginning to its old age and end. As the cosmos revolves we are, cosmically and mythically speaking, returning to the youth of the cosmos, and its beginning, by way of another *mythos* told by the older Stranger. In any case, the Young Socrates has heard of the old tale of the quarrel between Atreus and Thyestes, but he only remembers the golden lamb of the story, which was the token of political power given to Atreus from the gods. The memory of the Young

Socrates is a political and educational problem for the future. The Stranger is not interested in tokens of political power that are objects of dispute, but rather he intends to speak of the portents contained in this old tale. Cosmic change is the event (*pathos*, *Statesman* 269a–c) that lies at the heart of many old *mythoi* and is the cause or reason (*aition*) for them all. Within this cosmic reference the Stranger can speak of kingship in itself, since the *mythos* will provide a division prior in time and in nature to the division between the intellectual and practical sciences. Thus, there is this concrete example of *mythos* coming to the aid of and refocusing philosophical *diarexis*.

The *mythos* tells us first of all that the cosmos has two cycles conforming to two epochs, each with their allotted time. God guides the revolution of the universe during one epoch, but the other epoch occurs when the god releases his guidance and the cosmos reverses its cycle. The cosmos is a living creature endowed with intelligence (*phronesis*) by its governor from the beginning. (This will be further elaborated at length in the *Timaeus*.) This reversal of motion is a necessary part of the bodily nature of the cosmos, even though it has received many divine qualities. Only the most divine of all is without change (*metaboles*) and ever the same.

The greatest possible deviation of motion is in the reverse cycle. To turn forever in a single motion in the same place and in the same manner is not possible, except for the divine power that guides all things. As a result of what we can assert about the divine, as opposed to the somatic, we must not conclude that the cosmos always turns itself, or that it is always turned by god in two opposite courses, or that two gods turn it in different ways. This would not appropriately conform to what is divinely governed as opposed to that which is somatic in nature. We may, however, wonder why there is not a lower order god that has charge of the reverse cycle of the cosmos (e.g., the goddesses of Necessity, the Fates, do take charge in the *mythos* of Er). In the *Laws* (896d–898c) there is even the remark that there are two gods, one of Good, the other of Evil. Perhaps the diversity of responses suggests that this is really a matter for mythico-speculation, but these different answers would still be in conformity with the model of a divinely established and ordered universe.

However, in the *Statesman* these other alternatives would radically interfere with the dialectical division or bifurcation that the Stranger is making between on one side god and the *demiourgos*, and on the other side body and necessity. If another lower order god superintended the reverse revolution of the cosmos, this could mean a number of things: (1) a confusion of the demiourgic function with that which is in function and in essence non-divine, although it is initially formed by the divine maker; (2) a human doubt as to the skill of the *demiourgos* in fashioning what is not as perfect as possible given the material limitations; and (3) at best, such a lower order god only

could be meant to be representative of the *demiourgos's* achievement (as in the *mythos* of Er) without interfering with this contrary revolution that goes contrary to divine law (*themis*, *Statesman* 269e). Both the first and second will receive greater attention in the *Timaeus*. For now, the only remaining alternative is that the cosmos is guided at one time by an external divine cause of the *demiourgos* that gives life and renews immortality. At another time the cosmos is left to itself and its own motion. Since the change from divine, circular motion to the reverse revolution is the greatest and most final of all cosmic changes, we associate this reversal with the greatest cataclysms and destructions that have occurred within the world. Those who have survived have had many wonderful and strange experiences (*pathemata*) of the world changing directions (*Statesman* 270d). As more of the *mythos* unfolds the Stranger will be addressing basic experiences, which are more or less dimly felt in the historical memory of peoples (e.g., a great fire, a deluge, an earthquake, and even a golden age).

We must note the symbolic parallels between this *mythos* of the two ages and previous *mythoi*, which have spoken of a going to and from this life and the next. Especially the *Gorgias mythos* depicts a habitation that may be something like or identical to an age in which the god or *demiourgos* governs the cosmos. More likely, this age is symbolic of the end of the 10,000-year cycle of reincarnations, when all accounts are finally settled. The universe is wound down to the point where the god or *demiourgos* must intervene and renew the order of all that has been made, including all souls (especially in-between human souls neither damned nor saved) that have failed to escape this reverse cycle. Entropy and final destruction, given the preexistent materials of Necessity (see the *Timaeus*) and the *apeiron* (unlimited), remain a formidable fear for Plato. By its very nature, the human soul (which is always the central focus of any Platonic *mythos*)<sup>31</sup> will either have an affinity to the age of divine revolution and soul perfection, or an affinity to the age of counterrevolution and possible self-destruction. The nature of the cosmos includes both.

Maybe, at this point, it is wise to suggest that we need to avoid all crude literalization (materialism) and see the cosmos and the cave as analogical symbols for the history of personal souls in (*phronesis*) and out (*theoria*) of political communities, ever subject to revolutions of perilous, human existence.

The *mythos* continues by describing the particular happenings that occur when the cosmos changes its revolutions back to saving divine guidance. Every mortal creature no longer grows older in appearance. When the cosmos reverses its reverse cycle, so do the bodies of creatures, until these bodies become new-born babes. There is something reminiscent here about old age becoming a reversion to childishness and dependency, even without

the present-day horror of Alzheimer's disease, when our memory fades in a reverse cycle from short-term memory to long-term memory. Platonic *mythoi* can be intelligently defantasized. In the end, these old bodies waste away entirely and disappear. There is no suggestion that the soul's immortality is threatened by bodily dissolution. The Young Socrates inquires about how life is generated in this age, the reign of Chronos, when the god has taken over the governance of the cosmos.

It is a natural consequence of the return of the old to childhood that those who are dead and lying in the earth take shape and come to life again, since the process of birth is reversed along with the reversal of the world's revolution; for this reason they are inevitably earth-born, and hence arises their name and the tale about them, except those whom god removed to some other fate. (*Statesman* 271b–c)

Nowadays, this tale of the earthborn is not believed by humans (although upon death we are buried or cremated, ashes to ashes), since we are at a great remove from our earliest ancestors who were nearest the period of Chronos' reign. It follows, however, that the further we are from Chronos' reign, the closer we are to returning to it. This *mythos* symbolically is addressed to youth, and our return to youth at least by recollection. Again, the onset of old age causes one to think backward regarding the flow of events and decisions in one's life and the big, mysterious question of old age: why did I turn out to be who I did turn out to be?

Notice that god removes some souls from the cycle of being refashioned all over again out of the earth. These few souls either truly enter the Isles of the Blessed or are thrown into the abyss of Tartarus forever. The *mythos* of the earthborn, which seemingly only had local, political consequences in the *Republic*, now indeed has fundamental, cosmic import. That the god supervises the whole circular, perfect, and divine revolution of the cosmos, and other gods rule over the various species of creatures indicates or portends a remaking of what was once originally made by god and gods. This is the golden age of mankind when life springs forth spontaneously (*Statesman* 271d–272b) from the earth (symbolic of the mortal and bodily habitation of mankind). There is no wildness, no eating of one another, no war or strife, no regimes (*politeiai*), and no possession of wives or children. There is no memory of former lives. On the other hand, there is a superabundance of food without slaving in agricultural tasks. There is no need for clothing or housing; the earth and the climate are naturally comfortable for living. Besides, there is a hierarchy of divine guidance from god who is the shepherd of humans analogous to those humans (insofar as they have a divine part) tending lower animals. This golden age paradoxically is as great an abstraction from earthly



necessity and contingency as could be imaginable, since humans just spring from the earth. From the highest to the lowest there is the harmoniously ordered whole.<sup>32</sup>

By implicitly conjuring up an image of a golden age, is the Stranger inviting us to yearn for a return?<sup>33</sup> First of all, we have already remarked that certain souls (the truly saved and the finally damned) have escaped the cycle in which the rule of Chronos necessarily leads to the rule of Zeus. The golden age functions as a precursor to another 10,000-year period of reincarnations. If our soul has divine, philosophical yearnings, it will not be for some descriptively definable, golden age. The Isles of the Blessed exist in a silence properly beyond words and comprehension. Also, the Stranger rightly wonders whether the age of Chronos is happier (*eudaimonesteron*, *Statesman* 272b) than the present age of Zeus. In the Greek mythical tradition, the passage from Chronos to Zeus was the passage from disorder and violence to the order of justice. Plato, however, departs from traditional mythical beliefs, by refusing in principle to assign to the divine any characteristics of disorder and violence. Likewise, the gods are not to blame for human troubles and wrongdoing. Still, there can be a hierarchy (and there is such) among the gods justly proportionate to their tasks. The age of Titanic Chronos is called such because humans and all the Olympian gods are the offspring of Chronos. There is no reason to suppose that Chronos rather than Zeus controls the governance of the cosmos in this age of Chronos. There is no reason to suppose that the unnamed *demiourgos* who controls and then does not control the cosmos is either Zeus or Chronos. Focusing on Chronos' children, both humans and Olympian gods, are they happier than under the aegis of Zeus? Certainly, Chronos' children have an abundance of leisure and power. But do they use these necessary prerequisites for happiness and the good life to converse and learn, and to be lovers of wisdom? Or do they just eat, drink and tell tales among each other? In other words, can we say that they justly earn the Isles of the Blessed or Tarturus?

There is no one capable of reporting to us what the desires of those people in those days were in regard to knowledge (*epistemon*) and the use of speech (*logon*). The reason why we revived this legend (*mython*) must be told in order that we may get ahead afterwards. (*Statesman* 272d)

Because this description of the golden age is so strongly reminiscent of the best city in speech of the *Republic*, or possibly the city of pigs, we are specifically advised or warned that the consequences of speech and knowledge are action and practice. When political action is not possible, psychic action still is. The gods do not make us divinely whole and self-sufficient, neither originally nor when they have care over the cosmos and our souls. We must

act and respond to *logos* and *mythos*; we are not to fall into some stupefying dream of some golden age, as if there could be such a *politeia* that just caters to whom we (our souls) fully are.

Irrespective of the peculiar blessedness of the age of Chronos, we necessarily will undergo a reversal of birth after the allotted period of births for the earthborn race. The helmsman of the cosmos will withdraw, and fate (*heimarmene*) and innate desire (*sumphytos epithymia*) will take over as the earth turns backward (*Statesman* 272e). Just as in the *mythos* of Er, when we were advised to learn between incarnations as much as possible about the goodness, intelligibility, and justice of the cosmos, now on a greater more comprehensive level we are advised in the *Statesman* that during the ages of cosmic revolutions we have the prerequisites to develop the potentialities of our soul for wisdom and justice. *Mythos* in Plato persistently addresses the potentialities (*dynamis*) of the soul.

Neither reincarnation nor the return to the age of Zeus is evil. We return for the reason (*aition*) that the bodily element (*somatoeides*) originally, inherent to its nature, participated in great disorder before the attainment of a cosmos (*Statesman* 273b). From the maker of the cosmos only good things are received. Injustice and savageness do not have their origins with the divine maker. However, as the cosmos is separated from its governor, gradually and inevitably the condition of disorder prevails more and more out of forgetfulness of and deviation from the Good. Near the end of time when destruction is near, the god who made the cosmos takes over the helm to prevent chaos and descent into the dissimilarity (*anomoiotetos*) of the boundless (*apeiron*, *Statesman* 273d–e). In this way, the god imparts order through governance and endows the cosmos with deathlessness (immortality) via eternal return.

We are to understand this cosmic *mythos* in terms of the way in which human generation necessarily imitates (*mimema*) the condition of the cosmos (*Statesman* 274a). Mankind is indeed in great difficulty now that the gods have withdrawn. Humans are on their own and are free, but unprotected and feeble, without resources. Although the *mythos* proceeds in bodily language, we understand that this is meant to have an analogical reference to the condition of the soul given its different functions and responsibilities parallel to the two different epochs. The old traditions tell of the necessary instruction and education (*paideuseas*) given to humans as the gifts of the gods: for example, Prometheus' fire, the arts of Hephaestus and Athena, the seeds and plants of other deities (*Statesman* 274c–d). Although humans now have to direct their own lives, just as the cosmos revolves on its own, there are all these divine gifts for human life. Yet we wonder on the level of the human soul (not just the human body) what gifts have been left or proffered for those who seek the fulfillment of their souls. Why is this the age of Zeus? Does the Zeus of the

*Phaedrus* come to mind as the symbolic representative of the gift of divine madness that leads us to take up philosophy as a way of life?

The Stranger's *mythos* does not make this clear, although it would be reasonable and proper in this age of Zeus that philosophy be the self-revelation of the attuned soul. But the point of the *mythos* has been to clarify the political situation, such that we do not confuse that age in which the divine shepherd rules the human flock with that age in which the human rulers must compete with others for rule. Those "others" are not easily distinguishable as either rulers or ruled (*Statesman* 275b–c). Nevertheless, the *mythos* functions like a paradigm (*paradeigma*) allowing for the investigation of the fitting manner of true rule by a human statesman.

The essential mistake in our previous division was to confuse care (*therapeia*) of the human flock as a form of tendence in common, as if it were indistinguishable from feeding this flock. Both the divine and the human shepherd are above the tasks that bring about the satisfaction of biological needs (*Statesman* 275d–276d). The key distinction is between political rule, which is voluntary and tyrannical rule, which is compulsory. Certainly, the provisions of those things that are necessary for mere life and existence are on the level of the necessary and compulsory. We have yet to discern what is particularly voluntary and caring about the political art of the statesman. Further paradigms and paradigms of paradigms are required because we do not have direct access by *logos* to knowledge of statesmanship, divine or human (*Statesman* 277b–d). Our *pathos* of knowledge is as if we are dreaming. Yet the divine action of shepherding revealed through the *mythos* should abide in our memory as a measure, which the statesman can imitate in caring for and improving the human flock with their consent.<sup>34</sup>

Since the *mythos* just told is itself a paradigm, and since we are now politically required to use other paradigms, we are in the process of descending to that level where we can be persuaded to acknowledge political order. This is much more thorough a persuasive and educational process than the *mythos* of the earthborn and metals in the *Republic*. The key function that both the *demiourgos* and the human statesman have in common is persuasion (*peitho*). The reference to paradigms (and likewise to *mythoi*) is not just utilitarian and dispensable, if it is the case that paradigms address and represent an ontic condition common to divine and human shepherds.<sup>35</sup>

A "paradigm" consists in correctly identifying something that is "the same" in "the other" that is separate from it, thereby gaining one correct understanding of two things, both together and individually.<sup>36</sup> We shall examine in the *Timaeus* the divine *demiourgos* looking to the self-same forms, as he fashions a cosmos in that which exists as "other." This is achieved by the fatherly process of rationally persuading necessity, the nurse or mother of all things, thereby bringing about an order in conformity with the forms that are self-sufficient

and independent of all things. A paradigm in itself confronts on various different levels the problem of fashioning in speech and in deed that which is at once the same and other. A paradigm functions as analogies do; they have that indispensable function (equal to that of the *demiourgos*) of mediating and linking that which is neither wholly the same nor wholly different.

The *Sophist* addresses this problem at great length in order to distinguish the philosopher from the sophist, and accordingly to distinguish being itself from that which exists in-between being and not-being. This in-between existence is “the other,” which is not the same as being itself, but is different without being not-being at all (*Sophist* 258b–c). Epistemologically, in-between knowledge and ignorance lies opinion, which is either true or false opinion depending on its direction toward being or not-being. The true statesman, who wants to end the destructive contention (factions, *stasis*) among all kinds of persons for political rule, must persuasively address the opinions of persons and persuade them to participate in conformity with knowledge and being. Politics is participation (each to her/his own) in the common affairs of the *polis*. A paradigm or *mythos* is eminently suitable for caring for, in speech and in deed, the opinions of the many, assuming such a statesman has previously, philosophically grasped the same in the different. In this sense, she/he has the art of caring for and ruling the whole of mankind (*Statesman* 276b–c).

To ask how the statesman caringly enacts this for his/her people (if not for mankind) is to ask what paradigmatic functions we conceive the statesman performing. Speech and deed merge as we are concerned with more than a mere persuasive device or method.<sup>37</sup> A seemingly quite menial and technical paradigm is used to describe the statesman’s activity as analogous to a weaver of wool. (Again, an allusion reminds us of the Fates of Necessity governing the spindle-axis of the cosmos in the *mythos* of Er.) Weaving is a practical science<sup>38</sup>, not a theoretical science, and this conflicts with the previously accepted division of the statesman from others. But we are not to take the statesman as a literal weaver of clothes. The previous division of the theoretical and practical sciences (as we saw through the *mythos*) dangerously threatens to transform the statesman into some divine shepherd. This being the case, the human statesman in some way combines the theoretical and practical sciences. The human statesman must act, besides knowing and contemplating. Such action includes seeing and knowing the lower in light of the higher. The danger of division, no matter how playful, is that it hybridically bifurcates human reality, as if humans could have direct access to and identity with the divine. The *mythos* does not ignore divisions and separations, but like any good paradigm the *mythos* analogically combines more than it separates. In the powers of this weaving, the *mythos* portrays an integral, participatory continuity between the human and the divine on the basis of what is shared, the immortal soul. Even after this connection, the tension

remains analogically between that which is the human and the divine<sup>39</sup> (see appendix C).

Before one can weave wool, there must be a process of carding that separates what is found combined and matted together. This parallels the Stranger's dilemma of not being able to distinguish readily the statesman from other claimants for rule. Likewise, this is analogous to the *demiourgos* who finds a chaotic unlimited (*apeiron*) before fashioning an order (see *Timaeus* 55c). What is the ground that makes possible the Stranger's dialectical activity of division and the demiurge's activity of making order (*taxis*) in the world? The ground is the immaterial ideas known by reason alone. (The ideas are more implied for those who can see them, than ever argued for in the *Statesman*; see 269d, 285a–287a.) This is a theoretical, philosophical matter that at least by implication is prior (in the order of being) to the practical action of the statesman. But how will the statesman be able to make a claim to rule among all the competing practical sciences and activities? We need another distinction or division (the process of carding is temporally prior to weaving) between contingent or contributing causes and real, actual causes (*Statesman* 281e). Both carding (separating and dividing: analytical dialectic) and plaiting (combining the warp and woof of the threads: synthetical or synoptical *mythos*) are two contributing causes of weaving. What remains the real cause?

We need a measure, a standard of the mean, to judge the excess or deficiency of the contributory causes (*Statesman* 283c–284c). This standard of the mean permits us to judge any products in terms of their goodness and beauty. With this superior art of measurement, the statesman can claim to have a standard for all the arts that none of the particular arts and sciences have. Yes, even the art of measurement has to be divided: one art measures quantitatively and comparatively according to number, length, breadth and thickness; the other art measures the mean between the extremes concerning what is qualitatively fitting, opportune, moderate, and necessary at a given time (*Statesman* 284e). According to this distinction, it is made clear that we really are measuring not products made by craftsman (the first art of measurement), but the words and deeds (the second kind of measurement) that are applicable to the political (not menial) life.

In summation, the art of the statesman involves the ability to recognize similarities (the process of collection and *mythos*) and to recognize differences (the art of division and dialectic, *logos*):

When a person at first sees only the unity of common quality of many things, he must not give up until he sees all the differences in them, so far as they exist in classes; and conversely, when all sorts of dissimilarities are seen in a large number of objects he must find it impossible to be discouraged or to stop until he has gathered into one circle of similarity all the things which are related to

each other and has included them in some sort of class (*eide*) on the basis of their essential nature (*ousiai*). (*Statesman* 285a–b)

*Mythos* is associated with the process of collection, because it proceeds on the basis of similarities and affinities that are previously separated out and tested by the art of dialectical division. *Mythos* is synthetic after it follows the analytical activity of reason (*logos*) and puts into action or practice what is discovered, the essences or ideas. In this way, the human statesman is analogous to the divine statesman or *demiourgos* who fashions and governs a cosmos.

In so far as the statesman acquires the art of measurement, the standard of the mean, she/he can perform her/his governing function, which is the art of weaving diverse and opposite natures in the political community, *polis*. No more than it is the task of the *demiourgos* to modify that which is recalcitrant in molding a cosmos, likewise the statesman persuasively addresses human nature with the intention of weaving a unity among opposites (a one *polis* among the many citizens) in the souls of the ruled.

It is true that the statesman will have to use force, compulsion, violence, even the killing of some of his citizens (*Statesman* 293d). This is not simply because of their given recalcitrant human natures (as if human beings were not responsible and justly punishable with death). There is no evidence that this will occur arbitrarily and ordinarily in a tyrannical, egomaniacal manner (*Statesman* 301c–d). Persuasion assumes some commonality of ends and possibilities of agreement on means to those ends. Persons will be tested (*Statesman* 308d) (reminiscent of the *Republic* and especially the *Laws*) analogous to the way that persons are cosmically on their own and tested in the reverse cycle of the cosmos. The demiurge also has to permit force and violence and destruction, when there is the passage from one age or cycle to the next. When such compulsion and even killing is in accord with science, justice, preservation, and the good of an order that comes of it (*Statesman* 293d), then it is the right form of governance. For example, in the *Laws* (881aff.) there is remedial punishment and persuasion up to the point that a given person is found to be irremediable. Capital punishment is an unavoidable consequence for the sake of preserving good, right order, lest we all politically fall into disorder (*Statesman* 296c–297b). This same motive impels the *demiourgos* to regain control over the inevitable degeneration of the cosmos.

It is rhetoric that the statesman will use to persuade the many through telling stories (*Statesman* 304cd) and thereby weaving their diverse natures into a relative one community, the *polis*. The statesman does not perform the tasks assigned to the various arts. He presides over them and decides which are to be encouraged and when they are to be initiated. None of the instrumental or contributory causes and functions of the community go beyond the mere preservation of the community's existence (*Statesman* 287e). These given

conditions necessary for political existence are like the givens of necessity, which exist prior to the demiurge who fashions an order from them and despite them. That “in which” is not that “for the sake of which.”

The statesman acts for the sake of the whole community—that is, for the sake of weaving together the community into as perfect a whole as possible. This occurs on the level of the virtues in human souls. Primarily, there are two demotic virtues that have to be reconciled. As they are found among many people, they are at odds. There is no suggestion here that contrary to the *Republic* a natural harmony among the virtues does not exist. Rather this harmony has been lost through bodily existence and the souls’ forgetfulness. Although related, this is a different kind of opposition than the fundamental opposition of divine reason and material necessity, both of which irreducibly coexist in the cosmos. The two warring virtues are courage and moderation. They are at odds because courage implies quickness and energetic action, whereas moderation is characterized by gentle, slow, and restrained action. Different situations seem to require one or the other virtue. Courage at its worst tends to rashness, aggressiveness, and ambition. Moderation at its worst means meekness and inability to respond. Within the same person these two virtues could be at odds; moderation beckons us to stay at home, courage invites us to take on opponents and to go to war.

Is there any knowledge which can combine these two virtues together voluntarily making (*demiourgei*) them into one power and form (*idean*, *Statesman* 308c)? This assumes that they have something alike and common in the midst of their unlikeness. The statesman will supervise those actual trainers (i.e., weavers) who educate characters suitable to the political regime. Those who have no capacity for courage and self-restraint will be either exiled, deprived of civic functions, or punished with death on account of their deficient nature. The virtue of *phronesis* (practical reasoning) will be developed in the education of the statesman, in order to be ready to use moderation and/or courage depending on (unforeseeable) circumstances.

The statesman weaves or forges two bonds in the souls of citizens: a divine bond proportionate to the immortal part of the soul and a human bond proportionate to the mortal, animal part of the soul.<sup>40</sup> The divine bond is true and sure opinion about beauty, justice, and goodness, as well as their opposites. As this arises in persons’ souls it is divine. The statesman and good law-giver are the only ones to whom the power belongs to implant true opinion. A courageous soul laying hold of such truths is made gentle (*praus*) and is made ready to partake of justice among others. The self-restrained soul becomes truly moderate and wise by partaking of these opinions. The statesman has to be more concerned about courageous, erotic persons than moderate persons.

Laws will be the binding factors that unite divergent parts of virtue. We need to think of laws as comparable to *mythoi* in that both are mimetic

and reflect conventional tasks. Laws like *mythoi* stand in-between and mediate between what they imitate (the virtues or moral ideas) and particular persons.<sup>41</sup> Since *nomos* or law implies man-made conventions, only by a change of focus can we think that there is some divine law (*themis*, *Statesman* 269e) that binds the demiurge. Even when we consider laws as *mythoi* they are more than conventional, because they prepare the way beyond the conventional. In this light, we need to understand that the divine bond, intrinsic to the well-ordered soul, is meant to make possible a political consensus (*homoinoia*) of virtue that is action-guiding. In regard to action (not truth and wisdom), true opinion will suffice as well as knowledge (as long as true opinion is held and acted upon).

The human bond is less important, since it involves the extrinsic action of breeding and marriage. The Stranger wants to avoid the common practice of unlike, discordant characters seeking each other in matrimony. This produces the unwanted extremes of rashness and meekness. If the citizens are of the same opinion about the beautiful, the noble, and the Good (which means the divine bond has been successfully woven), then it will be possible to encourage by persuasion and law that moderate and courageous persons unite thereby procreating and raising children who will naturally imitate their parents. The happy, harmonious political community is the outcome. Clearly, the marriage and procreation proposals of the *Statesman* are much more moderate and restrained in objective and practice than in the *Republic*. Proper habituation and dispositions are crucial pre-educational factors, not biology. Socrates in the *Republic* knows and acknowledges this, but a single-minded drive (the *eros* of the philosopher-king disturbed by the *eros* of the demos?) to achieve unity at all costs results in Socrates' extreme, self-defeating eugenics.

How does one explain in the *Republic* the nastiness of Socrates' second wave (redeemable, corrigible via the third wave?) of eugenic manipulation—an extension of the so-called great (noble) lie of the earthborn and metals (borrowed from Athenian traditional myth and Hesiod) and applied primarily to the guardian dogs? First, Socrates is quite hesitant and doubtful about this second wave (is it because of its reception or is it because of its applicability?). Second, there are (unfortunately) no objections whatsoever from the proto-guardian dogs present (Glaucón, Polemarchus, Adeimantus, and including many commentators since) even though it is addressed and applied to them? Third, this eugenics policy will obviously fail to control *eros* and prevent incest. Maybe we should not take this literally because among friends discussing in words (not deeds) there can be no incest in philosophic communism. Fourth, this eugenics policy is a lie in words, but not a lie in the soul given the radical, erotic pursuit of the one. Socrates' *kallipolis* requires a guardian class of well-born (brought up), natural *aristoi*, the desirable outcome of the *paideia* curriculum (Plato's Academy outside the city's walls



and the real basis for the *Republic*) to flourish in revealing who (the few) will be true philosophers. There is no need to declare that the philosopher now is the tyrant, although this most certainly is a serious danger, just as the most promising student could become the manipulating sophist, so difficult to separate from the budding philosopher. In the *Laws*, there will be *symposia* tests regarding *eros* and this seems to be a wiser, practical policy to achieve a relative end given the unruly contingency of the political.

### THE DEMIOURGOS OF THE *TIMAEUS*

Why should the philosopher, who potentially at least is the statesman, even care about serving and ruling others? It has been said that even if the true philosopher does not rule and govern, because a people have not consented to accepting him/her, she/he still remains the true philosopher by nature (*Statesman* 259b). Given what is integral to such a philosopher's nature, no doubt there are non-worldly rewards more in conformity with the perfection of his/her soul. Why give up the tendency of one's own soul for the sake of caring for others? Can caring for others, who perhaps do not care, benefit the philosopher's own soul? A treatment of the *Timaeus* can partly answer this question, if we think in terms of why the demiourgos cares to fashion order in the cosmos and even to remake order once the age of Zeus has passed.

The demiurge is an analogue for the philosopher in the capacity of statesman. We have reached the point where the political dimension of *mythos* becomes predominate, vis-à-vis the divine activity ordering or reordering the cosmos and the philosopher's concern for saving her/his own soul. If politics is no more than a necessary, transient evil befitting our earthly, bodily estate, then likewise *mythos* and its political dimensions in the form of speech and action integrally related to others will be denigrated and downgraded to a dispensable means of speaking to those who by nature or by circumstance dwell in an unfortunate, lowly lot in this life.

It is important to say (for now) that in any community the philosopher will have more than just an obligation or duty to that community that raised her/him. She/he will be personally rewarded by finding those few potential philosophers and directing them to that end which perfects their nature, because in the process of philosophic education the partnership between teacher and pupil eventually becomes a partnership between teacher and teacher, or more modestly, between teachers who remain pupils to each other (e.g., Plato and Aristotle). It is even the case that a pupil may inspire in a teacher that which otherwise would not come to light, if such a teacher were to pursue alone, privately her/his own reflections. It seems inherent in all but the divine life (which alone by definition is self-sufficient, even though Plato claims his

reformed gods still care about humans) that we serve others as they in turn serve us. This is manifestly a political, educational relationship especially in the best possible *polis*, namely, that Socratic, dialogic domain in which everyone who is relatively equal encounters and knows in communion with everyone else. Such is *philia* or friendship.

The beginning of the *Timaeus* (17b–19a) refers back to and follows the speech already given about the best regime of the *Republic*. This is not a question of chronology given the Platonic corpus, but a matter of philosophical development when we proceed from the microcosm (the *polis* is the soul writ large) to the macrocosm (the architecture of the cosmos being analogous to political and psychic order). The true philosophical procedure will be to go back and forth (which mythically is a journey) until one realizes comprehensive wisdom in one's soul. Did not Socrates say in the last book of the *Republic* that the best regime is a pattern set up in the heavens (cosmos) for anyone who wants to see it and once one sees it, one can found a city in one's *psyche*? The city alone remains philosophically imaginary (incomplete) in speech (*logos*), not utopian. The summarizing of the *Republic* in the *Timaeus*, which is intended to remind us of the institutions of the best regime, purposely leaves out that part of the *Republic*, which is the education of the potential philosopher-king. Instead of *episteme* and *theoria*, Socrates in the *Timaeus* wants us to see this city come alive (genesis) in deed and in action (*Timaeus* 19b–e). This will require mythical elaboration and correspondingly an exercise in statesmanship. There is every indication that this is an integral part of philosophical education (*Timaeus* 19c), even though Socrates will be only a silent partner. There are at least two overt reasons for Socrates' silence. Socrates during his lifetime refused to become politically involved, even given the paradoxical acknowledgment that he is the only true statesman. And we learn in the *Phaedo*, Socrates never took up the bold enterprise that Anaxagoras promised (albeit Anaxagoras was waylaid by material elements), namely, to explore the cosmos under the aegis of *nous* as divine cause.

*Critias* begins by telling a strange but true story (*mythos*) that Solon handed down after hearing it from ancient and venerable Egyptian sources. Because of Solon's political involvements he never had the time to finish this Egyptian tale. This is the explicit textual reason why the *Critias* (which follows the *Timaeus* account) is unfinished. The story tells of the greatest deeds performed 9,000 years ago by the city of Athens. Today the Athenians, a youthful, forgetful race, do not know about their great ancestors, seemingly because of the lapse of time and the destruction that followed Athens' defeat of Atlantis. However, neither of these worldly factors has prevented the Egyptian sages from preserving an account of such greatness. In fact, the Egyptian priests tell Solon that there have been many destructions of mankind by fire and water (possibly alluding to the pre-Socratic natural philosophers

who never got beyond material elements). The truth behind these particular mythical accounts of destruction is that the motions of the heavens deviated. The truth is cosmic and divine. This seems to be in conjunction with the great destructions told about in the *Statesman*, when the revolution of the heavens changed their course.

Athens once was, in the matters of wisdom and war, well-ordered. She was under the tutelage of the goddess Athena, noted for law-giving and wisdom. Athena applied such divine things to human affairs, and Athens surpassed all mankind in every virtue. When Athens and all of Europe and Asia were threatened by the devastating, invading power of Atlantis (an island situated somewhere in the Atlantic outside the Mediterranean), Athens rose to the occasion and alone prevented imperialistic slavery from engulfing Europe and Asia. But in the aftermath, there were great earthquakes and floods. All the Athenian people, along with the island of Atlantis, sank beneath the sea and vanished.

How can we account for this destruction? Is there a suggestion of a degeneration that radically separates present-day Athenians from her heroic ancestors? Will the *Critias* represent symbolically a foundation *mythos* for Athens to accept or to reject? Is there any human responsibility for this destruction, just as there would be the responsibility of the Athenians to accept or to reject the principles of this foundation *mythos*? Or should the *mythos* be understood naturalistically, in terms of some cosmic necessity (symbolized by earthquake and fire), which unavoidably is a part of the made-world that accounts for physical and psychic degeneration and political collapse? The god and gods never are to blame because they make everything for the best. It is the materials used by the demiourgos that degenerate according to their nature. The cycle of nature, for Plato, seems inherently to include perfection and degeneration. Socratic philosophy truly is the artful wisdom of confronting dying, psychically and cosmically.

*Critias* has recalled this story of Athens because Socrates' account of the best regime aroused within *Critias*' memory a correspondence between Socrates' speech and Solon's Egyptian tale. Socrates wants to hear more about this "genuine history" of Athens (*Timaeus* 26e), but before the best city is put into action, *Timaeus* will tell of the nature of the universe from the birth of the world to the nature of humans (*Timaeus* 27a). This is fitting, if the story of the engagement of Athens and Atlantis is situated closest to the beginnings of the cosmos and that period of divine care over the human flock. The foundation of the cosmos may analogically parallel and be a paradigm for the foundation of these political regimes, which would enlighten such a political founder as Solon.

*Timaeus* begins by invoking the gods and also calling on his own powers (a joint divine and human endeavor) to discourse about how the universe

came into being. This requires making a distinction right at the very beginning between knowledge and opinion and being and becoming. That which always is has no becoming and is apprehended by *nous* through giving a *logos* (*Timaeus* 27d, 28a). On the other hand, that which always is becoming is not being and is the object of opinion (*doxa*) apprehended by the sense-perceptions. All that becomes is not its own cause, but of necessity it has come to be originally by some cause other than itself. The demiourgos is that efficient cause of the cosmos and all that is ordered therein (*Timaeus* 28a). The work of the demiurge will only be beautiful, if becoming is fashioned after an eternal model or pattern (*paradeigmata*, the formal cause) and not only after a generated model (a material cause).

Does the whole of the cosmos have a beginning, or has it always been? Since we sense the things of the world and apprehend the world according to opinion, the world has become. But we still need to know which model (which is hard to find and impossible to declare to all mankind, *Timaeus* 28c) the demiourgos used to fashion the world. Has the cosmos become after the model which never has become? If so, the time of the cosmos is as endless as the degree to which the cosmos participates in the eternal model (*Timaeus* 29a–c). If the cosmos is beautiful and its maker good, then the demiurge fixed his gaze on the eternal. *Timaeus* is clear: the cosmos is the most beautiful of all that has come to be and the demiourgos is the best of all causes. It would be impiety to suggest that the demiurge acted contrary to divine law (*themis*) and forsook the model that is comprehensible by reason and thought (*Timaeus* 29a). Similarly, in the *Statesman*, the demiurge of the *Timaeus* is not omnipotent<sup>42</sup>, since he is restricted by *themis*, the eternal forms being the model and (as we shall be seeing) by necessity, “that by which” the cosmos is ordered.

If all of this is granted, the cosmos is an image (*eikona*) by necessity and our approach to the cosmos must conform to its character as an image of this model. We, in turn, are bound in this human discourse to recognize our limitations, since indeed, on a higher level, the divine demiurge also was bound. A *logos* is of the same order as that which it sets forth, and since the cosmos is only an image or likeness, we can only speak proportionately; thus, a likely account “*eikota mython*” (*Timaeus* 29d) is given. We are only human and cannot be entirely perfect and exact in giving an account of the cosmos. This is not to say that there is no analogical measure: as becoming is to being so belief is to truth. The world does have a participatory reference to the eternal pattern, or the world is unintelligible and nothing but an inexplicable, disordered outgrowth. The physical world order does not exist in its own right, but rather exhibits the working of a divine intelligence (*nous*) aiming at order and good as far as possible.<sup>43</sup> The eternal model after which the cosmos is modeled possesses no generating power in itself. It requires the divine intermediary, the demiurge, to apply in deed. Thus, we are informed

of the conditions that must hold, if we are to begin to give any intelligible account of the cosmos. Are not these the same conditions for political order, once we know the intelligible forms such as the beautiful, the just, and the Good, and once we have understood that humans are political by nature, as well as by convention?

Before continuing this *mythos* or likely story, we have to consider some basic questions: why is the *Timaeus* a *mythos*, and can the *Timaeus* be interpreted non-mythically? Has Plato introduced some a priori assumptions about order and beauty in the cosmos that cannot be simply accepted at face value? These two questions go together because an empirical and factual interpretation of the *Timaeus* would exclude at the outset any kind of metaphysical and hence mythical presuppositions about the world. Championing the name of modern natural science (empirical observation, experimentation, testing and falsifying hypotheses, accountability and predictability), Gregory Vlastos<sup>44</sup> has undertaken an assessment of Plato's cosmology by single-mindedly pursuing its consequences for a modern philosophy of science. Accordingly, Vlastos avoids bypassing any particular difficulties within the *Timaeus* by invoking the escape clause: "It is a mythical account which need not be taken seriously or rigorously."<sup>45</sup> Unsurprisingly, Vlastos fails to interpret the *Timaeus* as a harmonious mixture of *logos* and *mythos*, and this has consequences that are quite deficient for an understanding of the *Timaeus*.

As if out of fearful respect for the modern scientific academic community beholden to Sir Karl Popper, Vlastos begins his book, *Plato's Universe*<sup>46</sup>, by bemoaning the severe punitive measures that Plato authorized in the *Laws* Book X (especially 889b–c) for those materialists (the *physiologoi*) and atheists who think the cosmos is no more than the outcome of the natural interactions of the elements: fire, water, earth, and air. Plato politically permits only a theological cosmogony and cosmology. There is an intellectual ban and a political prosecution of those who hold that the cosmos is generated by chance, is only a soulless body, and has only an immanent and material order exclusive of any divine, transcending intelligence. Vlastos proceeds as if it were best to abstract from such political/theological action consequences of Plato's cosmology. For Vlastos the merits of the *Timaeus* lie exclusively in the scientific accountability of Plato's natural science. Needless to say, this is a modern, anachronistic analysis, not on Plato's terms at all.

Contrary to Cornford<sup>47</sup> who contends that the demiourgos is the world-soul, Vlastos argues<sup>48</sup> that the demiurge is a god outside and above nature who acts on the disorder to make a cosmos without being acted upon or interacting with the cosmos. Both Cornford and Vlastos have gone to unnecessary extremes in giving a purely rational account of this *mythos*. First of all, the demiurge's act of making the cosmos is a free gift (this links the *Timaeus* with the *mythos* of the earthborn) and is not compelled by any necessity. Even

the necessity inherent in the preexisting materials is subject to persuasion by the demiurge. The cosmos is in accord with the goodness of the model that the demiurge contemplates. The cosmos is an expression in deed of what can be made within limits, since the cosmos is a copy and must persuade necessity. Cosmos means and is identical with order, and we are to understand the Good, the beautiful, and the just in light of the eternal order when analogically represented in the temporal order. Interestingly enough, the argument in the *Timaeus* 31a–b is that this cosmic order in which we live is unique. If there are a number of worlds, there certainly is not an infinity of worlds. (This is quite the same argument as that of St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I, Q. 47, Art. 3.) This is to say that the cosmic order we live in and apprehend is as good a copy as possible (Lessing’s “best of all possible worlds,” which Voltaire relentlessly mocked), and any further copies would suggest that something more or less ordered exists. If more ordered, then why should the less ordered (being a deficient whole) have come to be? This suggests some deficiency (evil?) in the divine demiurge’s action, rather than regarding everything existing for the best possible reason. Further, an infinity of orders equally the same would be meaninglessly without end, like a maker who could not stop making the once-and-for-all best.

To return to the point, Vlastos emphasizes the function of the demiurge as maker, while Cornford emphasizes the function of the demiurge as governor. Why should not the demiurge be both? The making of the demiurge is a governing and a ruling when the demiurge (just as the statesman of the *Statesman*) assigns tasks to be done by lower order gods. Vlastos even thinks that Plato has overcome his own “social prejudice” against manual craftsmen by naming his deity of the cosmos “demiurge,” not *nous*.<sup>49</sup> But surely the demiurge has *nous* or intelligibility in order to apprehend and then apply the paradigm. Vlastos is a gracious and liberal interpreter. However, it should be clear upon reading the *Statesman* that we need to distinguish between actual making and the action that supervises this making and the eternal paradigm. The *mythos* of the *Timaeus* explicitly attends to such an understanding; it is acting in conformity with the eternal model. Making reveals the product of prior understanding and action. More important, once the cosmos is finally, uniquely made, the affinity that humans have with the cosmos is expressed via action (thus follows the *Critias*) and not by needlessly making over again what is the best possible copy or representation before us. We have to see through the *mythos* of making in order to act appropriately within the cosmos, but this requires the understanding that we are in the presence of *mythos*.

Why did not Plato call his demiourgos *nous* instead? A purely noetic being is invisible and would have no contact with the world of things and would be indescribable in speech, since all that would exist for such a soul would be the noetic contemplation of the forms and nothing else (such as a cosmos).

The demiourgos is required as an intermediary between the Forms and the cosmos. But this does not relegate the demiourgos to a mere craftsman of the cosmos, just as erotic procreation does not relegate humans to mere sexual immortality. Vlastos' literal understanding of the demiourgos does not respect the analogical character of a mythical account. Some intermediary such as the demiourgos between the eternal model and humankind is required, if humankind is to have any affinity (such as that based on the immortal part of the soul that apprehends the forms) with this eternal model. Literalism leads to dead dogmatism; analogical *mythos* leads to the dynamic explanation of likeness, affinity, kinship, communion, participation, and so on characteristic of the life energy of the soul (not the modern self).

Furthermore, it is impossible that the demiurge is the transcendent God, since such a demiurge lacks creation *ex nihilo* and the status of pure, self-subsisting existence (hence the Hebrew/Christian God). The being of this demiurge is not only not omnipotent, but also is constituted by that which it contemplates above and beyond itself, the eternal model of the Forms and the Good beyond being. In a sense the cosmos does act on the demiurge, since it is a reflection (given the limitations) of that which the demiurge can best achieve in deed. The importance of understanding the *mythos* of the demiurge's action in the *Timaeus* is not measurable alone by what we can pragmatically know and make of the universe.

This is precisely the point at which Vlastos is not attuned to the *mythos*. Vlastos contends that Plato fortunately does not consistently impose his "retrograde turn" toward theological and metaphysical presumptions of value on all matters of fact; the facts of the *Timaeus* can be examined without having to accept them as mere deductions from theological and metaphysical premises.<sup>50</sup> "[Plato] soon comes within sight of facts derived from a scientific discipline, and then, with those facts in hand, invokes the teleological framework of this creation story to structure them in a coherent scheme."<sup>51</sup> Apparently, Vlastos believes that the mythical, teleological and theological aspects of the "*Timaeus* are only of nominal, classificatory significance." It does not matter if this is not the way Plato's text reads, since what matters is what Vlastos and the modern philosopher of science can extract from the *Timaeus* acceptable to his nominalist, experimental persuasion. Anachronism par excellence.

There is not the slightest hint in Vlastos' commentary that the *Timaeus*, in Plato's understanding, is the mythical basis for meaningful, public, philosophical communication. Vlastos assumes (as indeed Hobbes does, and Hobbes can be considered the key original political theorist of modern natural science) that the only neutral starting point is that there is no a priori order in the world, and we should not attribute any valuation to the facts of this world. But making no valuation and assuming no order in the world is as much a

loaded, not neutral, assumption, which has definable consequences just as assuming the opposite does. Indeed, we must require that the consequences of both competing assumptions be fully elaborated for what they are worth. Ontologically, there are no neutral assumptions or starting points at all.

If there is no given divine order in the world (which is divine because it is not humanly constructed from scratch), then the alternative is a random, chance-generated world of things that invites rational, constructing persons to be their own *demiurgoi*, especially having the Leviathan power to become the demiourgos of the whole of mankind. The radical devaluation and demythologization of the *Timaeus mythos* could have this consequence. If so, we are not far from the political contention that was found in the *Gorgias*, the *Republic* (the ship of state situation), and the *Statesman*, where warring, sophistic *demiurgoi* fashion their own conventional reality (or second reality) through force. The *pathos* of the *Gorgias* was meant to establish the basis for meaningful conversation and persuasion on the assumption that we all share a common, public world. Our soul, in search of its order, has an affinity for knowing the intelligible (*noetic*) order of the world. Cosmos means order; there is no cosmos without the assumption of some independent, intelligible, given order.

In the end, Vlastos or any other philosopher of modern science can opt for an order that is humanly known since humanly made. This warrants human self-sufficiency and autonomy; persons themselves are self-made, or at least generated accidentally in the world to make themselves on their own. Knowing and making become inseparable; the priority goes to making as the very proof and product of what one knows. You can only know what you make and show. This understanding of persons-in-the-world could be attributed to Plato, if the mythical dimensions of the *Timaeus* are ignored or purposely forgotten. Being attuned to the *mythos* generates the choice of action and deeds in communion with an intelligible cosmos already given in its paradigm and its fabrication. Our energies are not expended on making copies or imitations out of whole cloth and at some greater remove, irrespective and ignorant of the demiourgos (hence the radical criticism of poets and craftspersons in the *Republic*). Knowing the teleological direction of the cosmos is a call to affirmation through action. Whereas human makers encourage an unlimited exercise in making and remaking (for moderns, not for Plato, this freedom is an incontrovertible first principle), human actors recognize political and psychic normative limitations to the possibilities of action and choice within this world.<sup>52</sup>

Vlastos<sup>53</sup> makes much of the lack of envy on the part of the demiourgos (*Timaeus* 29e). The demiurge wants to share his excellence with others as much as is possible, and consequently this leads to the production of a cosmos that is as beautiful and good as a copy can be. The text (*Timaeus*



29c–30b) even suggests that this is more perfect than the noetic apprehension of the forms in isolation from the possibilities of originating a world order. But Vlastos conceives of this non-envy in traditional Greek (not Platonic) terms. The gods should give humans more and more wealth and prosperity, e.g., the *philanthropia* of Prometheus. Vlastos, however, is disquieted by the ominous possibility this has for the philosopher-king, who would strive for similitude to god. Yet, only the egalitarian and materialistic divine gifts (as in Protagoras' *mythos*) appeal to Vlastos.<sup>54</sup> But this non-envy of the gods must be put in its proper mythical context (i.e., the *Phaedrus mythos*), where human souls may follow the procession of the gods without fear of divine jealousy. Again, humans are responsible for their actions and choices that emanate from within their souls, and humans are not simply endowed with imitative divine power to make a prosperous world (see *Timaeus* 68d). The things of this world, no matter how well-made, inevitably decay and pass away. Vlastos sees no mythical foreboding of this, nor of the natural catastrophes that can afflict the generated world. The professional modern philosopher does not enter into the experiences of the *mythos*. The best Vlastos can do is to acknowledge *mythos* to be a matter of "faith" or preferable simply on aesthetic grounds.<sup>55</sup> Apparently, if this incites the urge to attain knowledge of the universe, then it is unobjectionable. But the goal is:

if you cannot expunge the supernatural, you can rationalize it, turning it paradoxically into the very source of the natural order, restricting its operation to a single primordial creative act which insures that the physical world would be not chaos but cosmos forever.<sup>56</sup>

Vlastos resorts to coopting language, if it serves the practical, instrumental goal of knowledge and desirable earthly existence. The transcendent only has rationalized immanent value. At least, Vlastos is open regarding his dedivinization, unlike many other commentators who just simply ignore the presence of the divine.

Can this interpretation of the *Timaeus* succeed without loss? It is true that Plato's *Timaeus* quite purposely is left open to further knowledge and experience that will modify and improve upon its beginning. The *Timaeus* is meant to be likely and credible, not true in any final way.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Friedlander<sup>58</sup> goes to great lengths to show how Plato is the predecessor of modern stereochemistry, crystallography, and atomic physics. But does Plato only use the mythical form of expression because conclusions about physical nature are unsure and temporary—that is, always dependent on further scientific inquiry and testing?

There is a great deal not readily explainable about how the demiurge brings order through persuasive imposition of the forms on inchoate preexisting

stuff. Note this combination of forceful imposition and persuasion is characteristic of the political legislator that Plato depicts in the *Statesman* and *Laws*. This act of making is peculiarly divine, since god alone has “the knowledge and power to mix the many into one” (*Timaeus* 68d). Nevertheless, the *mythos qua mythos* recognizes given limits on the human being, who does not have the knowledge and power to comprehend the whole of the cosmos. Yet, human nature is not radically cut off from exploring the cosmos in the obvious way an animal soul or a soulless object is. The human soul has a destiny for which it is responsible, which could only be if there is a cosmos (a divinely ordered world) in which transcendence, if not escape, from endless, meaningless coming-to-be and passing-away is possible. It is not a question<sup>59</sup> of positing some theological and metaphysical dictate and then fitting the observable and known facts to this a priori schema. It is a condition for coming-to-know, for human interaction, for political participation, and for communion with the wonders of the heavens. The *mythos* of the *Timaeus* is neither an intellectual postulation nor a subjective, pious conviction.

The *Timaeus* as a whole has a structure that is not unlike that other great *mythos* of human-divine interaction in the *Phaedrus*. The first part (*Timaeus* 29d–47e) properly comprises the activities of *nous* (*ta dia dedemiourgements*, *Timaeus* 47e). The action begins in the realm of the demiourgos and the forms and moves down to the ordering of the world. The cosmos is patterned after the world being one, single, visible living creature whole, complete, and everlasting (*Timaeus* 30cff.). The cosmos is spherical, smooth-rounded, self-sufficient, and not dependent on anything else. Its motion is that of reason and intelligence, since it revolves uniformly in the same place. The cosmos brought into being is a cosmic soul that persuades the whole body of the world (*Timaeus* 34b). The demiurge orders the movements of this world’s soul and body and makes the heavenly gods (i.e., the stars, planets, and earth; see also *Laws* 898dff.). The planets are instruments of time that have a moving likeness to eternity (*Timaeus* 37d, 38b–c). The kindling of the sun by the demiurge is especially important because it makes the whole heaven shiningly visible and apprehensible by number. Mankind can now reckon periods of time, given what can be seen of the revolutions of the cosmos.

The heavenly race of gods that are made in turn fashion mankind and other animals, since only in this way do all the different forms discerned by *nous* in the model of the cosmos come to be as one living creature (*Timaeus* 41c–d). Each human soul will have a star of its own, a destiny. Similar to the *mythos* of the *Phaedrus*, the souls are mounted on chariots. They are shown the nature of the cosmos and the laws of destiny (*Timaeus* 41e), just as they were in the *mythos* of Er. Thus, stars span the heavens symbolizing the fate of individual souls. All souls are equal at the first incarnation, but souls must

of their own accord rationally master the passions of their body to live justly in order to be able to journey back to their star.

There is no explanation of a “fall.” None of the gods are a cause of evil in fashioning humans (*Timaeus* 42d). The *Timaeus* account suggests that the beauty, perfection, and completeness of the cosmos requires different habitations, or in the case of human souls, a temporary habitation on earth, which they can escape through trials and according to their own merit. What is at stake in the *Timaeus* is therefore not a fall, but a basis for trans-genesis and transcendence of the soul from birth. The *Timaeus* accounts for the generation and sowing of human life on earth in which the human soul by nature is intermediate between being and becoming and is a mixture of reason (soul) and necessity (body). When a human being comes-to-be at birth, she/he is a body without intelligence yet actualized. The bodily currents of nourishment and growth have to be assuaged first before the rational motions can take predominance. Especially important in this transition is the faculty of sight, which either may simply serve a mechanical, physical process, habituating humans to this world, or sight may serve a rational purpose of relearning and reestablishing a harmony of the soul with the divine order. In effect, there are two ways we can “see,” one of which is indirectly via the mythical and analogical in the *Timaeus*. “Sight . . . is the cause of the highest benefits to us in that no word of our present discourse about the cosmos could have ever been spoken had we never directly seen stars, sun, and sky” (*Timaeus* 47a). The greatest benefit of eyesight is philosophy. The sense of hearing concerning speech and the music of the Muses likewise can serve (secondarily?) to bring order into the soul. The *mythos* of the *Timaeus* serves to consolidate in a harmonious proportion the body and soul of humans and the world.

The second part of the *Timeaus* (47e–69a) concerns the generation of what is possible through necessity. The cosmos is a mixed result of the combination of necessity and reason, but it is reason that is victorious over necessity by the use of persuasion, which guides the greatest part of things toward that which is best (*Timaeus* 48a). Necessity, errant cause, the receptacle (*chora*) and nurse of all becoming (*Timaeus* 49a) is that “in which”<sup>60</sup> becoming imitates being. Originally, there preexists this chaos of the indeterminate, the inconstant, the random, the characterless, the unordered, thus disordered, all of which is unintelligible in and of itself. Through the rational use of geometrical forms (i.e., through the soul’s noetic causal power) the demiourgos shapes the four primary elements (which prior to the demiourgos’s action are not distinguishable as irreducible atoms; see *Timaeus* 51a) by means of a proportional unity of friendship (*philia*, *Timaeus* 32c, 53a–b). This bond is indissoluble, because of the demiurge who binds the cosmos together. Only that which is evil could consent to dissolve what is good, intelligible order (*Timaeus* 41b). The world is not simply held together by mechanical

forces<sup>61</sup> and causes. The cosmos is a complex, heterogeneous, diversity mathematically and geometrically proportional (*Timaeus* 55dff.). The demiourgos works to order this chaos from below, and chaos is then lifted up or transcended to that point where the human organism and the cosmos meet in a common kinship of intelligible order.

The third section of the *Timaeus* (69a–92c) involves neither a working from above or from below. The best possible image of reason and necessity being woven together is the human organism of soul and body. A detailed account is given of the mortal parts of the soul lodged in the body. The immortal parts of the human are lodged in the skull and are considered in the first section of the *Timaeus* (44d–45b). In descending order from the skull, the mediating *thymotic* part of the soul is situated in the heart that is buffered and cooled by the lungs. *Thumos* is in-between reason and appetite and therefore may choose to serve either one or the other.

The separation of immortal and mortal soul prevents pollution of the divine part. Lower down, in the belly is the appetitive part of the soul. It is tethered there like a beast at the farthest remove from reason. Reason influences the appetitive part through the liver by way of images that ideally will strike terror into the appetitive part (*Timaeus* 71b–c). The liver is the organ of divination and thus partakes of some apprehension of reality and truth, insofar as it is healthy and well-ordered. Even the lowest part of the human organism is fashioned as perfectly as possible to contribute to the beauty and order of the whole (*Timaeus* 71d–e). The various functions of the human frame and organism are described including the diseases of the body and their effect on the soul.

The care of the soul properly concludes the *Timaeus*. Each of the three forces of the soul have their own motions, and these motions need to be kept in a proper proportion to each other (*Timaeus* 89e–90d). The noetic part of our soul is our *daimon* given to us by god in order to lift us up to the heavens by thoughts immortal and divine. The motions in the divine part of us are akin to the harmonious circular revolutions of the heavens. This is the best, most happy life possible for humans (*Timaeus* 90a–d). There follows a short passage that resembles a judgment of souls according to the nature of the lives they live (*Timaeus* 90a–d). Those souls that live orderly lives return to their consort star. Other souls undergo a successive ascent or descent from one birth to the next depending upon their character (*ethos*, *Timaeus* 42c). The discourse is at an end (*telos*): “This cosmos has thus become a visible living creature embracing all things visible, a perceptible god made in the image of the intelligible (*noetou*), supreme in greatness and excellence, in beauty and perfection, this heaven single in its kind and one” (*Timaeus* 92c).

There are two problems that arise within the *Timaeus* account that need to be settled before finally considering the mythical ramifications of the cosmos

as “a living creature with soul and reason” (*Timaeus* 30c). First of all, how can there be a preexisting discordant, unordered motion (*Timaeus* 30a), before the demiurge has endowed this brute disorder with soul? Is not soul the prior principle of all movement? Should not all motion be posterior to the existence of soul, if the *Timaeus* is to be consistent with the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* Book X?<sup>62</sup> The second problem involves the matter of the human soul that is fashioned by the demiourgos. How can such a generated soul meet the requirements of immortality attributed to the soul in the *Phaedo*? Is not it the case that only that which is ungenerated is indestructible, and only that which is its own *arche* has no end?<sup>63</sup>

The motion that exists in the receptacle (*chora*) independent of and prior to the soul is not inconsistent with a careful reading of the passage in the *Laws* (896d–897a).<sup>64</sup> This passage reveals that the soul does not produce motion but makes good use of physical motion already existing and in nature secondary (in the order of being if not in the order of time) to the divine, ruling motion of the soul. There is no suggestion that the preexisting motion in the receptacle is perceivable or communicable (i.e., in any way intelligible; see *Timaeus* 69b–c). Soul alone is intelligible motion in itself and rules the ruleless, giving purpose and order to the random and disorderly to the extent this is possible.

Soul remains the real and true cause or reason (*aitia*) for beginning to speak (*logos*) in any intelligible way of the cosmos. Plato perhaps chose to represent the condition within the receptacle as disorderly motion rather than static disorder, because this would be more consonant with disequilibrium.<sup>65</sup> (This condition of disorderly motion is reminiscent of the Homeric depiction of wandering souls, perhaps best suited for a Tartarus where the souls have lost all affinity and proportion for order. Wandering aimlessly precludes wondering attention, which is the beginning of contemplation and wisdom.) The receptacle properly is a container in which (not “out of which”) the necessary and accessory (but not sufficient) causes (*Timaeus* 46cff.) and conditions for the cosmos preexist. Such necessary or accessory causes are intelligible only when they are moved by the primary first cause, *nous*. Oddly enough, our inability even to imagine or speak intelligibly about such a pre-cosmic motion is as close as one could possibly come to the Christian leap to creation *ex nihilo*. For Plato’s Greek experience, the precosmic condition is unintelligible, thus a nothingness regarding *nous* and *logos*.

The second problem has to be addressed within the context of a world that is intelligibly generated and not generated by chance or by blind necessity. The soul “is the best of all things brought into being by the most excellent of things intelligible and eternal” (*Timaeus* 36e). The very generation of the soul sets the soul in motion throughout herself, revolving upon herself (*Timaeus* 37a–b). This is true of the heavens as well as the human immortal soul; both are self-moving. Thus, the heavens are for all time, since modeled

after the pattern that has being for all eternity. Likewise, the soul has being in motion for all time. Furthermore, just as the demiourgos is identically *nous* and *psyche*, it is this alone that the demiourgos can supply to human beings (*Timaeus* 41c).<sup>66</sup> Lesser generated deities fashion the mortal part. If there is any wise advice to humans from the demiourgos, it is “of motions, again the best is that motion which is produced in oneself, by oneself, since it is most akin to the movement of thought and the universe” (*Timaeus* 89a). The part of the soul that is destined to govern needs to be exercised in thought and in action, in order for this self-governing motion to come into its own. By divine imitation of the demiourgos, human souls realize that their blessed immortality is an earned, not a given, perfection. The *Timaeus* must be a constant reminder, not of a dualism of *nous* and necessity, but of a partnership in which *nous* persuasively orders necessity<sup>67</sup> and brings about a more comprehensive (because unselfish) perfection and beauty that is better (more diversely eventful) than self-subsisting *nous* alone.

Constantly throughout the *Timaeus* we are told that the demiurge modeled us, as well as other things, after the pattern of living creatures (e.g., *Timaeus* 37d, 39e, 69c, 92c). Our soul itself is immortal and everlasting through time, since it partakes of being-in-becoming betwixt reason and necessity. In this respect, even the most philosophic souls will care for all other souls. The demiurge symbolizes the noetic activity itself of bridging the tensional gulf between eternal being and worldly becoming.<sup>68</sup> The use of a symbolic agent such as the demiurge suggest that we neither take the demiurge concretely, as if an existing being, nor appropriate the demiurge’s power for ourselves. The demiurge is symbolic and exemplary to the degree that our souls (more precisely our *nous*) acknowledge a mysterious divine source or agent for beauty, justice, order, and goodness in the cosmos.<sup>69</sup>

## THE CRITIAS

These reflections on the *Timaeus* lead us to the abrupt end (not the beginning) of the *Critias* when Zeus summoned and led the procession of all the gods to their honorable place at the center of the universe, where they all can behold all being and becoming. Zeus is about to speak, but Plato intentionally<sup>70</sup> discontinues the dialogue. Are we not asked to recollect (see *Critias* 108d) the cosmos of Zeus in our souls? The *Critias* completes the circle of the *mythoi* into the silence of mystery. Zeus speaks at that point in time when the race of Atlantis justly deserves divine rebuke and punishment for their lawless ambition (*pleonexia*) and power that grew in their souls (*Critias* 121b). In one sense, Zeus does not need to speak; he only needs to be the symbol of the natural dispensation of divine justice in the end. In another sense, in

the judgment *mythoi* we learned about the destiny that naturally comes to the souls who sacrificed their divine nature for the sake of this-worldly mortality. Human beings are responsible for their own souls, because they inherited an affinity for the divine and envisioned for a long time the ways of gentleness, nobility, truth, and wisdom (*Critias* 120e). Also, Zeus spoke in the *Gorgias mythos*, when he insured that hereafter the judgment of the dead will be just. The factor of cosmic judgment and possible destruction represented by Zeus is both just and natural regarding our soul.

There is another possibility that Zeus' expected speech really is meant to refer us to the *Laws*, which begins with the word "god" and which is a dialogic journey to the cave of Zeus on Mt. Ida. In this respect, nothing apocalyptic need be expected from Zeus, since the *Laws* is meant to be a practical effort to achieve a political order that blends the best ingredients of other historical regimes with the philosophical experiences of the Athenian Stranger. Politically, there is no call for a return to some utopian, golden age. In fact, the *Laws* (712a) reminds us of the *Critias*, when it declares that a *mythos* will speak of a well-governed *polis* combining the greatest power and best persons.

At the beginning of the *Critias*, the time of the story of Athens and Atlantis clearly occurs within that cycle in which the gods take over the whole earth (not by strife which is typical of the gods in traditional *mythoi*; see *Critias* 109b). The gods now each rule their domain like shepherds over flocks of humans. The souls of mortals are governed by persuasion, in the same way the demiourgos brings necessity under the persuasive control of *nous*. Hephaestus and Athena rule the Athenians. There is only a dim recollection of these Athenians and their deeds and laws, because of many intervening periods of destruction. Symbolically, this could refer either to the many bodily reincarnations or to the major change of the cosmos' revolution from the age of Chronos to the age of Zeus. This Athenian regime is vaguely reminiscent of the best regime of the *Republic*, since the military class is called guardians, who are separate from the rest of the citizens and possess no private property (*Critias* 110c–d). The rule of these guardians has the consent of all Greeks.

Poseidon took for his allotment the island of Atlantis. The rulers of Atlantis had their origin in the desire (*epithymian*) of Poseidon to unite with an earth-born woman, Cleito (*Critias* 113d). Athenian rule is related to persuasion and consent, whereas rule in Atlantis is related to erotic, procreative desire. That the first ruler of Atlantis is named Atlas suggests the sheer might and power that will characterize this regime. The wealth and abundance of the royal house of Atlantis was incredible and unsurpassed. The order of Atlantis was founded on the splendor of adornment (*kekosmemena kosmon*, *Critias* 115c–e). Although all was well on the surface as long as they submitted to divine rule and divine law, the evidence of potential internal disorder and disunity is

striking. The offspring of Poseidon failed (in terms of the *Timaeus*) to order their regime philosophically and mathematically, and this suggests that they lacked rational statesmanship.<sup>71</sup>

In the end, Atlantis was unable to bear the burdens of its origin, its superabundance, and its lack of rational self-rule, once the guidance of the god was forgotten and once this divine governance was not learned. Thus, Atlantis became the aggressive political power (a Calliclean regime), fomenting war with others rather than minding their own business and seeking Socratically to rule their own souls. Perhaps the ensuing war between Atlantis and Athens reflects a kind of “fall” from a golden age condition in which mankind (of their own choosing) failed to exercise the proper care and rule over themselves and others befitting their place in the cosmos. In this respect, the *Critias* represents a foundational *mythos* that calls on the Athenians to recollect in their souls the true bases for political order.

## CONCLUSION

When the philosopher opposes the order of his soul to the myth of the people, he discovers that he must use a new set of mythical symbols in order to express the source of his authority. For the soul is neither a subject nor an object, but an entity (better: sensorium of forces) illuminated from within that explores its own nature by means of the search (*zetema*). In the course of this exploration the soul will find its own depth (Heraclitus) and height (Parmenides); it will become conscious of the human essentiality and universality of its order (Xenophanes); it will understand action as attunement with the order welling up from its depth (Aeschylus); and it will, finally, discover itself as the entity whose experiences are expressed by the symbols of the *mythos* (Socrates/Plato). When that level of consciousness is reached, the unconscious, or semiconscious symbols, comprehensively designated as the *mythos* of the *demos*, will acquire the characteristic of “untruth” in relation to symbols which express the experience of the more fully conscious soul. The conflict between levels of consciousness, from Homer to Plato, in which the higher level of the moment relegates the preceding lower levels to the realm of untruth, now reaches its climax in the radical conflict between the *mythos* of the fully conscious philosopher’s soul and all preceding symbolic forms.

At the same time, however, the philosopher discovers that the *mythos* is the ineluctable instrument for communicating the experience of the soul; for she/he must develop these mythical symbols in order to express her/his discovery both as a process (play) and as a result. And through that opposition of his/her conscious mythos to the less conscious forms she/he becomes aware that the



old *mythos* also expresses the truth of the soul, merely on a less differentiated level of consciousness. The soul as the creator of the *mythos*, and the *mythoi* as the symbolism of the soul, is the center of the philosophy of order. That center, the philosophy of the *mythos*, is reached by Plato in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, Professor Eric Voegelin gives a brief “history,” in the best sense of the ancient Greeks’ fathoming of the soul. Since Voegelin has seen fit to lay the groundwork for a philosophy of *mythos* within the context of the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, it is appropriate now to comment on this endeavor and its insights in light of my own reflections on *mythos*. Unquestionably, a philosophy of *mythos* has its central focus on the drama of the soul in all of its dimensions (*aporia*, *anamnesis*, conversion, purification, descent and ascent, soul-judgment and divine judgment, and the analogues of political and cosmic order). In this context, Voegelin has theoretically or hermeneutically put a decisive emphasis on the “unconscious depths of the soul” or even the “collective unconscious”:

Before a philosopher can even start to develop a theory of myth, he must have accepted the reality of the unconscious as well as the relation of every consciousness to its own unconscious ground; and he cannot accept it on any other terms than its own, that is, on the terms of myth. Hence a philosophy of myth must itself be a myth of the soul. That ineluctable condition is the chief obstacle to an adequate philosophy of the myth in an age in which the anthropomorphic obsession [the fallacy of forming man in the image of conscious man] has destroyed the reality of man.<sup>73</sup>

By the “unconscious,” Voegelin (at the least) is referring to the Heraclitean experience of the immeasurable depths of the soul, which have not been and cannot be made totally conscious (unless there is some promise at the Parmenidean heights?). There is no question that *mythos* (and Plato’s *mythoi* in particular) stir these real personal, hidden depths through the experiences of *aporia*, *anamnesis*, conversion, purification ascent and descent, judgment, order in the *polis* and cosmos, and so on. These depths of the unconscious should not be closed off and forgotten. Voegelin warns that we must always distinguish the engendering experiences out of the unconscious depths of our souls as opposed to just the language symbols in *mythos* and its exegesis. Instead we must strive to make conscious these depths to ourselves and others. Voegelin’s “collective unconscious” best refers to “equivalent experiences” he finds formulated symbolically in other cultures and languages.

Problems, however, remain especially for those who remain doubtful regarding the mysteriousness of these hidden unconscious depths and also the hidden beyond. It seems that we are going from an unknown (unconscious) to a known (displayed by the symbols of mythical language charting

the drama of the human soul), then on to the known analogically and mythically, but unknown end, the god, the beyond, all through a glass darkly! Yet, has not everyone experienced an insight or inspiration out of the blue from “I know not where”? Has not everyone experienced a sense that there must be “something more” than the earthly limits of human experience and existence? Do not our souls “stir”? Nevertheless, will not the plunge into the depths of the unconscious bring up all kinds of urges? How do we avoid perversions and fanaticisms (in Voegelin’s terms “derailments” and “deformations”)? For Plato, the test will be by way of speech (*logos*) and deed (*ergon*). A private mysticism, self-divinization, objectifications and hypostatizations in the form of ideologies, all such subjectivisms and objectivisms, must be eschewed.<sup>74</sup>

Plato’s use of *mythoi* constantly occurs within the context of *logos*, including the *Timeaus* and *Critias*. There is the interpenetration and interplay of *logos* and *mythos* in Platonic dialogues. Even when *mythos* moves beyond *logos* or speech, it remains checked/qualified by *logos*. There is no attempt to expound here a philosophy of *mythos*, since philosophy is *mythos* and *logos* harmoniously combined. *Logos* has the function of preparing the way up to the sun (*theoria*) or the way down from the sun into the cave (*praxis*) via mythical formulated experiences. The way is long, hard, and difficult, and only the few enter into and fathom the *mythos*, although many may share in the *mythos* by hearing it and pondering.

The crucial distinction (which does not seem to be stated explicitly by Voegelin) is that the function of *logos* (reason and speech) necessarily must precede entrance into the *mythos*, if only because we do not know if the inspired person (e.g., Ion) “knows” whether the hidden depths in anyone’s soul, including her/his own, are bestial or divine. Voegelin tends to speak more about whether a *mythos* is historically true or untrue, depending on the degree to which the compactness of the soul has been differentiated and explored. But perhaps Voegelin intends otherwise when he writes: “The myth authenticates itself; its existence is the evidence of the existence of the forces which create it.”<sup>75</sup> This is fundamentally, unresolvably paradoxical, just as Socrates declares other related, puzzling, stymying paradoxes: (1) all learning is recollecting what you already know, despite your present ignorance and/or forgetfulness; (2) you need to know the whole of virtue to be able to know the particular virtues, even though no human knows the whole; and (3) everything and every person pursues the Good, even though there are unavoidable confusions, errors, and evils. The paradoxes here are the temporal in relation to the eternal, namely their puzzling, mysterious interrelationship, which is, on the strictly conceptual level, antithetical.

However, it is not so much the historical times that are the real danger, but persons themselves and their souls and their human drama at any time. If a

person's *mythoi*, symbols, metaphors, and analogies reveal who she/he really is, all of which become objectifications (or projections) of the unconscious, then how do we judge the truth or falsity of such *mythoi*, symbols, metaphors, and analogies? Is it enough to say severely to everyone or anyone?

The freedom of the play [with symbols] is possible only as long as the creator of myth remains aware of [conscious of?] the character of the symbols as a nonobjective reality in objective form [the eternal never fully captured temporally?]. If he loses the sense that dangerous forces are playing through him when he plays with the myth, when perhaps he goes out in search of the object expressed in symbols, or attempts to prove or disprove its existence, not only his labors will be lost, but he may lose his soul in the process.<sup>76</sup>

Perhaps the central and decisive problem is Voegelin's delimitation of consciousness and the objectifications of consciousness to an experiential epistemology of the personal world. How and why should the intentionality and consciousness of the soul be so constituted? Is this consistent with the consequences of paying heed to Platonic *logos*? As a consequence of contemporary epistemology, commentators such as Vlastos read the *Timaeus* solely to the degree it offers grounds for the furtherance of modern empirical knowledge. Voegelin is correct to counter this by discerning that the *mythos* evokes an appeal to "spiritual sensitiveness, i.e., to the assent of the unconscious"<sup>77</sup> as the *mythos* places before us the beautiful, the Good, and the intelligible cosmos that are the consequence of the demiourgos's gazing on the eternal model. Humans remain at a third remove, through a glass darkly. But Voegelin rightly affirms (he does not sunder) an intimate relationship between experiential fact (empirical evidence as defined by the Greek notion of *empeiria*) and the spiritual sensitivity of the soul to the hidden depths of the unconscious. Nevertheless, is this not an analogous, proportional harmony between the cosmos objectified and the deepest, interior workings of our soul? More needs to be elaborated by way of "the analogy of being."<sup>78</sup> Such an "analogical" exegesis offers more resistance to hypostatic deformations of human experience.

The *mythos* of the *Timaeus* persuasively beckons this kind of receptivity and assent of the soul on the basis of our generated affinity to the cosmos around us. The *logos* of the demiurge who fashions the cosmos is divine and impenetrable to human *logos*, since it is the *logos* of the divine, noetic apprehension of eternal being. The human condition is being-in-becoming,<sup>79</sup> and only a likely *logos* can be had by humans, including Timaeus who tells this *mythos*. In the end, Voegelin is correct to say that *mythos* renders not the truth of the idea (of which knowledge we always fall short because of our human limitations), but the truth of the embodiment of the idea.<sup>80</sup> But is it sufficient to say in the end that the truth of the *mythos* is the "self-authenticating truth

of the *psyche*”? The reasoning is circular: because the *mythos* has come out of the depths of the soul, it truly represents the depths of the soul contrary to our ordinary, conscious existence. On the contrary, only insofar as there is agreement between the truth of the intellect (*logos*) and the truth of the soul (*mythos*), can we humanly judge (not at all a final judgment) the varying worth of each. Such truth does not require identity or self-sameness, but an analogical relation of likeness and agreement, exemplified by communal (*polis*) “participation” of intelligent, searching souls in words and deeds. Neither *logos* nor *mythos* is self-confirming. A judgment on the truth of *mythos* is what a judgment is in the area of consequences for action. For you shall know them by their speech and their deeds.

Voegelin especially saw the importance of cosmological *mythos* today to counter the scientism and hypostatizations of contemporary physics. This would not become literary, poetic diversion, but rather a kind of Platonic “serious play.” It is commonplace today to encounter in science fiction the belief in endless parallel universes, given that it seems our beginning is so completely chaotic and formless that anything is possible (and therefore everything is permitted?). What greater unbounded freedom could anyone joyfully ask for? Such normless pleasure, self-seeking, freedom, and daring are Titanic and Promethean with no credible, truth-bearing alternative allowed on stage, at least not until after monstrosities occur. Thus, we offer “constructions” nominalistically without any ground, and exercise raw power to enforce these whatever, free, arbitrarily imposed constructions. Hobbes-world, Brave New Future-world (viz. HBO’s “Westworld”).<sup>81</sup>

Again, somewhat in disagreement with Voegelin, this does not lead to a Platonic renunciation of politics.<sup>82</sup> There is the tendency in Voegelin’s writings to translate the meaning of *polis* into society (including the household), which threatens to lose the primary meaning of *polis* as the “decision-making political” inside, but not subordinate to, the broader context of the social sphere. The political should significantly remain the foundational domain of leadership and statesmanship. This “differentiation” of the political and the social does not occur in Plato. Politics is the domain of action (not just social science behavior), and in one respect we can judge the *mythoi* of humans regarding their truth and falsity on the basis of the political, action-generating consequence of such *mythoi*. There is the particular, corrupting danger of *mythos*, fanaticism in action, parallel to the corrupting danger of *logos*, dogmatism in speech. Of course, speech and action are closely related, since both reveal persons. Voegelin’s critique of all this is powerful, but his political alternative, with reference to Plato’s political philosophy still relevant today, is not very clear and not developed.

Voegelin seems to diminish the political and the moral (his unqualified praise of Machiavelli is disturbing). Perhaps it is because the political and the

moral in themselves do not go far enough, easily degenerate into politicizing and moralizing, and offer no supervenient ground for intelligible order. The political and the moral all too often are conventional and weak. But in a sorely imperfect world, we need to develop analogical connections, even if the unlikenesses between conventional moral and political order greatly outweigh the likenesses with the *kallipolis* and *spoudaios*. Imitating the demiourgos at a great remove, the true statespersons will do their best under the prevailing circumstances, politically and morally.

The positions taken by modern social scientists and by such a modern professional philosopher like Vlastos have great consequences for the view of the world we eventually adopt. It is in such a world that we will act. Prior to political action Socrates strongly advises (in the *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Statesman*) that we examine our souls and become better aware or conscious of ourselves through soul-examination (a better way of putting it than “self-examination”). May not this whole process of soul searching occur between people in a public, political setting that is educational for the soul? Often, Voegelin conjures the image of the mystic’s soul searching alone, self-governing, and aloof from others and the ways of the world today. If anything healthy, this is but one dimension of the soul. In the *Republic* those who have escaped the cave are forced to return to the cave. Likewise, the *Timaeus* and *Critias* also return us to political order and action by way of the cosmos being the model (paradigm) of order. Naturally given our times, getting involved in the political is a rough, possibly despairing, ordeal, which Plato expressed regarding his own lifetime in his *Epistles*. Unending is the playful and agonizing tension of the *polis* situated in-between the human soul and the cosmos.

## NOTES

1. From the start, contrary to the “modern, individualistic fallacy,” given the Greek *polis* experience, we have obligations to others in our community (*polis*), and in this way the *polis* has claims on us. The Socratic saying “know thyself” would be better translated “know thy soul,” since the “soul” is naturally outreaching and communal, unlike the demanding selfish self. No wonder Socrates spends time most often in the Platonic dialogues with those who might be eager to know and are not self-convinced know-it-alls. Nevertheless, many commentators do not make the distinction between self and soul, and accordingly they assume anachronistically that the development of the individual self is the primary basis for Socratic/Platonic philosophy.

2. Eric Voegelin, “Philosophy of Existence: Plato’s *Gorgias*,” *Review of Politics* 11 (1949), 492–98. Voegelin is one of the few Platonic commentators to realize and philosophically meditate upon the apprehension of order (cosmos) throughout the history of political thought.

3. Voegelin, "Philosophy of Existence," 496–97.
4. Voegelin, "Philosophy of Existence," 482–83.
5. Voegelin, "Philosophy of Existence," 498.
6. Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, 126.
7. See Eva Brann, *The Music of the Republic* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2004) who begins with the *Phaedo*.
8. Zaslavsky, *Platonic Myth and Platonic Writing*, clearly and decisively identifies Platonic *mythos* as fundamentally about genesis. Yet is not Platonic philosophic *mythos* more expansive than this regarding ends not just beginnings? Zaslavsky's skeptical *logos* precludes completing the cosmic circle.
9. Another abiding characteristic of Platonic *mythos* is "hearing," while the *episteme* of *nous* and dialectic are "seeing."
10. Contra Cataline Partenie, "Plato's Myths," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2014.
11. Stewart, *The Myths of Plato*, 119.
12. Some writers on Plato's *mythoi* (e.g., Brisson) are so focused on Plato the author and artist of myth-making, despite the fact that Plato denies any such wizardry and radically interrogates and dismisses traditional and sophistic *mythoi*. All such "Platonic *mythoi*" are reports heard (not constructed) from others elsewhere, because Plato is more a journeying discoverer of likely *mythoi*, tensionally analogical from the depths of human consciousness, between such poles as becoming versus being, earth versus the heavens, and so on. Today constructivism has become the taken-for-granted, unchallenged, reigning ideology.
13. Contrary to Voegelin, *Order and History*, III, 54 and Eva Brann, "The Music of the Republic," *Agon* 1 (1967), 4.
14. Brann, "The Music," 16.
15. See Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 130–31 and Strauss, *The City and Man*, 137.
16. The *mythos* of Er can also be compared to Parmenides' poem that speaks of a descent to the underworld. See J. S. Morrison, "Parmenides and Er," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 75 (1955), 59–68. For Pythagorean influences, see H. Richardson, "The Myth of Er," *Classical Quarterly* 20 (1926), 113–33. But most important of all, the exhaustive work of Zdravko Planinc, *Plato through Homer: Poetry and Philosophy in the Cosmological Dialogues* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).
17. See *Cratylus* 398c–d for Socrates' playful, etymological interrelating of *eros*, hero, and *erotan*, thus intending to ask questions as would a dialectician. One might query: how does symbolic interpretation differ from allegorical interpretation? The former is playful and dynamic representing the human soul, while the latter is literal and often flatly moralizing. With allegorizing you get to walk away with some maxim or lesson. With symbols there is no reduction to something other; they have to be returned to over and over again to peruse their multi-dimensionality.
18. In popular ritual there was a pillar cult of Zeus, see Planinc, *Plato through Homer*, 129. Also, the reference to the rainbow (*iridi*) reminds one of Zeus' messenger, Iris (*Republic* 616b).

19. See J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge: University Press, 1907), II, 442–45, 470–72.

20. Adam, *The Republic*, 447–48.

21. Contrary to *Republic* 616e, Adam included the fixed stars, but in the process would exclude the Earth's revolutions. Adam, *The Republic*, 449.

22. See Brann, "The Music," 80–81.

23. See R. Brumbaugh, "Colors of the Hemispheres in Plato's Myth of Er," *Classical Philology* 46 (1951), 173–6; and R. Brumbaugh, "Notes and Discussions: Plato's *Republic* 616c the Final 'Law of Nines,'" *Classical Philology* 49 (1954), 33–34.

24. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, 37.

25. Orpheus, Thamyras (proud, blinded Thracian singer), and Agamemnon choose bird lives for their next reincarnation, perhaps based on the frequent reference by Homer to "winged" words and deeds. Such men now will be winged, but without the human possibility of words and deeds, the consequence of their Homeric hatred of mankind. I have no idea why Odysseus' exhausted choice of a conventional, ordinary life in Plato's *mythos* of Er is an improvement upon, rather than a negative reaction to, his heroically shrewd, skillful former life.

26. A. S. Ferguson, "The Platonic Choice of Lives," *Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1950–51), 32–33.

27. Friedlander, *Plato, The Dialogues of the First Period* II, 293, 296–97.

28. For Kant, as well as for Hannah Arendt, see *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, 1977), judgment here is in the domain of practical reason. Both Kant and Arendt, being moderns, eschew ontology for the sake of epistemology.

29. Friedlander, *Plato* II, 287.

30. Note how this failure has application to American politics today, especially the predominant CEO model of "leadership."

31. Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 154ff., 183–84.

32. All this presages Marx's communist utopia, although Marx sharply denied any golden age in the beginning of time. Only at the end of the revolutionary course of history will laborers produce superabundantly and achieve such a heaven on earth.

33. *Ibid.*, 153–57, for Voegelin's discussion.

34. Friedlander, *Plato* II, 284–86.

35. Many recent commentators on Platonic *mythos* find usefulness for human conduct in this life to be the primary, if not the sole, meaning of these *mythoi*. This lowering to earth and the political, instead of lifting up via the divine pulls on the human soul leaves much to be desired. See the Collobert and Destree essays in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, for the refusal to see any transcendent dimension, thus favoring here-and-now human conduct in this life. Likewise see the article by Michael Inwood in Partenie, ed., *Plato's Myths*, which is particularly reductionist (e.g., the criterion of "interestingness"). An anachronistic, modern exclusion of the noetic (cognitive) from the prescriptive (moral *praxis*) lies behind this non-Platonic, lowest common denominator interpretation. Immanentizing the eschaton, I suppose. See Appendix B.

36. Friedlander, *Plato* II, 288.

37. Friedlander, *Plato* II, 289.

38. F. J. Crosson, "Plato's *Statesman*: Unity and Pluralism," *New Scholasticism* 37 (1963), 30ff.

39. In the end, the door is open to what is never said explicitly, because silence reigns and is never renounced: the mystical union of the philosopher with the divine.

40. Actually, this is a much more difficult and complex process regarding the binding together of two cords. In the *Laws* 644eff. the soul will be a whole field of forces and cords that will require therapeutic adjustment. Thus, the complex human soul, not the simple divine soul.

41. Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 161–64.

42. F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology, The Timaeus of Plato* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1937), 36.

43. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 27.

44. Gregory Vlastos, *Plato's Universe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975).

45. Gregory Vlastos, "The Disorderly Motion in the *Timaeus*," in *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, ed., R. E. Allen (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), 399.

46. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 23–26.

47. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 37–39.

48. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 25.

49. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 26. For Voegelin, Plato in the *Timaeus* carries out what the silent Socrates could not, making *Nous* a third age god after Chronos and Zeus. There is no question that Plato claimed that *nous* and the Good are divine, which Steven Menn cogently argues in his *Plato on God and Nous*. Yet it is mytho-speculation based more on mystical silence than evidence that Plato sought to supplant entirely, rather than reform, the Greek Olympian gods.

50. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 29–30.

51. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 30.

52. Platonic *mythos* studies recently have taken a "new" turn, away from the dismissal of Platonic *mythoi* composed entirely for children, non-philosophers, and the *hoi polloi*. We could call this deliteralization (as opposed to demythologization) providing fodder for philosophical ruminations, raising respectable philosophical topics to uncover Plato's doctrines and artistry as a myth-maker would using devices and having a strategy. Consider most of the articles in the Collobert and Partenie books. Perhaps this is somewhat better and truer to the Platonic texts regarding the integration of *logos* and *mythos*. But making/authoring and designing dialogues to espouse philosophic teachings and doctrines that Plato explicitly denies whatsoever in his *Seventh Letter* results in commentaries that fail to get into the dialogic (dialectical and mythical) flow of the human soul, namely Plato's open-ended, self-critical teaching in-between rigid dogmatism and utter skepticism.

53. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 27–28.

54. It is amazing the number of recent authors (e.g., Calame and Van Riel in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*) who just simply claim Protagoras' *mythos* to be Plato's *mythos*, since Plato must be its author. Clearly, Protagoras in the dialogue of that name chooses a *mythos* as opposed to a *logos* all on his own and Protagoras is the most prominent sophist Socrates ever engages.



55. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 29, 93, 97.
56. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 97.
57. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 93. See M. F. Burnyeat, "Eikos muthos," in *Plato's Myths*, ed., Catalin Partenie, for a rejection of the application of modern science to the *Timaeus myths*.
58. Friedlander, *Plato, an Introduction I*, 246–60.
59. Vlastos, *Plato's Universe*, 53ff.
60. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 181.
61. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 52.
62. See Elsa Grasso, "Myth, Image, and Likeness in Plato's *Timaeus*"; and Luc Brisson, "Why the *Timaeus* is *eikos mythos* and *eikos logos*" in Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, for the treatment of similar problems.
63. Both these problems are raised by Vlastos, "The Disorderly Motion of the *Timaeus*," 379–420.
64. H. J. Easterling, "Causation in the *Timaeus* and *Laws X*," *Eranos LXV* (1967), 31ff.
65. Easterling, "Causation in the *Timaeus*," 37–38.
66. For an excellent treatment of Platonic theology from an Aristotelian perspective, see, Stephen Menn, *Plato on God as Nous* (South Bend; St. Augustine Press, 1995).
67. Menn, *Plato on God*, 29–30.
68. Voegelin, *Order and History III*, 197.
69. Consult Glen Hughes, *Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993).
70. Voegelin, *Order and History III*, 182.
71. See Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination*, 47–59, 260–63. Brumbaugh gives a brilliant analysis of the details of disorder in Atlantis given the mathematical construction of this city.
72. Voegelin, *Order and History III*, 170. See also Tilo Schabert, "Reaching for a Bridge between Consciousness and Reality: The Languages of Eric Voegelin," *voegelinview.com*, February 13, 2014.
73. Schabert, "Reaching for a Bridge," 193. Perhaps, it would have been better if Voegelin had just stayed with Platonic *anamnesis* and avoided such potentially misleading Freudian and Jungian terms: "unconscious" and "collective unconscious."
74. See David Lachterman, "What is the 'Good' of Plato's *Republic*?" *The St. John's Review XXXIX* (1890–90), 170, footnote 24 who contends that the ancient Greeks in their thought made no philosophical division between object and corresponding subject.
75. Schabert, "Reaching for a Bridge," 190.
76. Schabert, "Reaching for a Bridge," 192.
77. Schabert. "Reaching for a Bridge," 195. It is perhaps best to describe Voegelin's understanding of the "unconscious" as the *via negativa* of the mystic. Two questions follow: (1) Is this an acceptable interpretation of Plato? and (2) What happens to analogy and the analogical functioning of the *mythos*, given the *via negativa* of the

mystic? Furthermore, can we relate this *via negativa* to Socrates' *daimon*, who never told him what to do, only what not to do?

78. See Przywara, *Analogia Entis*. Voegelin knew of Przywara's writings, but there is not much in Voegelin's writings about Przywara.

79. Przywara, *Analogy*, 195–96.

80. Przywara, *Analogy*, 198.

81. Maybe we can look to the intriguing ghost stories of the prominent, traditional conservative Russell Kirk for an example of beneficial contemporary *mythos* arousing our spiritual resources. There are many other worthy modern storytellers: the Inklings, Flannery O'Connor, Thomas Mann, Philip K. Dick, Robert Musil, Albert Camus, and others on the border of philosophy and literature.

82. Przywara, *Analogy*, 180.



## Chapter 6

# Epilogue

## ***Mythoi in All Their Nobility: The Pathos of Mythos***

### SYNOPSIS

An interpretative review of Plato's *mythoi* is not adequate without a reflective rereading of and listening to those *mythoi*, understanding the *mythoi* in terms of their context, and exploring the many symbolic dimensions that a given *mythos* will have. The goal is to reach an understanding of *mythos* that avoids mystical rapture before the *mythos* or doctrinal reduction of the *mythos* to some straightforward, analytical, conceptual knowledge. Certainly, there are instances where *mythos* provides considerable assistance to the dialectical activity of defining (*logos*) and clarifying whatever is under discussion. We have seen that *anamnesis* (recollecting) keeps this dialectical activity going, since recollecting suggests that there are atemporal forms that intelligibly make knowledge possible, as well as a divine, immortal part of our soul that has access to and animates these forms. *Mythos* is indispensably suitable for addressing the atemporal, divine, and immortal, since the temporal, human, and mortal analogically participates and acts in the light of the former.<sup>1</sup> Also the distinction between the two epochs in the *Statesman mythos* furthers the dialectical aims of that dialogue. *Mythos* is particularly appropriate when it establishes limitations upon the conceits of both intellectual activity and pragmatic, political reform (see the *Statesman*); and *mythos* also will qualify the enormous *hybris* of erotic demands in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.

*Mythos* paradoxically performs the dual function of arousing the soul (recollection, conversion, and descent/ascent) and limiting the soul (the judgment of souls; the mysterious beyond our grasping reach; and likely, probable stories that are experience-based, not invented). *Mythos* in itself may be more a limitation given its playful, childish, inexact, metaphorical mode of expression. But obviously, at the same time, *mythos* is tremendously inviting and

exhilarating. The symbols of *mythos* represent and remind (*anamnesis*) us of something more fundamental and greater than their objects or objectifications. Thus, *mythos* addresses something “more,” something “transcending”<sup>2</sup> in the sense that there is a whole that is intelligibly ordered and harmonious in terms of which we have some access as rational, desiring beings. Yet, this is a whole that we do not and cannot comprehend fully, only analogically, since it is so much “more” than our human *nous*. Being a *logos*, analogy recognizes that unlikenesses may exceed likenesses. Again, paradoxically, we must comprehend the whole (e.g., virtue), which we cannot fully comprehend, in order to know sufficiently the parts (e.g., particular virtues). This paradox never dissolves in human life, but there are sudden flashes of insight (*exaiphanes*), only if one philosophically and attentively labors on. The *mythos* of the earth-born (discussed at the end of chapter 3) conjured up an experience that our existence has a source outside of us greater than any individual life. We are awestruck by the experiences of *mythos* that have their point of origin outside us, and at the same time such mythical experiences function as a human limitation on our exhilaration.

Plato’s resort to *mythos* is consistent with his choice of the dialogue as the proper form of play for philosophical expression. The dialogic form stresses encounter, participation, interaction, struggle (*agon*), and the philosophical difficulty (*aporia*) of engaging the relative, contingent, and the accidental in light of the imagined absolute and eternal.<sup>3</sup> But, more important, there is the transcending of the subjective and the particular at that very unexpected, mysterious point of philosophical discovery and insight. Some of the early, aporetic, Socratic dialogues, which on the surface go nowhere and are utterly deficient in the kind of pay-offs that treatises and logical textbooks offer, are not without insights that invite greater development. For example, the *Euthyphro* is especially suggestive of some sort of service (*therapeia*) relationship that will properly characterize the relationship between the human and the divine. Will it be the service of buyers and sellers bartering in the marketplace, the service a slave owes a master, or some notion of service (philosophic *philia*), such as the caring and tending of one’s immortal soul?<sup>4</sup> The outcome will determine one’s piety in action; first, for the sake of one’s own soul and secondly, for the sake of other souls that have an integral (*polis*) relationship to one’s own soul. The origin of philosophy, understood as the wonder before that which is, comes at this indescribable, unpredictable, humanly uncontrivable point of discovery and insight. It may occur in thought or in action. This moment is so accidental and uncalled for, yet revelatory of what is so essential and necessary for the furtherance of our powers of understanding and our own thoughts and deeds. Does not *mythos* re-present such experiences?

We need to remember that Socrates does not make or contrive *mythoi*. He hears them. They come to him as a consequence of that inner dialogue

in reflective silence.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, *mythos* breaks with the quarrelsome, personality encounters that frequently are a matter of who gets the best of whom (thus, sophistry). For Socrates, it is better to be refuted (corrected) than to refute, since obviously one's own soul becomes better in the process. Socrates labors to have his interlocuters only listen to the argument (*logos*), when they refuse to partake in questioning and answering. The longer the *logos* goes on, the more precise, narrow, and analytical the encounter becomes and the further, it seems, we move away from questions of action, ways of living (*polis*), and some synthetic understanding of what has happened in the process of *logos*. Thus, the *mythos* occurs. Not because the *logos* somehow absolutely derailed, albeit we may lose our bearings temporarily. We may no longer know what to say or what to do. The *mythos* is not a facile attempt to put Humpty Dumpty together again, but indeed it tries to do what all the king's men could not. It is no exclusive alternative to theoretical and logical clarity. But the *mythos* is a means of bringing about a synthesis, providing an access to an order, which is regulated by the sober examination of *logos*, as well as the experiences of a philosophical guide and leader such as Socrates who partakes of that inner reflection in silence. *Mythos* gathers (collects) and connects the dividing achievements of *logos*, especially at the point of its limitation,<sup>6</sup> and tells an open-ended story that goes on and on, just as life does.

This limitation can be described in various ways, all of which explain why *mythos* is resorted to by Plato. First of all, *mythos* may serve the function of a political consensus (the *mythos* of the earthborn<sup>7</sup>, the *mythos* at the end of the *Gorgias*<sup>8</sup> and the *mythos* of the *Laws*<sup>9</sup>), which recognizes human limitations regarding our knowing and active participation in the whole. Yet, insofar as we all are called upon to act, one wants an awareness and inclination to act like soul brothers/sisters among one another. Secondly, *mythos* may occur when there has been an impasse in the conversation. The *Gorgias* and *Phaedo* reveal two different kinds of impasse. One is among enemies and the other is among friends. At this point, one seeks to express the intangible, and that which is prior to and a condition for rational communication and action. *Mythos* advises living a life with intense recognition and awareness of the drama of one's soul, which will be judged in accord with whatever the soul's very nature becomes and therefore is.

Thirdly, the soul inquires, seeks, searches, and longs for the Good and its happiness and pleasure. Thus, *mythos* propels and directs the desires (*thymotic* as well as appetitive) of the soul toward their proper end (*telos*)<sup>10</sup> The analogical, mediating character of *mythos* activates the soul in a way that abstract intelligence or logical demonstration alone univocally fails.<sup>11</sup> *Mythos* functions analogically and anagogically to express proportionately: (1) human, tensional existence in-between the divine and the bestial; and (2) being-in-becoming. *Mythos* speaks not the static, impersonal, object

language of *logos*, but rather the language of the personal drama of the soul. Without *mythos* and analogy, there is no way to remain true to the tensional, participatory, paradoxical experience of the divine in the human, being in becoming, and the timeless in the temporal. When *logos* is carried to its extreme regarding noetic apprehension of an essential oneness in the nature of things, then the particular, the unique, the individual, and the personal is forsaken in favor of divine oneness, essence, and identity.<sup>12</sup> This involves no denigration of *logos* and *nous*, because *logos* still functions critically and discursively, and *nous* still apprehends (without being identical to) our end toward which we continually and persistently strive. Nevertheless, analogy and *mythos* are best suited for expressing the potentialities (*dynamis*) of things, which may be realizable through action, as well as through observation and contemplation.<sup>13</sup> This action of the soul, desiring and erotic, needs to be limited by moderation and reverence (the *Phaedrus mythos*) and a proper, rational understanding of its end. Love (*philia*) of wisdom makes the soul gentle (*praus*) and in communion (*homonoia* and the *polis*) with others like oneself, rather than aggressive and competitive, which would be destructive of others and one's own soul.<sup>14</sup> Is not this human soul immortal, alive, and personal, not dead and impersonal?

Fourthly, there is the possibility that one's intellectual powers have gone too far and have not properly distinguished the divine from the human (e.g., the *Statesman*). *Mythos* addresses this relation of humans to some divine source of being that is perfective of the human soul, but this requires recognition of the divine/human distinction in the order of the cosmos. The cosmos is by definition an order greater than any person's intellectual powers; yet, it is a limit (*peras*) and not an *apeiron*, albeit, for Plato, within the *apeiron*. When we examine the *mythos* of Er, its most prominent feature is not the description of some golden age or the Isles of the Blessed for those who are saved. None of Plato's *mythoi* takes us inside some philosopher's paradise, although they do bring us to the threshold of some such fruition.<sup>15</sup> By radically questioning the life of the soul in the age of Chronos, which resembles the true, healthy city of pigs in the *Republic*, *mythos* discloses the liberating conditions for philosophic existence that are beyond the satisfaction of biological needs. To realize justice in deed is no easy, simple matter of conjuring up a utopia of bodily satisfied individuals. In fact, the pursuit of justice in speech and in deed must observe the limitations of *sophrosyne* vis-à-vis the driving forces of *thymoeidos*.

The most prominent feature of the *mythos* of Er, and the grounds for its indispensability, is the portrayal of the soul choosing. Impinging upon this radical action of choice is: first, the cosmic order thorough which souls have journeyed; second, the souls' past lives representative of their character (habits and formed opinions), if not any greater discoveries and insights; third, the previous judgment of these souls, which means either an ascent or a descent

proportionate to rewards and/or punishments integral to the condition of their souls; fourth, the necessities of the bodily, physical, environmental condition within which souls live; fifth and finally, sheer fate (*moira*) given all the other factors of life including other people's choices. This is the context wherein rational deliberation occurs and precedes the fundamentally human activity of choice. We are not autonomous, self-sufficient wholes unto ourselves.<sup>16</sup> Unless we are finally saved or damned, the soul has not been completely freed to be finally who and what it is. Even being saved or being damned involves becoming that which is more or less than who or what one was originally. In this respect, we can understand how important the contingent time dimension is (the was, is, and will be or respectively the Fates: Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos) to the mythical drama of the soul's personal history. Static discourse (logical and propositional) can paralyze and sterilize the action (political) dimensions of the soul. Constructing some dead doctrine or theory of the forms or Ideas ossifies the Platonic soul. Also, the dimension of time leaves open a future (symbolically in a reincarnation) that will permit the kind of virtuous action that enables the soul to ascend. Outside the time dimension, we are either intellectually attuned or intellectually barren with no hope that action over time, in time, can save our souls (thus Socrates suggests that we attend to the *mythos* of Er that it may save us, since the *mythos* itself has been saved in time).

The *mythos* of Er is irreducible and indispensable in another respect. The dynamic interaction between here and there is capturable only in a story that develops through symbolic portrayal the psychic affinity for that which (the forms or eternal model) somehow makes political and cosmic order possible. On the basis of this psychic flow and interplay we act politically. Our political action has its analogue in the cosmic order, which was made under the supervision of the divine *demiourgos*/architect. This raises the problem of political action and making. If there are limits on divine action and making, there are even more limits on human action and making, since humans are at a farther remove. But there is some doubt as to whether for the Greeks and for Plato there is such a possibility for divine action at all.<sup>17</sup> Why should divinities, which are perfectly self-sufficient, act at all outside themselves? Certainly, there is no necessity or need for divinities to act. You could say that their activity (*ergon*), not action (*praxis*), is noetic contemplation (thought thinking itself). Analogically, is this also the condition of the human philosopher whose intellectual virtues are so transcendent that it is a matter of sufferance and condescension to attend to contingent moral virtues and political action? The assumption is that the moral virtues, including action, and a concern for one's moral character (*ethos*), are deficient and subordinate compared to the intellectual virtues, because the moral virtues partake of the conventional, the contingent, and the political. Unquestionably,



public *polis* action occurs in the midst of conventions and is limited by all kinds of contingencies. But is not this our fate to become who we are, our identity (remember the example of Socrates), whereas who we become disappears to the extent our souls are immersed in contemplation (*theoria*)?

The possibility of action leaves open (perhaps not infinitely) that kind of soul-development and soul-growth in the midst of others, which may be perfective of whom we are, if our choices are in accord with our proper end. The radical separation of *theoria* and *praxis* (by Arendt and by some Straussians) ignores the central function of *mythos* vis-à-vis *logos*, namely, to be restorative of the action that leads to thought and the thought that leads to action. This is what human nature and the human condition are all about. We are forced (the force of obligation and care) to return to the cave and our *psyche* lives on tensionally. Or to put it in other symbolic terms, the descent and ascent of our souls interrelate in a circularity analogous to the circular revolutions of the cosmos.

The *Timaeus* (29d–30c, 41a–b) reveals that there is a form of divine action that is naturally perfective even of divine activity, while it spreads out comprehensively engaging that which is without order (matter or space, the receptacle, *chora* in Plato's terms). The divine *demiourgos's* political action of persuading necessity (*ananke*) and achieving as much order as is possible in this unordered emptiness (the Greek meaning of chaos) results in the making of manifestations or images of order and beauty. The teleological, participatory endeavor is to bring about as much perfection to the cosmic whole as is possible in light of the perfect paradigm. This demiurgic, persuasive ordering is also a paradigmatic analogue for the statesperson as well as for the human soul. Persuasion is that deliberative and discretionary action, which is not the same as, but is prior to, actual making.

Notice how in the *Laws* (927c) *mythos* functions as persuasive prefixing or prefacing of the laws. That the *Laws* uses *proemia* (preambles) that are mythical in Plato's terms reveals how much Plato wants to animate (the soul being the fount of animation) the laws for Magnesia designed by the Solonic Legislator, the Athenian Stranger. Dead letters require dictatorial force and compulsion to gain just external compliance. That applies to bodies who as bodies cannot engage. Spirit-filled laws apply to souls receptively educable for persuasion. Plato's Socrates consistently abjured force and violence in dealing with Thrasymachus and Callicles, in the *mythoi* of afterlife judgment, and now in the human-best regime of the *Laws*. (Of course, any *polis* will have to use force in self-defense when attacked by force. Did not Socrates fight in the Athenian military?) As much as is humanly possible given the human resources at hand, there shall be commonality and unity—that is, a community of friends. Perhaps, Plato experienced a personal dilemma and temptation regarding the choice of extremes, the *pleonexia* of tyranny versus

philosophic withdrawal. But actually, and existentially, the measure of *logos* and play of *mythos* that philosophers turn to is proportionally and analogically in-between those extremes of excess and deficiency.

Persuasion (*peitho*) is the action that mediates between the molding of the clay and the form guiding the molding. Thus, the *demiourgos* in the *Timaeus* acts through governing those lesser gods who qua artisans do the actual making. Likewise, the philosophical statesperson persuades and deliberates about how to achieve a political order to the best possible extent given the materials at hand. The *demiourgos* is the paradigmatic mediator who must be understood analogically in action, not literally as a *deus ex machina* or rational designer. Rather than speaking of a mysterious upwelling of the unconscious<sup>18</sup> that comprehends the relation between being and becoming, the *demiourgos* should be seen as a paradigmatic figure poised analogically in-between (*metaxy*) being and becoming in action. This is fundamentally an analogy; the tasks before the human philosopher-statesman in the *polis* are almost insuperably at a third remove, compared to that which the *demiourgos* achieved in the cosmos. The communion between the *demiourgos* and lesser gods would be the appropriate relation (not always the actual relation) between ruler and people. On both the cosmic and political levels, the beginnings and foundations of all such political, persuasive acting and making may be as perfect as possible, but there is inevitable imperfection, meaning decline and degeneration. This is the unpredictability of action in all of its dimensions<sup>19</sup> and the undurability of all making. Further action or continuous action<sup>20</sup> and more making is requisite for human beings who find themselves in an unstable world of acting and making (no matter how great their striving beyond may be). For the sake of freedom and choice, it is better that there be order through action, rather than accidental order, or no order at all.<sup>21</sup>

Action is not necessarily separable from or antithetical to making, since it is directive of those arts that make or produce. The maker produces according to some guide, model, or form, which is independent of his actual making process. Action in the sense of guiding or governing is not just a process. It is worthwhile, noble, and good for its own sake, irrespective of its end-product, all of which may depend on a host of imponderables. Politics involves both making and acting, but acting is superior to any kind of making or *techné*. Through political action the various craftsman and makers are ordered in a conditional harmony that constitutes a city (*polis*). The city by its very nature is a composite, not a simple unity, because of the manifold types of people and activities that go on within it. There can be no *eidos* of the city. But there can be a *mythos* that converts the *logos* of the *eidei* (justice, the Good, the moral virtues) into an *ergon*.<sup>22</sup>

*Mythos* has this unique in-between status that is continuous with the lowest and highest forms of human existence. Not all persons will be deliverers

of the *mythos*, nor will they all be equal partakers of the *mythos*. Craftsmen especially may only understand through persuasion that their contribution is for the sake of a greater whole that they may primarily intuit but do not know. Also, there will be those persons who can only be persuaded by first being compelled to do their job, just as the original preexisting necessity was persuaded by the *demiourgos*.<sup>23</sup> But most important of all will be those statespersons or polispersons, who by just, good, moderate, and courageous actions, establish a living paradigm or *mythos* revealing, to the extent possible in action, the acts of human participation proportionate to their greatest end, the Good.

The various levels of *mythos* exist according to three comprehensive analogical relationships: body and soul, body politic and philosophic statespersons, and cosmos and *demiourgos*. To understand *mythos* as partaking of a continuity of soul experiences (e.g., recollection, conversion, descent and ascent, judgment, the foundation of psychic, political, and cosmic order) is to reveal through interpretation the plenitude of being that exists outside and beyond one's particular, individual existence, although we do partake of this plenitude to the degree we long to act in the knowledge of the truth of being. Because this is an active, dynamic, tensional participation of the soul, not a final divine union, we necessarily use language that is metaphorical, analogical, and mythical. Just as in some analogies where the fourth term is unknown and hidden, but open to discovery, likewise *mythos* is an opening toward the hidden and not fully known ("the unknown known" of Bernard Lonergan). *Mythos* must be kept mythical and analogy must be kept analogical, in order to avoid any hard, crude dogmatization (and eventual dissolution) via literalization of *mythos* and analogy.<sup>24</sup>

*Mythos* is more than a pious hope or belief<sup>25</sup> that has only an emotional or subrational basis.<sup>26</sup> *Mythos* speaks to the whole of the soul, because it reveals the discoveries of the soul in terms of the souls' erotic and rational longings. Many are the forces upflowing from the human soul, but they all must be ordered following the charioteer *mythos* of the *Phaedrus*. This does not exclude *mythos* from having an emotional appeal like a charm, but neither does it preclude an active response that activates speech (*logos*) and deed. The soul is the continuous (through figuratively many rebirths and reincarnations) locus of personal identity<sup>27</sup> and consciousness. *Mythos* has the most important function of clarifying this soul-identity of the person, since *mythos* incites searching and seeking, reflection and soul-awareness.

The paradoxical mystery of the soul is that it is seemingly boundless in its receptive depths, but not without a perfecting end. There is no question that the philosopher or potential philosopher alone has the time (*scholē*) and the ability to investigate these receptive depths. Those who hear the *mythos* from outside themselves (non-philosophers) may be aroused and awakened by the

*mythos*, or they may be tempered by the *mythos* (thus, the terrible, boundless depths of Tartarus for wrongdoers). Even an external participation (*methexis*) in the *mythos* is conducive to order, although it does not befit what constitutes a truly perfecting human soul that only could be born a human soul and act in a truly human way if it had once figuratively seen the divine, eternal forms and was thus able in this worldly existence to recollect these forms. How else can we speak about that which we must know in some potential (*dynamis*), undeveloped way, which develops into knowledge and wisdom?

One of the predominant functions of *mythos* is to generate the experience of analogical participation in the foundation of psychic, political, and cosmic order.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps for most people this is most immediately realized and concretely rewarded in the context of political involvement. In the *Laws* (713a), *mythos* is called upon to resolve the problem of the regime's identity, if only because the *polis* is no form for *logos* to apprehend. Should we not see this as analogous in some way to the problem of the soul's identity? There is no reason why political participation cannot be the external arena in which public deliberation and deed offer a means for soul-revelation (but not soul-perfection). Individual action and leadership above and beyond the ordinary may be both paradigmatic for others and a personal achievement that reveals the limits of action without being discontinuous with the ends of knowledge and wisdom.

Given all the contingencies and tragic unpredictabilities of action, which aim at the expanding realization of the Good, the just, the orderly, and the beautiful, this need not thwart the knowing of truth and wisdom. Through action one comes to experience limited successes (e.g., the possibility of participation and sharing with others a common endeavor) or limited failures (e.g., misunderstandings, rejection, unforeseen outcomes, suffering destiny). Political action involves others in order for its success, but acts of individual heroism are not excluded, as if one could only act by being dependent on others. The judgment *mythoi* of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* beckon and evoke such concrete action, insofar as they are in conformity with the right order of the soul. Without such action, how would a soul have access to that realm of experience that generates the kind of universal concern (e.g., for the common good) and is one of the great ends of philosophical reflection.<sup>29</sup>

The *Republic*, *Statesman*, and the *Laws* (the three manifestly political dialogues) do not counsel withdrawal into some private sphere of contemplation.<sup>30</sup> Even the regime of the philosopher-king in the *Republic* (which most likely will never be in deed because too many conflicting factors must align) is constantly addressed by Socrates in terms of its possibility in deed (*Republic* 443c–e, 456bff., 471c–473e, 484c–d, 499bc, 501c–d, 540dff.). Can anyone deny that the kind of reflections that occur within the *Republic* are related to the experience of political action in the midst of a great variety of souls

and corresponding regimes? The regimes of the *Republic* (the true healthy city of pigs, the luxurious city, the city of guardians, and the regime of the philosopher-king, all collectively cities in speech or *logos*) are acted out or tried out in speech without being manifestos for immediate implementation. If anything, the *Republic* is an “educational mission” for Plato’s Academy. (Oddly, few commentators discern this.<sup>31</sup>) Over and over again Socrates refers to children and youth and their habits and character in their upbringing (propaedeutically based). The whole *Republic* dialogue reveals itself in the form of a *mythos* and a *paideia*. We are invited through philosophic reflection, to come to know and apply analogically the forms of the virtues and to love wisdom from within the context of the possibilities or potentialities of human political action. Acting and knowing thrive on one another. Otherwise, there is the disorienting of soul that comes with the extreme choice of one or the other. The greatest danger is to settle for final knowledge (the conceit of gnosis) or absolute action (fanaticism). Such knowers are always humanly tempted to try to act out their knowledge; such actors commonly think they need not know any more. Somewhere in-between (*metaxy*), analogically and mythically, our souls properly and moderately find themselves and our limitations.

In the context of all of Plato’s dialogues, the *Critias* and the *Laws* are not simply a sacrifice to the second best, nor a simple concession to moderation and political actuality in Plato’s old age. The *Critias* and the *Laws* are disclosures that expose those persons and those *poleis* who have daringly experienced acting in the world. For Plato, the heroic action of the philosopher-king courageously reentering the cave is the grounds for the possibility of improved regimes depicted in the *Critias* and the *Laws*. These regimes are improved because they remain conducive and open to the possibility of the philosopher-king as ruler. But they are regimes of nameless actors, the Athens of the *Critias* and the Magnesia of the *Laws*. The closest to a philosopher-king is the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*, but he too is a stranger or alien without a name. This portends an opening that remains to be filled by some noble actor. These regimes have to be acted out and tested to display their nobility and their real possibility; they cannot be defined or approached as if an *eidos* of the *polis* were a possibility (as opposed to a false immanentization and objectification), or as if the *polis* were identical (rather than analogical) to these souls that contemplate the *eidei*.

The *Laws* especially has a synthetic, mythical purpose when it combines the mythical, educational contributions of Apollo (emphasized in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*)<sup>32</sup> and Dionysus (emphasized in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*). The foundational legitimacy of the *Laws* originates with Zeus (*Laws* 636c–d) and passes through the beginning of education in the training of the pleasures and pains under Apollo, symbolic of moderation (*Laws* 653dff.), and then

passes through the Dionysian moderation test of courage and *eros* in the *symposia* (*Laws* 672b–d). This structure of *mythos* in the early books of the *Laws* also is informed by the important story about the puppet persons, who are the playthings of the gods (*Laws* 645bff.). This properly precedes the reference to Apollo and Dionysus, because these two gods address the problem of the puppet persons, namely, the many directions and dimensions of desires (chords and strings) in the souls of humans. This is quite a different and more complex picture of human souls than the rationally ordered, static, tripartite depiction of the soul in the *Republic*.<sup>33</sup> In no way does this puppetry (as serious play) remove individual responsibility for one's choices that define one's soul over a lifetime. We are limited creatures, not fundamentally autonomous (as demythologized modern philosophy would have it).

That such puppet persons are the playthings of the gods suggests two possibilities: (1) the gods, as anthropomorphic projections of human desires, are lacking in any source of divine order or serious play, that would give structure and meaning to human existence; thus, humans are externally controlled puppets and playthings, suggesting the aimless, meaningless combination of necessity and chance and the lack of any harmonious guidance or any affinity between the human and the divine; and (2) the gods are symbolic of the diverse possibilities of human desires (e.g., the whole procession of gods in the *Phaedrus mythos*), which is to say that the desires in themselves are not evil or radically in need of subjection or even extermination; since there are diverse desires or forces in human souls, there are diverse ways of ordering them according to their potential and their fulfillment, as well as their rank in a *polis* analogically ordered to the divine. Solely seeking bodily pleasure, no; but knowledge's pleasure, yes.

This second interpretation exemplifies the inoffensiveness of the imagery of humans as puppets of the gods for two reasons: (a) there is something about the desires that suggests a source and an ordering end outside of their mere subjective occurrence within humans, yet we do simply get to choose our desires, since they are an educable given; and (b) if there is a divine ordering of the desires and this is humanly discoverable, this does indicate mythically an external source, but also encourages and requires inner care and discovery along with outer guidance and care. The gods in effect play with the human puppets in accord with whatever strings or chords are defining particular human souls. Humans remain soul-determining, with limitations and consequences, affirming a human-divine, analogical context.

In a sense, this *mythos* of the puppets has been a religious test of its hearers or readers and interpreters. One's response to this *mythos* becomes an indicator of one's understanding of the divine-human relationship, which is indispensably a part of any Platonic *mythos*. Although the Athenian Stranger is speaking about laws received from Zeus and Apollo and the practices

and gifts of Dionysus, this does not mean that these laws are not put to the Socratic test (see *Laws* 632e–633a) of what would count as proper or improper nurture for children in accord with the virtues of moderation and courage (*Laws* 653dff.). Thus, the Athenian Stranger is speaking about the educational process of charming and guiding children and the great majority of persons in a political regime.

However, this clearly is not the focal point, nor the bottom line, when all has been said and done in the *Laws*. Without a concern for a harmonious ordering and disciplining of the desires, *poleis* will degenerate and there will be no auspicious stage on which to act politically (*Laws* 688b–d). This has been the truth behind the ancient *mythoi* of floods, plagues, and catastrophic destructions, which come as the catharsis leaving behind a few simple and good persons to begin all over again the political effort (*Laws* 677aff.). The *mythos* that engages the three men of the *Laws* (the Athenian Stranger, the Cretan Clinias, and the Spartan Megillus) covers the original Greek foundation of laws that will make possible, insofar as it is a good beginning, a guide for action, participation, and involvement continuous and attuned with the philosophic life. It will be continuous with the philosophic life not only in the form of a necessary preparation, but also as the provision of a public arena in which action can shine forth. Politics is not necessarily and only identifiable with the content of speeches and actions within some raucous agora. There may be public forums in which political deliberation in speech succeeds in getting others to enter into the silence of their own souls' reflections, that awaken the *pathos* (experiential ground) that persons qua friends can reciprocate with one another, and eventuates in the most favorable action. Action is important in that it is virtuous action reinforcing the souls of persons—that is, virtuous practice makes perfect. In this respect, philosophy is constituted by and supervenes what is achievable in *logos* (speech) and in *mythos* (deed). This is the omnipresent and comprehensive image of the Socratic theoretical and practical life.

**MYTHODEMOS: POPULAR (PEOPLE'S) MYTH  
TODAY: A DESCENT WITH LIMITED ASCENT,  
AND MYTHO-SPECULATION TODAY**

In no way can *mythos* be just left behind, as if some antiquarian interest or literary diversion. Indeed, there is no return possible to the early, compact cosmological society of traditional *mythos*, but Plato's philosophical *mythoi*, and later historical mytho-speculation (as Voegelin characterizes it) show that the resort to *mythos* is somehow unavoidable and fundamental. If Plato were to return today, he might be very curious to know about what passes

for popular myth, especially in the critical light of his philosophic *mythos*. On this basis he could judge the readiness (*propaedeutic*) or lack of readiness for a well-governed political order based on laws.

There are three examples of “*mythodemos*” today, that can be examined and analyzed in terms of their musical lyrics and their possible depths and straining heights. From out of the human soul, especially from rock and roll artists/poets, comes today a flow and stream of experiences emanating from and confronting our libertarian, commercialized, and disenchanting modern world. Do we know why Bob(by) Dylan received a Nobel Prize for literature? Does he, the rambling man, know why? Be forewarned: analyzing and interpreting art certainly is not the same as the play of making it. But the best interpretations of musical art cause us to revisit it, not to cast it aside, or take it for granted. Plato was well aware of the importance of music and poetry possibly providing some harmonious order of the soul from womb to tomb.

There are two “thought experiences” (not “thought experiments” which suggest a modern reduction of *mythos* to *logos*) unleashing a philosophical “play” of *noesis* (understood to be both reason and intuition). First, we will examine popular *mythos* found in some representative rock and roll lyrics. Second, we need to consider myth (e.g., the powerful science fiction stories of Philip K. Dick, the Inklings, et al.) reflecting and opposing a modern scientific cosmology, despite the ruling, dominating, anti-mythical modernity of the natural sciences. In the end, there may be more clarification regarding how *mythos* and *logos* still interpenetrate and interplay with each other, achieving more than anything they could ever be alone.

Three rock and roll song lyrics impress for their teleological promise: the Little River Band’s “It’s a Long Way,” John Lennon’s “Imagine,” and Styx’s “Show Me the Way.” Note that in all these cases we are dealing with some kind of imagining a way, which is in agreement with *mythos* as a *via media* between here and there, down and up, whence and wherefore, lost and found, ignorant and knowing, and the host of -ing-ing words common in Platonic dialogues.

Little River Band’s “It’s a Long Way” originally was sung with brio in an upbeat, contemporary, rock and roll fashion. The later version is slower, more reflective, and more likely to bring out the imploring lyrics. The song starts with a call out to the audience to find out if there is an awareness in the consciousness of the singer/artist: “People on their own are getting nowhere. I am on the road to see, if anything is anywhere and waiting just for me.” There is a sense of everyone’s individual confusion and aloneness (*aporia*) getting nowhere but we are going out on the road (the American frontier symbol beckons) to see if “it” can be found, waiting just (only? especially?) for me the singer/artist. We are now “beyond” just feeling, proceeding in the form of a good narrative or story that is adventurous,



maybe even daring. It is quite American to want to go west, or now to go into outer space, young (wo)man. Therefore, "Every night I walk around the city. Seems like I'll never know, the feeling of being together when I go." Is this "being together" what a person is looking for, with another person or just with oneself? And is it "being together" on the go, while looking and feeling one's own way? Perhaps the ambiguity is resolved by being what we all do, but alone, for ourselves. Being on the go and being a go-getter is quite individualistically American.

Refrain: "And it's a long way there, it's a long way to where I'm going." A quite modern affliction is this: "everything and everyone is transitory." Uprooting change rules. Are not Americans the most mobile persons in the history of humankind?

The final plea is "I live for the day when I can have people saying that they know and they care for everyone." That's quite a tall order. "But I feel like I have been here for the whole of my life, never knowing home."<sup>34</sup> Can there ever be home, a resting place where realistically everyone knows and cares, since you are not rooted and always are on the go, on the road? Does your Odyssean vocation prevent settling down, or should the blame be put on other people who set the example of not settling down? Trudge on, minstrel, if somewhat pleading despairingly: "But I don't seem to matter much to anyone who's around. Is there anybody around?"

The travelling bard will not know about finding and establishing a home? Has it not always been true that the nomad is the stranger who never can fully know and feel "being together" at any place, since such a person never develops lasting friends and family? Perhaps you need to be on the road to know and to experience more starkly what you otherwise would just accept and take for granted. Individuals cannot just establish some political community order out of nothing, or out of continual movement, always being on the go (the tour). It's unnatural or apolitical to be continually uprooted.

A mythical account (a rock and roll song) can dramatize (sing) these experiences, especially when they cry out and fall short of resolution. The symbols resonating from such experiences are "the call," "home," "being together," "the nomadic way (touring)," "care," "transience," "the city," "everybody," and so on. This song, however, ends without resolution, without joy. How fitting today!

Second, there is John Lennon's 1971 favorite song, "Imagine," written in his estate's bedroom in Ascot, England, giving a beautiful melody to what he called "virtually the Communist Manifesto." It's a dreamscape of imagination, a utopia (nowhere, if not yet anywhere). There is also a call in this song's lyrics, amounting to a great deal of negational specificity:

“Imagine there is no heaven. It’s easy if you try. No hell below us. Above us only sky. Imagine all the people living for today.” No heaven in the sky, just sky, but quite the possible heaven here on earth of people just living for today, once again, for the moment. There would be no need for this song at all, if the tensions and drama of human experience were all nullified. But it’s easy if you try, at least, in your imagination to nullify it all.

Proceeding in the same vein, supposedly without religion and without countries there would be nothing to fight and to die for. Peace automatically spontaneously occurs! “You may say I’m a dreamer. But I’m not the only one. I hope someday you’ll join us. And the world will be as one.” Thus, all conflicts and wrongdoing will evaporate, if you all just join us as one. This sounds more like some Buddhist/Indian guru than it does Karl Marx, who believed that the violent, mass, proletarian revolution, not some imagined, individualistic, utopian egalitarian dream, would bring about the perfection of man in communist society. Lennon is too wrapped up in his own dream to discern Marx’s necessary means (praxis, not imagination or *theoria*) that contradict some spontaneous, self-fulfilled heaven on earth.<sup>35</sup>

Does anyone believe that if all needs were fulfilled humans would then be automatically at peace with each other? How naïve regarding the thymotic forces within the human body and soul. Instead, in a fit of nihilistic dismissal of religion and country, voila, everyone shares everything fairly, peaceably. It seems more likely that religions and countries devoted to negotiated peaceful settlements hold some limited hopes and promises; limited because there is no realistic, spontaneous possible brotherhood on earth.<sup>36</sup> “Imagine” is more a derailment from reality; there is no easy, magical “stop and negate it.” Nevertheless, it is true, given oppositional factors in human existence, that we do get aroused by injustice and the violence of war to think about and work for some kind of lasting justice and peace in a difficult, ever-contingent world.

From rags to riches, from public housing in Liverpool to a mansion near London, the world so easily turned upside down, the play of fantasy associated with unbelievable fortune and fame, anything to nothing is imaginable. The forces of soul in such a myth are symbolically revolutionized fantastically. We have lost our way, for the sake of a rather primitive (property, beliefs, and food), soulless way at that.

Third, there is the song “Show Me the Way” by Styx. (Styx is the underworld river in Greek mythology that the dead must pass over, separating them from the living. It symbolically is a river of hate, but also a river divide that sometimes releases miraculous powers and may be the basis for binding oaths.) Contrary to Lennon’s imagination, for Styx there is “Every

night I say a prayer in the hope that there's a heaven," which is then realistically countered by "But every day I'm more confused as the saints turn into sinners." (Actually, all true saints are unbearably sinners. We need to meditate on how they become saints, being such awful sinners, especially in their own eyes.) "All the heroes and legends I knew as a child have fallen to idols of clay. And I feel this empty place inside, so afraid I've lost my faith." So prominent, disturbing symbols appear out of reflected-upon experience: "night," "prayer," "hope," "heaven," "confused," "idols of clay," "empty place inside," "fear," "loss of faith." The refrain calls out: "Show me the way, show me the way. Take me tonight to the river and wash my illusions away."

Indeed, this world is full of illusions, mere fleeting appearances, which hopefully will be washed away, if only we are shown the way. Plato would call this *aporia*, but *mythos* and *logos* are on the way. Night falls again. "And as I slowly drift to sleep, for a moment dreams are sacred. I close my eyes and know there's peace in the world so filled with hatred." Once again, the momentary, in the form of dreams contrary to the conflicting, hard reality of strife, offers a kind of escape. However, notice here, unlike the Lennon's lyrics, matters require something more than just imagining a collective act of human negation. Instead, there is a fear that we as humans will not know and see the signs. Styx sings of difficult, experiential problems, not simple solutions.

"Bring me tonight to the mountain and take my confusion away. And if I see your light, should I believe? Tell me how will I know." So inside us is some yearning for, let's say, "the promised land" in the beyond of the mountain. But it will take courage and strength to see and to believe, and perhaps going up a mountain to experience a visionary moment. The constant refrain: "Please, show me the way" suggests some hope for transcendence, not any here-below, deconstructed heaven on earth. Certainly, the way is not by hate, conflict, sin, and any kind of falseness, which are illusions and need to be washed away. For Styx this is the appeal to the divine beyond quite different from Lennon's appeal to human selves.

It is doubtful that the Little River Band and Styx will ever be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In the Styx song "Show Me the Way," there is no terminal subjectification (feelings) and no terminal objectification (new world). Rather there is phenomenologically the call, the descent ("idols of clay" and "empty place inside"), the distance (night, idols, news, loss of faith, etc.), and the ascent (the mountain and the light) with hope and prayer; and it will not be easy, this test of faith to get beyond.

Myth today, "modern mytho-speculation" will first of all have to deal with the anti-mythical, demythologized, disenchanting nature of

modernity. The hallmarks of such modernity<sup>37</sup> are: (1) the primacy and autonomy of the self and its mode of literary presentation, the novel; (2) liberty the unquestioned, absolute, first principle; (3) pragmatism and opportunism, a what-works utilitarianism, irrespective of, if not contrary, to the reflective, loving of wisdom; (4) a metaphysics of constructivism (the dominant educational doxology) regarding chaotic, unintelligible reality; and the denial of “intelligible order”; and (5) earth-bound man is the measure and the highest good in this earthly life (not God, who has absconded or is extinct). Philosophical Platonic *mythos* counters: (1) the outreaching soul, not the private self, is the drama of human existence; (2) human existence is an abiding, erotic tension in-between the bestial and the divine; (3) rightly constituted order, independent of us, yet analogically related in our noetic soul, political community, and cosmos, orients liberty in its proper flourishing; and (4) meditation and contemplation deeply explore the whence, wherefore, whither, and why of human existence in accord/harmony with the divine measure, our intelligible consummation, a silence that passeth all understanding, despite our futile, noisy, mechanical, Babelling world.

If there were to be a modern, cosmological myth, the modern notion that there is this neutral starting point (*arche*) of preexisting chaos and unformed matter (see the opening episode of “Star Trek Discovery” where this is blithely assumed to be true) would have to be disabused. There are no neutral starting points; all dice and algorithms (starting points) are loaded. Noetic order versus preexisting material disorder generates (mythically) quite different consequences for humans to interrogate, follow, and endure.

Likewise, we are confronted with two extremes in the understanding today of the *Timaeus*. James Arieti claims the *Timaeus* is all sophistic parody and purposely self-destructive Platonic play, while Richard Mohr contends the *Timaeus* is philosophically serious science even today.<sup>38</sup> Neither commentators consider the *Timaeus* to be Plato’s philosophical *mythos* somewhere in-between all play and all seriousness, a serious playfulness about only a likely (analogical) cosmogony, most likely needing to be revised over time, with the growth of scientific knowledge, yet never obtaining the exactness known to the divine *demiourgos*, in direct contact with the paradigmatic forms, the originals of which the cosmos is a copy or image.

Today, assuming you want to follow up on Plato’s cosmogonic philosophical *mythos*, you could start with Hans Jonas’s philosophical biology in his *The Phenomenon of Life*.<sup>39</sup> (This will keep the matter “in the family,” since Voegelin was of the same generation with similar Germanic experiences and Voegelin acknowledged Jonas’s *The Gnostic Religion* to be a

major influence and a superior, breakthrough analysis of gnosticism.) Jonas cannot help at the end of his book to write his own myth corresponding to his philosophical, biological conclusions. His chapter is entitled “Immortality and the Modern Temper.” Why, somewhat unexpectedly, does Jonas resort to myth? He calls it a “metaphysical” concern expressible today in the mode of a “likely imagination,” which may be taken to mean a play of likely images. Logical concepts and demonstrations do not apply or work here. Jonas thought it important to keep science and faith separate, which tended to mean that science could affect faith, but not the reverse. The issue is immortality in the Greek sense, the immortality of deeds, and our relation to a creator God both Jewish, gnostic, and Christian. This myth will conform to the “modern temper” (and/or distemper?), related to Jonas’ foregoing critique of modern, materialistic, natural sciences. A reader has to wonder whether this is a myth Jonas endorses given the circumstances of modernity, or whether this myth is a powerful provocation, especially directed at traditional Jewish/Christian religious believers. (It could be both, but I tend to imagine the latter, even if it is too ominous, a post-Holocaust way to conclude a book.)

What is distinctive about modernity that would characterize a modern mytho-speculation? Let me repeat the hallmarks of modernity: the individual self replaces the communal soul; liberty not order is the individual self’s starting point, man has become the measure of God, who is then measured by his creation. Actually, Jonas claims “man holds the fate of god in his hands.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, Jonas proceeds to fashion a myth contending that god created the world, thus giving away to this world and all therein the total fullness (potentiality) of his divinity into what is now humanity. For man there is this total gift of freedom to achieve fame and fortune and thus immortality by way of his/her decisions and deeds. There is no personal immortality in some heaven, only the collective sum total of deeds, good and bad, that will constitute immortality over time into eternity.

Man does still have a conscience with practical reason (Plato and Aristotle) informing a critical consciousness (*logos*), but given the sufferings of our historical (the horrifying twentieth century) existence, will man use these divine capacities and gifts (from an unbounded, gift-giving Prometheus?) appropriately? Will modern man ever know anything other than “unconditional immanence”<sup>41</sup> (anything goes, everything is permitted here and now)? Jonas does subordinate *techne* (technology) to critical, practical reason, if only it will be consulted and used. In alignment with gnosticism, where the struggle is between good and evil gods, now there is the totalistically human struggle with the likelihood of a collectively evil immortality, quite likely along the lines of the totalitarian, genocidal horrors of the twentieth century that profoundly disturbed Jonas.

Jonas is not naïve nor optimistic about the technological imperatives of biotechnology.

Perhaps this myth is Jonas' provocation to modern man (any remaining premodern persons seem hopelessly irrelevant) to pursue noble, not base, deeds given the free decision-making powers that the modern self now has. The ball is in our earthly, environmental court to choose rightly in order to leave behind collectively for posterity some worthy, immortal legacy. Yet, how can this happen, if there is no divine Good analogically operative and known by *nous* in our souls, politics, and cosmos?

Jonas' myth is a "tentative" (in his words) philosophic myth in accordance with Platonic philosophical *mythos*, assuming that Plato would have dared to write such a crisis-driven myth. Potentially, Jonas' myth could be reversed on non-gnostic, Judaic-Christian grounds, but will anyone listen and will some Judaic-Christian myth be saved so that it can save us all? Does Jonas work off the nominalist belief (from Ockham and others to the present day) that the God of Jews and Christians is essentially willful and omnipotent? This is not the merciful, loving, self-sacrificing God, whose providential ways remain ineffable. Where you start is where you end up. Nevertheless, we can discern how important the nature of the human-divine relationship is, when it is analogically expressed and elaborated upon via myth.

A public space (*polis*) is missing given the modern ideology of self-reliance and privatization. The public (politics and religion) is now private, and the private (sex, Hollywood, fantasies) is public. Is it likely that anyone can credibly state today (and when Jonas was writing) that there are engendering moments and experiences (sudden flashes of luminosity) and language modes (pulsating symbols), whereby the eternal shines forth briefly in the temporal, the just in the unjust, being in becoming, the absolute in the relative, and immortality in mortality? And the replication of such experiences in various cultures (Voegelin's symbols of equivalency) allows the "critical consciousness" (Jonas' term compatible with Voegelin) to verify in one's philosophic soul and in communion with others such mythical experiences and symbols.

Jonas, rightly or wrongly, dismisses mystical experiences in terms of their private, subjective, flash in the dark among the few. Likewise, love and beauty also are discounted, since only the few are likely to climb this ladder distinguishing the noble from the base. Some modern mytho-speculation must serve the many, the *demos*, to inspire moral responsibility and action. Yet there remains for Jonas the judgment myth in the end, which is the immortal judgment by which human immanence and transience is judged. Within Jonas' philosophic myth there is only immortality of deeds (how pagan Greek?), not persons with immortal souls. Is this immanent context enough of a context and spur for individuals? These immortal deeds (noble and base) make up the transcendent record devised by the god to be the results

of a great, experimental test of genesis. In Platonic terms, this is the modern meaning for human beings no more than playthings or puppets of curious gods wondering if humans will leave behind any immortal memories and lessons.

Yet, in the end for Jonas the god, the player and spirit, wins out,<sup>42</sup> because the journey and adventure of man to become the awakened god fails. Paradoxically, to become god eternal means human extinction for all time. All along man was created for god, not in the image of god.<sup>43</sup> But what do we do with the “inward testimony” of transcendence and the eternal god. We are innocents no longer, and we need to grow up and accept our mortality. Then we can become morally responsible for all those who were denied a chance to act. We must abjure fatalism (the popular saying today: “It is what it is.”). In this way we reciprocate the call of the immortal god, who is hidden, unseen, and unknown. Jonas chooses immanent Aristotle, not transcendent Plato. Is it more likely most people will just get caught up in living their own, self-enclosed mortal lives? Was it ever any different?

### **Road Trip: from *Aporia* to *Agathon*, the *Pathos* of *Mythos Recidivus***

To reflect that you are imprisoned is the beginning of your release from prison. Otherwise, you just vegetate in womb-like conditions that satisfy your biological needs presumably, and eventually you die off and disintegrate. What in this world would release you from this vegetative state once completely inside it, animal that you are? Some yet-to-be-developed power within and activity (*dynamis*) awakened by sight and sound must occur. The mysterious gods or spirits reside in all things alive, moving, and appearing hither and thither. You are not alone. You have no common language yet. You are imprisoned in Plato’s cave, completely chained to your spot with only fleeting shadows and images (*eikasies*) on the wall of the cave before you. This is anything but a fantastic *mise en scene*, but rather paradoxically the highly realistic reality of illusions (*phantasmas*) common for what today we call people fixated before the television screen, as well as the head-bent-over people entranced by their smart phones, alone together.<sup>44</sup>

The prisoners in the cave are images of *pathos*: pathetic. Any “knowledge” they might have passively comes from indiscriminate sense perceptions. It is as if you cannot take off your virtual reality headgear device, ensconced in a dream world at a third remove from the real world. (Watch Netflix’s dramatization of Philip K. Dick’s “Electric Dreams.”) Plato’s dialogues persistently confront us with the “questioning quest” about what remove and distance our images and imitation are from the original truth. Perhaps a god will lead us back to the womb in a reverse cycle of degeneration, so

that we can regenerate all over again. Both Plato's *Statesman* (268dff.) and *Laws* (713aff.) talk about this innocent, golden age of Chronos (castrater of *eros* but now king of the Elysian Islands), carrying us backward to infancy, a purification, a reverse cycle in the loop away from our age of becoming (age of Zeus, the philosopher for Plato, *Phaedrus* 252dff.) back to our being unbecoming. We can only degenerate and die, in order to regenerate, and be reborn, comparable to the seasons of nature. Figuratively, we are encouraged to return (*anamnesis*) to the source (*arche*).

From the End to the Beginning and from the Beginning to the End, from Degeneration to Perfection, from Perfection back to Degeneration, thus we have the two cycles of the cosmos, the Age of Chronos and the Age of Zeus. In the beginning was the end (*telos*), the god perfect and complete, the divine time of the Age of Chronos overthrown by the Age of Zeus and the revolution of the cosmos reversed from up to (*anabasis*) divine perfection down to (*katabasis*) human imperfection. Penelope comes to mind here, weaving by day and unweaving by night, waiting for Odysseus' return home. Which age are we in now figuratively, and by analogy in what cycle is our soul's life? From valley (cave) to mountain top peak back to the cave (*Republic*), as well as the charioteer's difficult ascent that falls back in a descent (*Phaedrus*), so it goes round and round. Is there no escape, Sisyphus? Likewise, analogically, there is the degeneration of regimes and the hope for regeneration. Such is the characterization of the body/psyche mix analogically in the cosmos, *polis*, and individual human soul. All of this actually pertains to our soul, while the *polis* and cosmos are *paradeigmata* for our soul's instruction.

Does the love of wisdom (*philo sophos*) not only help us understand through insight (*dia noia*), but also reach the beyond (*via noesis*), and thus escape this repetitive cycle? Not so fast. A long and difficult road (*hodos*) lies ahead and the ups and downs (*anabasis* and *katabasis*) occur in this life at a second remove, in-between the third remove (of the technocrats) and the first remove (of the gods). Indeed, if there is some key to Platonic/Socratic philosophizing, it is this tensional, dramatic, analogical in-between (*metaxy*) predicament of the human soul, in-between the bestial and the divine, the makers and the lovers.

Plato or Socrates frequently refers to *mythos* (as distinct from but still accountable to *logos*, as much as *logos* is respectful of *mythos*) being something heard, something old and passed down, the childhood of humanity that recalls the child in us, something divine or delivered from some intermediary (*daimon*, Diotima, the Muses, Er the messenger, et al.). We receive (*pathos*) the *mythos* in our souls instigating deep reflection (the descent), which activates an ascent upward and possibly out of the cave. There is some kind of external compulsion or necessity, with the release of a prisoner's chains in the cave. The first stinging jolt of that sting ray Socrates could break chains,



but also get himself killed. Every human animal has the natural power (*dynamis*) to begin the -ing-ing mode—moving, wondering, experiencing, striving, questioning, aspiring, and so on, but needs a forceful pull or push. The first turning around (*periagoge*) in a lifetime of conversions occurs and reveals that the shadows and images on the cave wall are but reflections of more real objects being randomly displayed before some light source. This liberation is an individual, not a mass, conversion (*periagoge*). The mass of humans can be extremely resistant, and even collectively threaten any prisoner who is released or tries to be released. Inertia is their natural state. They do not see the light, only the shadows. The light has the wondrous power to beckon.

The *thymotic* dimension of our souls, namely the spirited and willful part of our tripartite souls, in-between our appetites and our reason, awakened among some prisoners, which may mean desiring for more than these desires and their objects. Thus, the courageous warrior spirit, *eros*, arises to take risks and overcome. Sight is going to play a predominant, initial role. The sight of the light of the fire and the nameless figures making incoherent sounds and carrying tangible objects before the fire therefore casting shadows on the cave wall may instigate a belief that there is something more going on here. (In the Greek language, coordinate with the very bright intense Greek sun, there are all kinds of “knowing” words that are rooted in the illuminating phenomenon of “seeing.”) Now the released prisoner(s) can see more. They know that what was once but shadows on the cave wall are now at a greater remove in distance and less important than the reality of artificial objects that cast shadows (images). Why not just accept this and not venture forth any further? All biological needs such as “bread” are met, and there are “circuses” for entertainment, namely the dance of the shadows and the guessing that becomes the basis for gambling games among the prisoners. Can there be anything more than these purveyors and their wares casting shadows before the fire? The flame of the fire is very bright and painful to the eyes, as well as hot and forbidding. Does this fearful display of shadows and objects make for provocation or resignation?

Some exemplary action or deed (not a making, nor any habituation, or acquiescence) might carry this human soul farther upward from here. The whole cave environment actually invites an upward focus, a hierarchical image of ontological significance (not a flat, deadening allegory with some moral lesson). In retrospect, we know that the potential (*dynamis*) for instigating and activating one’s thoughts (reflections) is present. There is a tensional play (*paidia* for *paedeia*) among opposites, namely, between the literal and the symbolical, the univocal and the analogical, the visible and the invisible.

Will a guide or messenger from above (like Hermes) help, especially if a person’s soul is openly receptive? The prisoners in the cave do not break their chains

themselves. Some guide, midwife, or *daimon*, presumably a daring lover of wisdom, offers to help another who may seem to be ready. Not everyone wants to be freed. Loss, disturbance, confusion, vertigo, pain, and so on is natural enough. Will the former chained persons take risks? The most likely and promising goad paideutically would be some instigative type of *aporia*, leaving us puzzled, thus our bewilderment or crisis, causing us a curious, wondrous restlessness that will not go away. Such is a feat to be achieved, not a defeat to be endured. The stirring of some not-yet-clear recollection (*anamnesis*) invites the recollecting endeavor to search for something that is the source of the images.

In the *Laws* (644dff.), Plato resorts to another *mythos*, that of the puppets representing the humans that we are either for play or for some serious purpose of the gods, we know not. Naturally, for many it will be for play, and for some few it will be for a serious playfulness. Why? Taking the easier path of least resistance is what almost everyone is inclined to do. But, most important, there are our inward experiences (*pathea*) such as *anamnesis* that pull on us or drag us (possibly our *thymos* resists higher desires for lower desires), thus the unchained prisoner in the cave is dragged forcefully up. There are many sinews or cords, but the leading one is golden and holy, engaging our personal reasoning (*logismos*). Surprisingly, assuming that we live in a beneficial *polis*, this is reflected in the public law (*nomos*, *Laws* 644d–645c) of the city (not *physis* or *philosophos*), which, if we are fortunate, is flexible, uniform, and gentle (not Draconian) instruction in our early education. The depths of our souls initially are not enough; there needs to be external offerings and provocations. We will need helpers (these *nomoi* and their persuasive preambles) to grasp the *logos* of these inward pulls. Good fortune, such as being reared in a well-governed *politeia*, does play an important role in human life.

Clearly, Plato and Socrates are fixated on the upbringing and early childhood education within the family and the *polis*. Accordingly, Plato and Socrates seem obsessed with *eros* and procreation. No wonder Plato and Socrates would expel all adults over age ten from the best regime, actually a “boarding school,” namely the Academy Plato will be the founder of (depicted in the *Republic*). How regulate this *eros* for the greater good, to which all may make a contribution? In the *Laws*, a wine-party test is proposed to find out who can or cannot maintain self-control. Who will artfully combine those two paradoxical virtues, fearfulness (*sophrosyne*) and fearlessness (*andrean*)? In the *Republic*, much of that dialogue struggled with *aporia* in the personages of moderate Adeimantus and courageous Glaucon. These virtues will need to be tested in exercises and practices, if perfection (*teleos*, *Laws* 547d) is to be achieved.<sup>45</sup> Law and justice are ready to help. Wine is a playful method of soul inspection. This art of politics discovers the natures and conditions of person’s souls (*Laws* 650b) and also with *phronesis* finds the mean or measure between extremes.

*Aporia* is a condition of the soul that most likely is inescapable (no *euporia* in this life), since we humans are fated from time-to-time to relive it. *Aporia* is characterized by a bewilderment and befuddlement that can be oppressive (the opposite of true freedom). A person may be experiencing existential angst because of some loss, some difficult-to-resolve dilemma, some suffering, some crisis, which of course is not “some” at all, but seemingly totalizing. Exposed ignorance, dishonor, shame, ugliness of various sorts, and failure are characteristic of that *aporia* that causes dire hopelessness.

How does a person “escape” or “turnaround” (*periagoge*)? *Aporia* is not just all defeat, because at times there occurs wonder via *aporia* at the way things are and the hope of transcending conflictual opposites. Some sudden flash of insight enlivens and invigorates. A vision of a course to take changes one’s existence from passive to active. Perhaps there is a compelling “pull” or a “drag” from some true friend or invisible guide (*daimon*). Perhaps there is an object of beauty inciting our *eros* yet not fulfilling it. Maybe there is a philosophical, reflective understanding (*anamnesis*) that we live in a very human state of taut tension in-between extremes, especially the bestial and the divine, becoming and being, the temporal and the eternal; and, yes, we are free to reorient ourselves and choose. What we are in we can get out of; what is down and depressing can become up and reviving. We are not defeated by necessity or fate; we -ing-ing along, going from wandering (Odysseus) to wondering (Socrates), searching, exploring, questioning, questing, believing, knowing, aspiring, begetting, striving, and so on. *Mythos* (Platonically crafted) is precisely this lively via media *dynamis* of flow and play (“process” for Eric Voegelin) partnered with *logos*, another via media more serious, critical, and dialectical. The human hope is that the applied principle of intelligibility (*noesis*) and insight (*nous*) will enable the recognizing (*anamnesis*) of our participatory being, an affinity (*suggenis*) and analogy (*ana-logos*) pointing beyond our tensional in-between (*metaxy*) the human and divine. Unlike Descartes and the bane of modern subjectivism, we are not solitary egos; rather we can find others (*philia*); and we need not go it alone (*idios*).

After initial *aporia* there is the long, hard road, with twists and turns and ups and downs. There is persistence and patience, steadfastness and endurance, and courage and moderation, while paradoxes abound threatened by bitter ironies (herein lies the abyss that Kierkegaard discovered). Shadows analogically prefigure illumination, through a glass darkly. Can you endure unlikenesses greater than likenesses? Oh, the distance between our here-and-now and the beyond. The tensional in-betweenness of human existence is perilous. Analogies break down, ambiguity torments or inspires, depending on your ability (*dynamis*) to discern (*anamnesis*) the invisible *arche* and *telos* through visible images, the unheard of through the heard. Restless *eros* is a goad, a drive that requires some kind of judicious reorienting (not any deadly

negation), and *philoï* (true friends) help for sure. But perhaps we have to experience (*pathos*, like the prodigal son) the aftermath emptiness (*kenosis*) of groping, violating, possessing, dominating, expropriating, all these false and unhealthy -ings.

It is amazing and so very fundamental that decisive terms in the Platonic corpus (“names” in the *Seventh Letter*) have so many multiple meanings and true/false and noble/base connotations: *logos*, *mythos*, *eros*, *polis*, *physis*, justice, images, pleasure/happiness, opinion, motion, imitation, *nomos*, and so on. For Plato, “terms” are loaded, multivalent, truer to the play of conversation and experience (*pathos*). In this way, Plato avoids abstraction and conceptualization, so common today among professional “philosophers.” No wonder it is difficult to pin down the crucial difference between the philosopher and the sophist. And the key virtues, for the sake of political order and justice, *sophrosyne* and *andreia*, have their own deficiencies and excesses. Many commentators struggle with this kind of “ambiguity,” which some negatively impute to Plato. Dialogic context helps clarify indeed but does not finally clarify. It does not settle the matter merely to state there are true and false *mythoi*, true and false pleasure/happiness. Philosophically, this reaches the problematic heights of the many and the one, Heraclitus and Parmenides, including understanding the same and the other, being and non-being. There is this abiding existentialist, not essentialist, dimension to Plato and Socratic philosophizing.

The problem (*aporia*) will not go away by any degree of (distance) or conceptual brilliance among humans: how grasp and comprehend “the thing in itself,” be it one of the ideas or the ultimate Idea of the God? We humans are “trapped in the dialectic of the copy or image.”<sup>46</sup> Only the transcendent divine comprehends the whole as it is in itself (as well as the parts, only comprehensible in terms of the whole). Yet the going from *aporia* to possible *euporia* (*Philebus* 15c–20a) is indirect by way of the analogy (likeness with unlikeness or difference) of being. *Mythoi* are but *via media* for depiction, and they are not final. The conundrum is rooted in ontology, primarily, and epistemology secondarily. Epistemologically, we need to advance via the representation (*eidolon*) of order (*taxis*), despite the disorder, in the cosmos, *polis*, and soul. Yet these representations (*paradeigmata*) ontologically are always at some remove. *Ana-logos* is the mode of *mythos*, since *logos* by itself remains horizontally this-worldly. *Ana-logos* is an orientation in the right direction we hope, but still only another *via media*.

The contradiction of opposites or non-compatibles given paradox and analogy (which does not rest satisfied with likeness given all the unlikeness) serves two functions: (1) to provoke us to continue learning and teaching (who knows what further insights, *noesis*, may come to us); and (2) to order our lives in our political decision making with others to achieve the good life

as far as is possible. The paradoxical (a strange unity or contrapuntal, musical mode of opposites) likewise provokes us to aspire to a higher understanding and unity. Thus, the greatest paradox of all, the whole, that cannot be fully comprehended, even though it alone gives full meaning to the parts, as well as the Socratic “I know that I do not know, since the more I know the less I realize I do not know.”

*Mythos* is a representation (likely, probable, tenuous) of the whole.<sup>47</sup> How is it that the whole and the one, immobile and simple par excellence, exudes, unfolds, and magnifies a whole world of riches? How and why this passage from being to becoming? Does it really prove so unlikely that it disproves “being” (as Jonas wonders and portrays in his myth)? *Mythos* is indispensable in reminding us of our human limits, and paradoxically our restless *eros* to acknowledge in action and in contemplation our affinity to an intelligible (noetic), whole beyond.<sup>48</sup> Must we dedicate ourselves to analytical *logos*, abstracting fixed concepts, and devising determinant doctrines and a system to master ourselves and nature? To rid oneself of *mythos*—that is, reducing the *mythos* to something other, is to give up on a synoptic comprehension of the aspirations of the restless, erotic, aporetic, human soul, the normative principle of a beautiful and just *polis*, the soul’s judgment day, and the order and disorder of the cosmos, all analogically related to each other.

*Mythos* represents our everlasting (qua humans) shortcomings, our limit, *peras*, before the unlimited, *apeiron*. This human condition should not be a deterrence, because within our human souls there is a potentiality (*dynamis*) based on an affinity (*suggenis*) for an analogical participating communion (*koinonia*) with our divine origins. Most important, the noetic comprehension of the analogy of being<sup>49</sup> occurs anamnetically in our soul, being an awareness of who we are and how far we have proceeded. Only *mythos* can represent and witness this fund of experiences (*pathea*). Needless to say, paradoxically literary and poetic *mythos* is very likely to espouse and reflect our degeneracy, if not our regeneracy. We also need to beware of getting caught up in second-hand, Platonic, philosophic commentary, especially when that seeks to pin down some doctrine and dogma of Plato. Thus, the lepidopterist temptation. For example, there is no numerology of being in Plato, yet Plato teaches us much via the analogy of number, the determinate One and the indeterminate Two.<sup>50</sup> Why should One need Two and develop into Two, and what need Two of One once it is liberated? Only dialectical *logos* that comes to the rescue can recover a truer analogical *mythos* that forever goes back and forth between (our ineradicable in-betweenness) the visible and the invisible, the many and the one.

We must drive on (erotically) and necessarily analogically, since our human (not divine) knowing is provoked and extended by our having (a) *dynamis*, powers and capabilities; (b) affinities and the drawing/pulling

that aspires us onward; and (c) the recognition of differences such as unlike-nesses (the other), while they may be disconcertingly greater than the like-nesses. *Mythos* preserves this analogical, likely, probable continuation of the *logos* out of the cave into the beyond; as our charioteer soul strives to achieve the musical harmony of the soul (if only temporarily before we fall to earth, back into the cave, because of the pull of gravity and our ineradicable limits). Orderly motions analogically pervade the cosmos and the *polis* (home), as well as the in-between soul, all humanly in-between the bestial and the divine.

Cosmically, the circular revolutions or cycles move forward in time via generation or regeneration, or they move backward in time via decline and degeneration. For Plato, we are possibly in the reverse cycle given the failure of the Athenian (meaning the Greek model) *polis* and the corresponding cultural-psychic degeneration. Consequently, the overriding emphasis on the drama of the human soul necessarily includes analogically the *polis* and does not exclude the *polis* even for the transpolitical philosopher. First, the soul or *psyche* is by its very nature not *idios*, private and individual, but communal (*koinonia*) or political in the broad Greek sense. From the beginning of life, our souls are in *poleis* naturally connected with and to others (family, neighborhood, community) that are the foundation for our first education (*paideia*) in habits and character (*ethos*). For some there is never much more than these habits, customs, and conventions, which may or may not be in attunement with the nature of our personal souls and beneficial to their *polis*. If you examine the *Republic* closely Socrates continually returns to the problem of parental/familial upbringing. Oftentimes, children and youth are mentioned, leading one to conclude that the *paideutic* efforts that are the main objective of the *Republic* are crucial for the success or failure of the well-governed *polis*.

So, yes, the philosopher (lover of wisdom, not possessor) must go back deep into the cave for these “political” reasons, since this lover is not divine, but human, and has a human obligation to the well-ordering of the *polis*. The lover of wisdom needs the *polis* for upbringing and for being a space to perform deeds. The cave represents the back-out-and-forth (ascent) and back-in-and-forth (descent), paedeutically advancing and achieving more qualitatively in each “reincarnation,” which is the way our souls participate in the divine. This lover advances him/herself paedeutically as well as with others in conversation contending with *aporias*, converting (*peragogē*) souls, always an ongoing process. The lover will be by nature and necessity playfully dialectical. It is the play of life’s energy (*dynamis*), which only can be oriented to the Good, although much-too-much our souls are heavy-laden toward earthly goods. The guide or norm is the principle of intelligibility (*nous*, *noesis*) called upon continuously by the birthing, midwife figure Socrates.

Perhaps if we contemplate the order of the cosmos (a musical harmony on the largest scale), we can transfer this intelligibility to the *polis* (on a smaller scale). But clearly it is the human soul tensionally in-between cosmos and *polis* that has to replicate (demiourgically) this order of *eudaimonia* in the depths of one's soul. The regime of *politeia* requires the tenuous exercise of *phronesis* (practical reasoning), not solitary *theoria* (theoretical reasoning, namely, contemplation) no matter how prior in the order of wisdom. The lover of wisdom does not want to settle for less when imitating (*mimesis*) the divine but sacrifice and vulnerability is the lot/fate of the lover of wisdom. Applying (preferably dialectically in conversation, as if one is among some assembly of friends/citizens) what one knows to those contingent, variable situations can only be conjectured and addressed in advance via habits, customs, and laws (*nomoi* all).

There are these profound, not simply resolvable, philosophical dilemmas such as becoming and being, the temporal and eternal, the many and the one, the bestial-human-divine, courage and moderation, the same and the other, necessity and choice, limited and unlimited, lies in words and lies in the soul, the philosopher and the sophist, and so on. These too can be dialectically pursued, but they are more likely to be disclosed in *mythos*, since the borderline of dialectic (especially analytically) invites *mythos* (synthesis) to acknowledge (only the gods comprehend) the contours of the whole. Nevertheless, knowing that (not what) the whole is there in the end (*telos*), we then can go on to examine the parts of which the whole is greater than their sum. These forms are patterns or paradigms for application and guideposts on the journey of ascent to the beyond, in light of the Idea of the Good that suffuses all things and persons.

We come to know by recollecting what we know with what we do not know by way of likeness or unlikeness, thus reveling in paradoxes. Unlikeness provokes, whereas likeness compares and urges us forward. Like is attracted to like.<sup>51</sup> The path out of Plato's cave is a *pathos* of likenesses and unlikenesses. According to the *mythos* of recollecting (*anamnesis*), we already know by way of our potential (*dynamis*), our affinity (*suggenos*), our participation (*methexis*), and even our bewilderment (*aporia*) what we do not yet know, if we courageously strive for, search for, long for, and so on, what is somehow germinal within our soul. Quite an analogical tension exists between the human and the divine (another relatively unexplored *pathos* by most commentators), becoming and being, injustice and justice, temporal and eternal, part and whole, relative and absolute, low and high, appearance and reality, perception/opinion and knowledge, the many and the one, and the beginning and the end. The second term in each pair encompasses the first term. Only the first term is in need of the second term for there to be intelligibility (*noesis*), the primary principle and standard/measure (*meson*) driving

Plato and Socrates. Of course, the most predominant analogy in the Platonic corpus is the human soul to the *polis* to the cosmos. Many commentators seem to want to dissolve this analogy and show that it fails in favor of just the individual human soul or self (but there is no modern, individualistic “self” in Plato<sup>52</sup>), as if there is no relevance of the *polis* and cosmos to the human soul, even today. The analogical tension, comprising likenesses yet still greater unlikenesses, is forfeited.

The soul too strives to become a whole, not parts riven with discord and faction (*stasis*). The analogy of the soul to the *polis* and cosmos reappears. What is the one in the many in the soul, *polis*, and cosmos? Is it not the philosopher’s *nous*, the noetic apprehension of the whole, the principle of intelligence? In the cosmos/*polis*/soul analogy, it is the radiant sun/Good that illuminates everything. What is the Good? The Good is divine beyond being (the created existence of all souls, the cosmos, and the *polis*), since the Good is the ultimate beginning source (*arche*), beyond which there is nothing else. The radiance of the Good is intelligibility (*Nous*) illuminated, whereby we can direct our souls and our *poleis* in accord with the cosmic paradigm of the *demiourgos* or architect, who established or put into motion the universe and all therein to the best possible extent. Certainly, there is no terminal dogma present here; only the endeavor to -ing-ing it onward, to learn from each other on this ultimate quest, a questioning quest (so Voegelin calls it). *Mythos* opens up the ascent to the beyond, whereas *logos* closes down rationally our pursuits and moderates *eros*. Can *eros* be harnessed and reoriented philosophically, or must *eros* degenerate our soul (politically our *philia*) into a private self (*idios*)? *Eros* is tensionally human in-between the bestial and the divine. To settle down with the human pragmatically, in speaking and meaning overpowered by custom (*nomos*) and habit (*hexis*), is more likely to stimulate our erotic soul to the tyrannical in us, not the philosophical.

Does *philia* tame and transcend *eros*? Does *eros* need to be tamed and transcended by philosophy? Has Plato in the *Republic* de-eroticized *eros*, contrary to the philosophic *eros* of the *Lysis*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*? Is politics and the city at risk given Plato’s attempt to install a philosopher-king, who somehow avoids being a tyrant? Is not a philosophical politics based on being persuasive and gentle with an educable *demos*? *Eros* is required to ascend Diotima’s ladder in the *Symposium* and to carry the charioteer up to the forms and the Good in the *Phaedrus*. Without such strong erotic drives, the long, hard years of study will not even occur, never mind procreate and bear fruit. Even the sting, the goad, and the provocations of Socrates to arouse young persons to pursue the philosophic way of life have to be erotic. Philosophic *eros* is the dominant desire (*epithymos*) for ambitious, courageous young men (such as Glaucon), but can their *thymos* be balanced with discursive reason (*logistikos*)? *Philia* gradually comes about once the preexisting passions in



the most erotic youth are reoriented, but not squelched. Moderation entirely on its own suits more the general *demos*, such as the artisans and their helpers.

Friendship is a combination of likes and unlikes, just as analogy is part similitude and part dissimilitude. Unlikes, keeping us going, are provocative and motivational, just like that stingray Socrates constantly emitting an *aporia* of bewilderment. Yet this Silenus figure cares (*therapeia*) from inside the soul, tries to give birth to viable offspring in speech, and offers *pharmakon* and *eidola* just as a true physician promoting health, but figuratively in souls not bodies. In the *Lysis* 220d all humans are situated in-between (*metaxy*) affinities toward the Good and repulsions regarding beastly ignorance and evil. We are not divine and self-sufficient. Certainly, recognizing the common (*koine*, *Lysis* 207c) identifies what all friends participate in and dynamically pursue. In this regard friends are relative equals and can be quite direct and truthful with each other.<sup>53</sup> Friends also are complementarily unequals that paideutically garner benefits. If friends were but equals in all things, where would the point of reciprocity be, and would it not be no more than self-congratulation and confirmation, as if a person were looking in a mirror? The fate of Narcissus is terminal and takes us nowhere. Indeed, our souls are continually wondering, searching, striving, -ing-ing along, never fulfilled in this life world.

Can reason (like *thymos*) be at odds with itself and faction ridden? Yes, and this is why Plato uses a number of differentiating terms for reason, since reason needs to rule. First, there is *logos*, a generic reason, namely, giving an account and/or a speech in words. Secondly, more specifically, there is *logistikon* or calculating reason used by the arts (*technai*) and mathematics. Such “reason” is at a lower level dealing with how best to accommodate desires (for moderns such as Hume, reason calculates while being the slave of the passions). For mathematics, this “reason” is limited to utilitarian work with craftsman (measurement). Yet this reason is also more abstract, when in geometry we deduce from unproven hypotheses. Thirdly, there is *dianoia* or reason as understanding via the discursive, conversational dialogic process. Such reason is working through to some end. Lastly, there is reason as *noesis*, which implies insight and intuition up to first principles, thereby identifying such ends and operating on establishing proven hypotheses, such as the forms and the Good.

In this instance, the highest form of reason (*noesis*) includes all the lower types of reason. Yet there is conflict based on the ignorance of lower types of reason vis-à-vis higher forms of reason. There is a strong human inclination to make the best simply of lower types of reason (pragmatism, sophisticated hedonism, utilitarianism) to live ordinary lives and not be motivated to keep inquiring until the whole can be more or less be in sight. This state of being would be the *demos* asked to “mind their own business or function”

and ironically not be meddling like Socrates or become a sophist unlike Socrates.

Despite Plato's portrayal of the demise and degeneration of the Greek *polis*, as well as the highly probabilistic, geometrical, Pythagorean, unSocratic tale of Timaeus (who is not any historically known person), there is something very significant going on here. All of us are heavily impacted for better or worse by the *polis* (community) we grow up in. One could easily read the whole of the Platonic corpus being addressed to youth who have aspirations, and still are quite open to searching. For many there is nothing much else that defines them, and the alternatives or substitutes are much more deficient.

Likewise, what one thinks of the cosmos (order) is decisive. Is it that the cosmos is a lucky accident, a fund of material chaos and disorder, enabling our scientists to be master engineers and mechanics constructing some utilitarian order? Or much differently, does the cosmos have some intrinsic order and intelligibility because of some divine origin? This foundational "hypothesis" analogically supports some degree and kind of order in the *polis* as well as in the human soul. There are very different roll-out consequences (or outlooks on life), if we start with the intelligibility principle (*arche*) of order, rather than accident and disorder.

For Plato disorder ever threatens, especially given necessity and matter in the cosmos, which remain real threats to any order without the counterforce of persuasion.<sup>54</sup> Unlike the immanentizer Aristotle, nature (*physis*) for Plato is not just a norm like the forms. Nature includes order (the demoiurgos's feat) and preexisting disorder, the abyss (*chora*) and *aperion* to which all things could return into nothingness, the end of any *mythos*. Or this infinite *apeiron* could include the Good, a divine life force, energy radiating over all, forever. Who among us knows? Paradox is a big factor when Socrates works off his knowledge that he does not know and declares the whole must be grasped before the parts can be known, and the absolute needs to be acknowledged for the relative to be intelligible.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the seeming impossible for humans makes the possible understandable and purposeful. Paradox is motivating and positive, whereas irony is terminal and negative, often cynical.<sup>56</sup> Plato warns us not to lose sight of the whole for the sake of the parts (something forlornly forsaken in our mega universities, forgetful that only in small, tutorial groups are the broad and synoptic, liberal arts wholesome and beautiful).

To recapitulate and make Humpty Dumpty whole again (who had a great fall into the cave), we started noticing the function of likenesses reflected in language (simile, metaphor, analogy, and *mythos*), which are primary (not secondary) speech (*logos*) phenomena. Then we raised up *mythos* to be pitted in tension with *logos*, even though *logos* holds *mythos* accountable, while tentatively *mythos* transcends *logos* evoking the divine (*themis*), our origins (*archai*) and ends (*teloi*), and the order (*taxis*) of the cosmos. Whole

dialogues (*logoi*) are declared *mythoi* (e.g., the *Republic* 545d, *Laws* 752a, and *Timaeus* 29dff., 48dff.), while other dialogues (e.g., the *Statesman*, *Phaedrus*, *Gorgias*) prominently feature *mythos* rightly checked, but not subordinated to dialectic (collection and division).

## CONCLUSION

To get clear about the status and function of Platonic *mythoi*, of relevance to us today, an understanding of *logos* vis-à-vis *mythos* is crucial. Both complement each other and are via media to higher ends. Particular *logoi* and *mythoi* may be subordinate one to another, but clearly both *logos* and *mythos* at their best are indispensable in their own right. In the study of the literary use of metaphor, two types of metaphor apply also to *mythos*: the magisterial metaphor having a teaching (heuristic, pedagogic) function that can be dispensed with once that teaching takes hold (is internalized); and the pupillary metaphor, wherein we are all pupils (as human mortals not divine immortals), before which such metaphors and *mythoi* are indispensable and not throw-aways or just learning crutches. The following chart applies to *mythoi* (and images) found in the Platonic corpus:

### Magisterial (propaedeutic)

*Mythos* of Gyges  
*Myths* of the Earthborn and Metals  
 The Cave (an image)  
 The puppets of the Laws  
 The weaver *mythos* of the *Statesman*

### Pupillary (paradigmatic)

Judgment *mythos* of Er  
*Phaedo* *mythos* of immortality  
 Charioteer *mythos* of *Phaedrus*  
 The cosmological *mythos* of Er  
 The *Republic* as a whole  
 The cosmogonical *mythos* of *Timaeus*

Plato always leaves it open (our noetic freedom) for revised and reformulated *mythoi*, since they are all but likely (analogical, not just literal) images and stories. The soul's ascent to the divine and beyond can never be finally circumscribed—that is, terminated by any human speech (*logos* including both *mythos* and reason).

There is a dialogic interplay, the in-between (*metaxy*) of *mythos* and *logos* when they interpenetrate, enriching each other in the way *logos* (the analytical and dividing) aids *mythos* (the synthetic and synoptical, the collecting), while *mythos* is always subject to *logos* as a check. *Logos* can try to track down the wily hunter sophist, thereby freeing the philosopher from being confused with the sophist. The sophist is a manipulator of *mythoi* (especially traditional *mythoi*) for rhetorical advantage, not for the love of wisdom driving the drama of the human soul. The sophist can prey on erotic boy lovers using the mask of the non-lover, while the charioteer philosopher Socrates

redirects and converts *eros* toward the beautiful for its own sake, not just sexual pleasure. Everything is at stake in this life-death *agon*. While *logos* seeks to apprehend the essence (that which is what it is in itself for its own sake), *mythos* pertains to the animating factor, pulsating existence, the drama of the human soul and its tensional affinity and longing for the whole via the parts (analyzed out by *logos*), the divine via the human, the one via the many. Neither of these two antipodes destroys one another. Their participation in each other is human excellence (*arete*).

While *logos* tends to be objective, impersonal, and conceptually abstract, with fixational focusing on essences, *mythos* is intersubjective, political, and playful, with its focus on movement, becoming, diversity. If there were no more than this, then *mythos* would be subordinate to *logos*. It is understandable that *mythos* is naturally resorted to, not as a device, construction, or fantasy, but rather as a *via media* representing and dramatizing the flow, play, unfolding, and *dynamis* of the human soul escaping the infinite *aperion* (depth, abyss)<sup>57</sup> toward the absolute *epekeine*. Outside of time, the future flowing into the past, there is the eternal present (*parousia*). Our present moment between past and future may witness a sudden flash intimation of the flow of the eternal present. Our human soul thus has an affinity via intimation and imagination toward immortality. *Mythos*, not *logos* which would fail trying to demonstrate it, evinces and evokes this reality. Nevertheless, without being “conclusive” in this manner, the real abiding phenomenon (*aporia*) of the human soul is in-between nothingness and longed-for, total fruition, pure *eudaimonia*.

Plato and Socrates invite us to “know our soul,” to soul-reflect and bring into fuller consciousness (*anamnesis*) our -ing-ing, striving, aspiring, inquiring, knowing, wondering, believing, and so on in this human, realistic, in-between *dynamis* condition of ours. We are perpetually in tension, restlessly alive in-between, and full of possibilities, while relatively experiencing some achievements and suffering some failures. We are participle (verbing) souls not reducible to dead, fixated, determined algorithms. And our fulfilled nature as souls (recollect soul brothers and soul sisters) is “political,” since it is with and through others in dialogue that we ascend and transcend. This certainly is the drama of human souls, sparking all this -ing-ing, often the result of some very personal crisis, be it a tragedy, an attempt to recover from a serious failure, or externally a loss of faith or belief in one’s political, historical existence (e.g., the *Gorgias*). An angst-ridden shock wave causes a deep reevaluation and possibly a conversion (*peritagoge*). It can be quite *agon*-istic and enlightening. Can you recover from your bewilderment (*aporia*) and the death of what you once believed and were? Have you met yourself in a day of judgment in a way you never have before? Did you really need a good beating (better to be corrected than to correct someone else), so you are stripped down,

emptied to your essentials (thus *logos*)? Did you find a path (perhaps a long road or second sailing, thus *mythos*, Odysseus) out of confusion and oblivion? The power of *anamnesis*, recollecting, allows for a reckoning of one's fate.

The human soul is a pulsating force field attuned to order (health and happiness), but subject to disorder (on the rack of pleasure and pain, and/or political regeneration or degeneration). Because we have an affinity for the divine, but are certainly not divine, we only see through a glass darkly, we only apprehend likenesses (the analogy of being)<sup>58</sup> seeking at best a proportional understanding, such as: belief (*pistis*) :: knowledge (*episteme*) : understanding through (*dianoia*) :: insight into (*noesis*) (*Republic* 509d–511e). *Mythos* ranges throughout this analogical proportion, sometimes a mere image, no more than a belief, other times an understanding and an insight tenuously achieving some knowledge and wisdom (*sophia*). The philosopher, the lover, remains open to the flow and unfolding play of experience (*empeiria*); there is no nailed down finality in this journey. The Isles of the Blessed can only be imagined, but some such must be there if there is to be any intelligibility (*noesis*) to human striving and aspiring. In this sense, Professor Voegelin's claim that *mythos* is self-authenticating (which I understand to be soul-authenticating) rings true. We continue to wonder and aspire, examining the symbols (not just propositions) left behind in perplexity by other soul adventurers. How tensionally trembling it is to be in-between material, bodily necessity that surely deadens as it is dying and spiritual soul freedom that offers everlasting hope and life.

## NOTES

1. The recognition of *mythos* as tensionally in-between the temporal and the atemporal (see for example, the discussion of recollection in chapter 2 and the discussion of *mythos* in chapter 3) is neglected by Moors, *Myth and Opinion in Plato's Republic*, 90, 102, 135–36, 152. Moors contends that because Plato frequently refers to *mythos* as something which happened once, long ago, that *mythos* in the *Republic* lacks any temporal dimension. This is also connected with his abnormally long argument (hardly sufficient in itself and quite external to the intentions of Platonic dialogue) that no date can be given to the writing of the *Republic*. It is not a question of doubting a timeless dimension to any Platonic *mythos* or dialogue. But insofar as *mythos* is directed to political action (not just mere opinion or the eternal forms, which seems to be the only two alternatives for Moors), then what *mythos* tells and evokes is still happening in time and remains open to all the limited possibilities of actualization in speech and in deed in time. To restrict *mythos* to the timeless outside of time (as opposed to the timeless which is apprehended within time) is to purge *mythos* by exclusive reference to a deadening doctrine of eternal forms that overcomes and

transcends all *mythoi*, being no more than opinion or belief. According to Moors, all “mythicizing” (a truly ugly term used by Moors) must hold to some universally valid philosophical truth, which suggests the dispensability of all *mythoi* for those who have achieved divine philosophic status. Moors concentration on *mythos* as opinion pure and simple, or on *mythos* as opinion transcended, prevents him from examining the harmonious, complementary, interrelationship of *logos* and *mythos*, both of which are via medias. Also see Edelstein, “The Function of Myth in Plato’s Philosophy,” 367–68 for an understanding of *mythos* as a temporal account symbolic of the eternal and also Eric Voegelin, “Immortality: Experience and Symbol,” *Harvard Theological Review* 60 (1967), 255, 261. Many contemporary philosophers make references to “doctrines” held by Plato. A characteristic of the search for and finding the doctrinal is the failure to see the tensional, dialogic dynamic regarding key perspectives, for example, traditional and sophistic *mythos* versus philosophic *mythos*; corrupt, degenerative political *poleis* and the reformed political *polis*, the political *polis* of friends that Socrates/Plato never disavows; the individual self as norm rather than our outgoing, outpouring (*polis*/political) soul; false, degenerative images and opinions instead of true, promising images and opinions, here-and-now versus the beginning and the beyond. In all these cases *mythos*, politics, the cosmos and the soul are abused by a one-dimensional understanding. Likewise, constructivism, with its materialistic, mechanical connotations, negates an outpouring of the deeply reflective soul. These outpourings are not the sole possession of a person’s own self-constructed reality.

2. Susan K. Gaffney, “Dialectic, the Myths of Plato, Metaphor and the Transcendent in the World,” *American Catholic Philosophic Association Proceedings* 45 (1971), 82, 84–85.

3. See Schindler, *Plato’s Critique of Impure Reason*, who covers philosophically the play between the relative and absolute in Plato’s *Republic*.

4. It is another kind of story that so many contemporary philosophical commentators on this dialogue, the *Euthyphro*, never once mention this problem of “service,” even though they spend pages professionally exposing the absurdity of Euthyphro’s piety.

5. See Brann, “The Music of the *Republic*,” 35–37. This article has been updated in her book, *The Music of the Republic*. I disagree with the discontinuity Brann suggests between Socrates’ use of images (of his own inner making) and his use of *mythos* (attributed to others). Both are the product of inner reflection and the attribution of *mythoi* to others is meant paradoxically to remind us that what we have heard can be further developed and guided by philosophy, as well as having its origin in that which is “more” than ourselves. Brann, however, correctly relates images with metaphor and analogy. As for the silence, paradoxically can anything more be said? See James Rhodes, *Eros, Wisdom and Silence* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

6. See Ellis Sandoz, “Myth and Society in the Philosophy of Bergson,” *Social Research* XXX (1963), 192. Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), 109ff. should be required reading. Needless to say, Bergson’s book precedes Sir Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, which in contrast makes Popper’s war-time polemic an ideological rant in the name of logical positivism.

7. See the latter part of chapter 3 where I discuss this *mythos* in terms of its function as a *polis* foundation story, which gives an experiential sense of identity and unity that constitutes a people qua people.

8. See chapter 5 where I placed this judgment *mythos* in the context of the *Gorgias* problem of politically sharing a common experience that would be the basis for intelligible, human speech and action (i.e., the opposite of the use of force and violence).

9. See the following references in the *Laws* (682a, 752a, 853c), all of which indicates a mythical attribution to the founding of a *polis* in the *Laws*. The remainder of this last chapter will address the nature of the *Laws* as a political dialogue that has a mythical, consensual basis.

10. Paul Friedlander, *Plato I* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 190.

11. Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 4–9, 18, 23.

12. See Allan Bloom, “An Interpretation of Plato’s *Ion*,” *Interpretation* 1 (1970), 51–62. Bloom accepts the extreme way of noetic identity with the essences comprehending the whole. This whole and oneness no longer includes the personal and the individual, the particular, time, and becoming. Before the eternal forms there is no looking back or falling back. The personal soul evaporates. Is this what Plato expounded and experienced?

13. Bloom, “An Interpretation,” 21–22.

14. This argument was made in the context of the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus mythoi* in chapter 4.

15. Thus, Eric Voegelin speaks of *mythos* and its border experiences in *Order and History* III, 362–66.

16. M. D. C. Tait, “Plato’s Use of Myth,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 26 (1957), 173–74.

17. See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 24. Contrary to Arendt, see F. Solmsen, *Plato’s Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1942), 152–3; and Leonardo Taran, “The Creation Myth in Plato’s *Timaeus*,” eds., John Anton and George Kustas, *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971), 380–81.

18. Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 186. Voegelin did abandon this term “unconscious,” and its Freudian/Jungian implications. Better to concentrate on *anamnesis* and our analogical affinity (*suggestis*) mysteriously characterizing the not-yet-conscious depths of our human souls. For the action of the *demiourgos*, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogues and Dialectic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), chapter 7.

19. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 193ff.

20. John Gunnell, *Political Philosophy and Time* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), 160, 169.

21. This question of freedom perhaps is the major point of contention I have with Arendt’s analysis. Freedom is not destroyed by the order of essences which are one’s final end in the form of a vision according to Plato. Nor is political participation, deliberation, and action diminished by a common seeking and living experience of these essences (the Good, justice, beauty, etc.), since they are necessarily analogically

comprehended and acted out. The bane of modernity is making freedom a first principle above all, rather than reliance on a rightly constituted political order within which true freedom can flourish. See Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 202–11.

22. Brann, *The Music*, 33.

23. Note how Plato remains true to the Greek *polis* in its best manifestation, and what is meant by the “political”: not power, force and compulsion no matter how necessary, not politics as acquisition following some market model, but politics as rational, deliberative persuasion among educated citizens, not subjects. It is distressing how the most perspicacious commentators on Plato’s dialogues (e.g., the illustrious Stanley Rosen and David C. Schindler) are so politically negative, and I would say dismissive regarding *polis* community. See Stanley Rosen, *Plato’s Republic: A Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) and David S. Schindler, *Plato’s Critique*. But not Strauss, *City and Man*.

24. Voegelin, *Order and History* IV, 224–25. Once again see appendix B.

25. Stewart tends to emphasize this, *The Myths of Plato*, 44ff., 67, 93, 131–32, 345.

26. Stormer, “Plato’s Theory of Myth,” 221 similar to many others. See Collobert, *Plato and Myth*, where commentators speak of *mythos* as primarily emotion and feeling. See also Chase, *The Quest for Myth*, 64, 75–76, 101–2.

27. Stewart, *The Myths*, 132, 139. Some will take reincarnation literally, others (most likely philosophers) will see it figuratively to be the drama of the human soul in this life.

28. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 188–89.

29. Stormer, “Plato’s Theory,” 217.

30. Moors, *Myth and Opinion*, 105–6, 161, 176 contends that philosophical existence is essentially private, free of the heroic political deeds of an Odysseus, since it is the most private apprehension (Moors calls it “acquisition”) of the standard of good and evil. Even if one were to concede this (to all the Straussians?), it is difficult to understand how what is essentially private can then become the foundation for that which is public (namely, law, justice, and political order). Only by acknowledging the public character of philosophical truth is it then possible to understand how all persons share analogically in a common being, albeit in various ways and even though only a few persons will know and achieve wisdom. This public character of philosophical truth remains an inward, personal apprehension. One should never confuse the mode of apprehension of truth with its status in the realm of being. Nor should one fall into an either-or trap when analogies allow interplay.

31. One exception is Voegelin, *Order and History* III, 88, 226. Another who discerns this is Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic*, 52, 97–98.

32. Gadamer, *Dialogue*, 47.

33. See Lawrence Cooper, “Beyond the Tripartite Soul: The Dynamic Psyche of the *Republic*,” *Review of Politics*, 63.2 (2001), 341–72 for an excellent treatment of *eros* and *thymos* in the *Republic*.

34. See Jacob Howland, *The Paradox of Political Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998) and *The Odyssey of Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2004), who makes a good deal more of the “home” symbol in Plato’s *Republic*.



35. I once was speaking to a young lady (pot head, actually) just out of college. I mentioned “Lenin” and she automatically thought I was speaking about “Lennon.” I gave up informing her otherwise, but perhaps she was on to something.

36. A person could read Edward Bellamy’s, *Looking Backward* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1889). Bellamy’s plausible account of a future (2000) administrative utopia never comprehends the amazing, troubling *thymotic* condition of human nature, which never can get enough and be satisfied, even when it has enough.

37. See the monumental work of Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). Taylor credibly engages the right questions regarding religious belief in our age of unbelief (especially intellectually) and secularism (the common privatization of religious belief). Nevertheless, Taylor is an accommodationist regarding modernity, since for him there are no other, credible options at hand. This does not mean that materialistic, modern science and rational, philosophical enlightenment will or can supplant religious belief. Rather a not-so-holy-and-dogmatic living together is possible. We can no longer have a naïve, simple, certain religious belief (did we ever or did this ever apply to those who reflected deeply?). We are heirs of reformation and post-reformation theological disputes. Christianity collapsed into lower expectations morally, such as success in this life, tolerance, reducing suffering, and free, pluralistic, religious alternatives. Achieving human welfare replaced holiness and serving God’s plan. Let us make the best of the irrevocable, later heritage? Taylor at this point opts for a spirituality of transforming love. This is a practice and an attitude, clearly not a dogma or a metaphysics. In effect, Taylor dismisses theology as a study and understanding about God, His creation, His Laws, His heaven and hell, all of which are now passé. Taylor’s accommodation to our present times is more anthropocentric than theocentric. Liberalizing Catholic liturgy is a witness. While it is literally true that there is no going back to imagined better times, a radical critique of the foundations and principles of secularism could generate the kind of supposed, imaginative, sacred response to the present-day loss of direction and meaning, the alienation, and the felt hopelessness of diminished existence so many readily experience. Actually, Taylor sounds like the swan song of the liberal wing of Christianity, which has watched (and caused?) church affiliations and attendance to drop precipitously. See Matthew Rose, “The Taylorizing of Christianity,” *First Things* (December 2014), 25–30.

38. Arieti, *Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama*, and Richard Mohr, *God and Forms in Plato: And Other Essays in Plato’s Metaphysics* (New York: Parmenides, 2006).

39. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1966). For an excellent, short treatment of Jonas’ writings see David Levy, *The Integrity of Thinking* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002).

40. Jonas, *The Phenomenon*, 274.

41. Jonas, *The Phenomenon*, 275.

42. Jonas, *The Phenomenon*, 277.

43. Jonas, *The Phenomenon*, 278.

44. Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

45. In the *Laws* (783bff.), Plato even recommends women inspectors keep tabs on children in the household. Common meals for both sexes is also legislated. In the

*Laws* (733eff.) out of the blue this procreation issue arises. Plato is more cautious in the *Laws* than in the *Republic*, because he realizes that you cannot forcefully legislate areas of privacy without rebellion, but the aim is the same, for the good of the *polis*. Habit and persuasion are gentler methods of indirection. Yet Plato still believes the better regime cannot allow *eros* and procreation to go unregulated. Accordingly, in the *Laws* Plato seeks the mean between extremes (instead of the eugenic policy of like marrying like in the *Republic*) by recommending that marriage partners have somewhat opposing soul tendencies, such that if one is on the excessive extreme the other should be on the deficient extreme, insofar as the aim is to achieve a balance or mean. Aristotle will elaborate on this.

46. Gadamer comes a long way dealing with this ontological problem (*aporia*) in Plato but does not discern the analogy (not just ambiguity) at stake. See, *Dialogue*, 100–111.

47. Gadamer, *Dialogue*, 117–18.

48. Gadamer, *Dialogue*, 200ff. What Gadamer does with Plato's mathematics: "The [ironic and near] infinity of possible explications afforded by the *logos* can never be closed off" I would apply to *mythos*.

49. Gadamer finds the analogy of being in Aristotle's critique of Plato's separate reality (or is it the "Platonists" post-Plato?), the doctrine of ideas. But is there such a mathematical doctrine, or is Plato paideutically playing with us? Are the ideas that Plato refers to "separate" from the world of becoming? Mathematics is another *via media* in a person's *paideia*, transcended by *nous*, not into a separate realm but rather an analogically connected and participatory contemplation of pure, perfect being and the Good, insofar as that is possible.

50. See Gadamer, *Dialogue*, 141.

51. This is the basis for friendship, not without qualification in the *Republic* 419a–420b, 423e, 462b–464d and in the *Lysis* 212b–213c, 215a–b, 216d.

52. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976) on the soul, not the modern self, being the primary philosophical focus of Plato.

53. See Mary P. Nichols, "Friendship and Community in Plato's *Lysis*," *Review of Politics* 68 (2006), 1–19. Nichols rightly and understandably stresses reciprocity in friendship, which includes unlikenesses as well as likenesses.

54. See Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic*, chapter 7 for the best treatment of the *Timaeus*, even though Gadamer does not cover the cycle of degeneration.

55. See Schindler, *Plato's Critique*.

56. Gadamer and Hyland, like many others, fail to explore the difference between paradox and irony. Consult Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).

57. Please note how much of the Platonic corpus is devoted to *aporia*. Nearly all of it. Only knowing that you do not know the whole of it, as if a god, never mind key parts, keeps us moving noetically, assuming we have the philosophic *dynamis*.

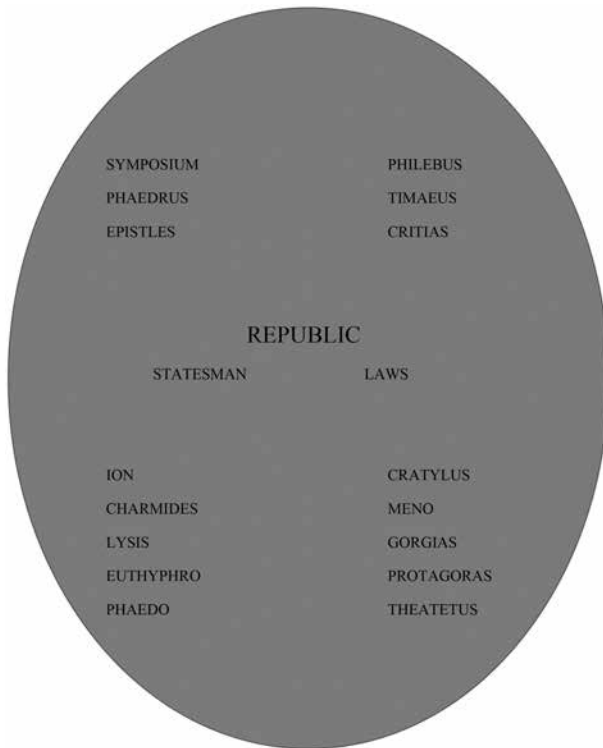
58. See Przywara, *The Analogy of Being*.



*Appendix A*

**Circular Motion of Cosmos**

*Dialogues Imitating the  
Procession of the Gods*



**Figure A.1** Dialogues Imitating the Procession of the Gods. *Source:* Author.



## Appendix B

# Occlusion by Way of Reduction

## *The Issue of Exegesis*

1. Allegorization: Plato has Socrates explicitly dismiss allegorizing (*Phaedrus* 229cff.) to be a waste of time peculiar to sophists who manipulate the Greek poetic tradition for their own gain (money and/or popular repute). Plato's goal is to correct and transform the Greek poetic tradition, especially on moral grounds and consistency with a philosophical, divine piety. The problem of allegorizing is leaving behind some simple moral or immoral admonition, a lesson or platitude so to speak, easily torn from the context of serious, soul-searching, and philosophy. Plato is no moralizer or demoralizer for that matter. It will not do to turn Plato into a utilitarian moralizer who advocates some useful code of conduct. This leads to the problem of literalization.
2. Literalization, Rationalism: Literalization and rationalization go hand-in-hand killing the dynamic of dialogue, *logos* and *mythos*. No wonder Plato figuratively stresses that the cosmos and the *polis* are living creatures (in some sense analogous to the human soul) and are not to be considered outside their orderly and disorderly motions. It is very difficult to avoid altogether allegorization and literalization (at a meta, second reality remove, see Voegelin) because today we naturally (or unnaturally) want to put some definite stamp and finality on the flow of the questing, erotic, thinking soul. This leads to dogmatism and mistaking contemporary theorization for *theoria* (contemplation). The rationalist likewise reduces anything worthwhile into a propositional statement based on the modern analytical outcome of the dialectic (collection and division), dismissing the synthetic, synoptical function of *mythos*. Humpty Dumpty's great fall into pieces needs to be put back together again (by the philosopher king's men?). Analytical philosophy and modern logic, while well enough on their own ground of *logos proper*, are not the base line, nor the final word.

3. Dogmatism: How common and disturbing the reference to some doctrine or theory of Plato when the *aporia* of just about every dialogue Plato wrote is pretty much all-consuming, while avoiding the nihilism of some deconstructionists (who are actually sour constructionists). The *Seventh Letter* tells it all in Plato's own words: he has no teaching or doctrine in writing that will see the dark of day. This is not just political wisdom, given the fate of Socrates, who did not write down anything. How does a writer know to whom he is addressing? How can any human soul risk the absolutization of words as if claiming to be some divine prophet? A characteristic of the penchant for the doctrinal is the failure to see the tensional dynamic regarding key terms—for example, traditional and sophistic *mythos* versus philosophic *mythos*; corrupt, degenerative political *poleis* and the reformed political *polis* and the political *polis* of friends; false, degenerative images and opinion yet true, promising images and opinions; and so forth. In all three cases *mythos*, politics, and the soul are abused by a one-dimensional, doctrinal frame of mind.
4. Immanentization and Anachronism: To interpret (exegesis) Plato in terms of Christian/Biblical terms or modern philosophy (namely, idealism, analytical language philosophy, romanticism, scholasticism, etc.) is anachronistic and perverting. Neither the Christian, transcendent, Person-God nor the immanent (transcendent denying or overcoming) modern perspectives does justice to Socratic/Platonic philosophy. Of course, immanentizers and Christians are usually not able to accept on their terms likely/probable *mythoi* being via medias?
5. Exteriorization and Decorative Illustration: This view from the outside (e.g., doctrinalization, literary devices, and strategies) almost totally rejects the view from the interior, the *pathos* of the soul in this life. Examining Plato's devices and tools and then rationally stepping back from the dialogical play and flow (*dynamis*), pretends to achieve some use value morally and theoretically? The most dismissive (and hybristic) verdict regarding Plato's *mythoi* sees Plato as a kind of psychologically frustrated, poetic wannabe, engaged in retrograde opinionating of which there is nothing much of serious philosophic import. It would be helpful if such critics realized that philosophy is the "loving of wisdom," not stand-taking and ideology.
6. Epistemology (irrespective of Ontology, which is prior): Closely related to rationalism, the epistemological demand is that we get clear and distinct about how we come to know. Logically and epistemologically, analogy is equivocation and metaphor is ambiguity. Myth is metaphorical speculation and a stylistic form of expression not appropriate to serious philosophizing. However, any epistemological method depends on the substantive what (not just the instrumental how) we are questing to know. Paradoxically, we think

we can proceed from the parts to the whole, even though we need to know the whole to make sense of the parts (our partial knowing). Socrates is more than just ironical by presenting us with so many paradoxes (seeming contradictions, logically speaking) regarding the existential human condition. For Plato, the ontological is prior in so far as it apprehends the real and the true oftentimes via metaphor, analogy, paradox, and myth.

7. Subjectivism and Privatization: The Delphic oracle counseled Socrates to “know thyself” (really meaning “test your soul.”), which means turning inward regarding the condition of one’s soul. Indeed, there is this inward, reflective meditation defining one’s human soul, but not in the historically later sense of “self” and Cartesian introspectivism and doubt. For Socrates, man is not the measure. One’s soul naturally needs to go outward to others (soul brothers and soul sisters), since friendship (among relative equals) helps one learn and advance self-critically toward the true measure, the good. Often when alone in private we converse with “imaginary,” because not present, companions who care as much about our thoughts as their own. While discussions in private are important, to privatize one’s soul as a self is the path of egocentrism and tyranny.
8. Fantasy: Again, Plato is a philosophical realist (not an idealist with “ideals”), who does not mythically establish or espouse in myth some “second reality” or “two worlds” characteristic of modern revolutionary utopians. Inspiration and imagination easily can be distorted. Fantasies are clearly disavowed by Socrates. The ring of Gyges *mythos*, the image of the cave, the charioteer *mythos*, Diotima’s ladder of *eros*, the *demiourgos*’ cosmos, and so on are conversational and teleological, not fantastical.
9. Constructivism: The dominant, educational *doxa* today is constructivism, whereby every individual constructs her/his own reality. Descartes and Locke live on with the vengeance of the all-encompassing, willful ego. In effect, the pursuit of power and self-interest reductively explain everything. On the grounds of constructivism, Platonic *mythos* is but an instrument and technique wielded to deliver a message or manifesto that can be propagandized literally, irrespective of the many Platonic warnings to the contrary.





## Appendix C

# God (*theos*), Gods (*theoi*), and the Divine (*theios*)

Reference to god, gods, and the divine in the Platonic corpus is manifold and ubiquitous, despite the lack of attention to this mode of discourse being common among contemporary “philosophers.” How can this be explained? Might it be nothing more than the Ockham’s razor of modern rationalism? Or might it be the cynical belief that Plato is mocking conventional Greek behavior, using irony to protect himself from the very charges of impiety that got Socrates executed?

Taking this divine array more seriously, a contrast with the Judaic-Christian God and divine may be revealing. Right from the beginning there is monotheism versus pagan polytheism, such that the gods and spirits are everywhere and in all things. Note that for Socrates/Plato the Good is in all things. Socrates/Plato are more discriminating and reformatory: Zeus, the philosopher, now leads the Olympian gods who are assigned functions and virtues in relation to the forms they apprehend in the heavens, as only gods can do. These gods are paradigms of exalted behavior, not corrupting and degenerate in their dealing with each other and with humans. In some undefined way they care about humans, but apparently only after humans freely choose their own *daimon* and such a *daimon* for Socrates only issues warnings and restraint. Virtue has no master. Humans over time define their own souls in deed and speech. Humans should have recourse to the paradigmatic divine *demiourgos* who is the architect of the cosmos, which means the divine is a cosmic model for human action regarding the *polis* and human souls. Beyond the gods there is the god and the divine *Nous* and Good, which is utterly impersonal and beyond. Humans have a kinship, an attraction, a communion with *Nous* (intelligibility and the Good) (radiating like its offspring the sun), yet there is no Judaic-Christian Person God, wrathful and merciful, condemning and loving, a Leviathan beyond. Yet for Christians there will be

the self-sacrificing incarnation of the Son of God. For the Greek pagans of course, there are reincarnations of human souls (no unique, once and for all time human personal soul in relation to a transcendent Person God), although there is escape for some down to Tartarus or up to the Isles of the Blessed. Reincarnation is a sort of justice enabling humans the freedom to try again, or maybe it is just a storied way of stating that in this life there is time to correct one's soul—that is, second, third, fourth, and more chances. Yet, it is entirely up to humans. There is no Christian divine agape and grace. In the end, the divine stands for perfection, completion, wholeness, the beginning (*arche*), and the end (*telos*), without the confines and the dragging down weight of the body, necessity carnate.

What truly represents the divine and god(s) for Socrates/Plato is a powerful sense of presence (*parousia*), which we can call the “beforeness” before the divine in knowledge (*anamnesis*) and judgment. This “beforeness” never collapses into some divinization of the human; the tension differentiating the human and the divine never ceases within this life and this world.

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## About the Author

Sometime in my undergraduate course of study in American government at Bard College, I realized that the horrifying twentieth century needed an explanation by looking back to discern where things may have gone wrong. This led me to my master's degree in Russian studies at Georgetown University. Yet clearly, I discovered I needed to pursue philosophical explanations, and this led me to the University of St. Andrews from 1970 to 1972, studying moral philosophy and learning the ancient Greek language. In order to complete my doctoral studies, I was admitted to the political theory program at the University of Notre Dame, which included the occasional visits of Professor Eric Voegelin. His close colleague Professor Gerhart Niemeyer was always there for the challenge of his courses and for his advice. Many are the émigré German professors I learned from over all these years. My dissertation, which I began at the University of St. Andrews, was entirely committed to (even to this day) understanding the irreducible and indispensable status and function of Platonic *mythos*. In the intervening years I primarily taught American politics at a number of colleges and universities, and I wrote sixty, fifteen-to-twenty-page dialogues on public policy issues, many of which were published. I took the best arguments on the various sides of a public policy issue and created an aporetic standoff for students to negotiate with evidence and rational arguments.

