

Philosophical Allurements: Education and Argument in Ancient Philosophy

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of  
Classical Studies in the Graduate School  
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ABSTRACT

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates how recognition of Plato's *Republic* as a pedagogical text and of the milieu of competing disciplines in which it composed suggests new readings of its philosophical content. I contend that close attention to the cultural context in which the *Republic* was written reveals the degree to which its arguments were constructed not only with an eye towards the philosophical demands put upon it, but also in response to the claims of epistemological authority made by other fields. Furthermore, I show that close attention to the pedagogical function of the text reveals the degree to which Plato relies upon the dialogue's characters and figurative language to entice students away from alternative pursuits and world-views and towards Platonic philosophy.

The *Republic* was constructed in a revolutionary period for both texts and teachers, in which texts were beginning to function as a kind of tutor. In my first chapter, "Educating Athens", I survey the changing Athenian attitudes towards education from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, with a special focus on the rise of the concept of *paideia*. I also consider some of the ways in which earlier scholars have regarded the *Republic* as a prescriptive text on education in order to distinguish their approaches from my own: unlike these earlier readings, my approach to the text is to regard it as *itself educating* the reader, rather than as describing a system of education. The development of systems of *paideia* is intimately connected to the phenomena discussed in my second chapter: the rise of disciplines and the explosion of the written word. I conduct a

historical survey of the evidence for literacy and texts in the seventh to fourth centuries BCE and show that the gradual increase in texts and literacy did not replace oral culture in Athens, but rather supplemented it. I point out striking similarities among medical texts, oratorical works, and the Socratic dialogues written by Plato's contemporaries as a basis for comparison with Plato's *Republic*.

In the final three chapters of my dissertation I examine three aspects of Plato's *Republic* which have presented problems for envisioning the *Republic* as a unified work. My third chapter examines the Socratic interlocutors of book one as negative models for the reader, and shows that by the end of the book Plato has demonstrated the importance of passion, creativity, and deference in the successful philosophical student. As well, I suggest that Plato deliberately shows the weaknesses of the *elenchus* in the first book in order to argue against the methodologies of his fellow authors of Socratic dialogues, and in order to showcase the new philosophical methods which he displays in the remainder of the *Republic*. In the fourth chapter I continue to emphasize the relationship between the philosophy of the *Republic* and the work's pedagogical mission by examining the "two starts" to the *Republic* at the beginning of book 2 and book 5. I show that important work is done in books 2-4 to prepare the reader for the radical reevaluation of knowledge that will come in books 5-7. In the fifth chapter I consider the use of stories within the *Republic*, and what such stories can tell us both about Plato's theories of how education occurs as well as about how the *Republic* is meant to function.

Ultimately my dissertation demonstrates that by locating the *Republic* within the intersection of competing pedagogies, new disciplines, and the recent rise of texts, the

text can be understood as functioning on a number of different levels. It dismisses the merits of other disciplines and privileges Plato over other philosophers, all within the structure of a work which is gradually molding and guiding its reader towards Plato's particular ethical and epistemological system. Although the *Republic* has been read as a work on ethics, on political philosophy, and on psychology, its disparate components and topics coalesce only by reading it first as a work which educates.

For Michael and Mary Ward,  
who first believed in me,  
and J.P. Lien,  
who made me believe in myself

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## Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations are used for collections and editions of texts, but the reader may find the following list helpful.

- DK            H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds. 1952 (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin.
- SSR            G. Giannatoni, ed. 1990. *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae*. 4 vols. Naples.

### *Ancient Works*

Because of the frequency of Platonic abbreviations, for the reader's convenience I have included below the abbreviations for Platonic works most commonly cited in the dissertation. Abbreviations for all other ancient sources are those given by F.R. Adrados *et. al.*, 1980-, *Diccionario Griego-Español (DGE)*, Madrid, except for Hippocratic texts, for which abbreviations follow below.

### *Plato*

<i>Clit.</i>	<i>Clitophon</i>	<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Euthphr.</i>	<i>Euthyphro</i>	<i>Prm.</i>	<i>Parmenides</i>
<i>Grg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>	<i>Prt.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>
<i>Lg.</i>	<i>Leges</i>	<i>R.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Ly.</i>	<i>Lysis</i>	<i>Smp.</i>	<i>Symposium</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>		

### *Hippocratic Texts*

For the Hippocratic writings cited in the text, I provide the page numbers from E. Littré, et. and trans., *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate* (= Li.), 10 vols. (Paris 1839-1861, reprint Amsterdam 1961). Within the dissertation I cite by abbreviation, paragraph number, and section number, according to the editions listed below.

- Aph.*            *Aphorisms* (Li. 4.458-609)  
W.H.S. Jones, ed. and trans. 1931. *Hippocrates*. Vol. 4. Cambridge, Mass.
- Morb. I*        *On Diseases I* (Li. 6.140-205)  
R. Wittern, ed. and trans. 1974. *Die hippokratische Schrift "De morbis I."* Hildesheim.

- Morb. Sacr.* *On the Sacred Disease* (Li. 6.353-397)  
J. Jouanna, ed. and trans. 2003. *Hippocrate, La maladie sacrée*. Paris.
- Praec.* *Precepts* (Li. 9.250-273)  
W.H.S. Jones, ed. and trans. 1931. *Hippocrates*. Vol. 4. Cambridge, Mass.
- VM* *On Ancient Medicine* (Li. 1.570-637)  
J. Jouanna, ed. and trans. 1990. *Hippocrate, De l'ancienne médecine*.  
Paris.

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## Introduction

Man is born into a world in which there are some objects and processes which are to him fully comprehensible and others which are not...what he says and does rests on the assumption that the secret workings of nature are capable of being influenced by his actions, and commonly on the further assumption that these secret workings are due to forces which operate in virtue of wills and emotions comparable with those which prompt his own operations.<sup>1</sup>

## Philosophical Conversion

In his 1933 work *Conversion, A.D.* Nock identifies the basic human drive to understand the world as the source for man's engagement with a variety of cultic, religious, and even philosophical activities. Such systems of thought or belief provide a backdrop against which experience can be understood, and give a foundational organization to the world beyond perception. Yet the more that such systems attempt to address the "secret workings" of the world in abstraction from sense perception, the less that sense perception can aid in the evaluation of competing systems. Whether the underpinning view of the universe comes from Epicureanism or from Orphism, the decision to subscribe to one particular system of thought is less a decision than an act of reorientation. Whether we call these new world-views reorientations, conversions, or paradigm shifts, we are nonetheless attempting to speak of the same ineffable experience of suddenly reorganizing the same set of sense experiences to fit a new understanding of the true nature of reality.

Philosophers have long recognized that one of the fundamental problems of philosophy is that any philosophical system is an interconnected web of doctrines (and

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<sup>1</sup> Nock (1933) 1.



their contingent precepts) – there is no hypothesis that stands on its own.<sup>2</sup> While the individual principles of a given philosophical outlook can be examined and criticized, such examination can only occur from within the web. Furthermore, certain propositions, such as the existence of a divine creator of humanity, do not seem to be subject to the strictures of logic, and as such cannot be engaged with through argument. Or, as Wittgenstein describes in the conclusion of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, these kinds of propositions are matters of aesthetics, and “darüber muss man schweigen.” For a philosopher, and in particular a philosopher who desires to induce others to his point of view, this seemingly intractable problem must be addressed. A philosopher may not be able to convert others on the basis of “purely intellectual conviction” but, as Nock outlines, he can ask his audience to look at the attractions of the picture he paints, and can counter opponents “by arguments which appeal to the heart and not to the head.”<sup>3</sup>

But how can a philosopher achieve such a radical yet controlled paradigm shift in his pupil’s fundamental assumptions about the world?<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, what role can texts play in a process that seems to be so inherently personal? Ancient philosophy can provide insights into both questions, as ancient philosophers were particularly attuned to

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2 As Marjorie Grene (1966) outlines, it is from these fundamental, ineffable aspects of thought that philosophy gains its personal quality: “The impersonal aspect of knowledge arises from and returns to personal participation in the search for and acceptance of the object to be known. For only the explicit, formulable core of knowledge can be transferred, neutrally, from person to person. Its implicit base (since it is not verbalized and cannot be formulated and so impersonalized) must be the groping, the orientation and reorientation of someone” (24-25).

3 Nock (1933) 181.

4 As Griswold (1999) observes, Socrates cannot convince someone who is not willing to engage in the debate, but even more disturbing, he cannot use reason alone to shift someone’s fundamental assumptions: “...the life of self-governance through philosophical reason is founded on commitments about value one resolutely insists upon for oneself and others, but could not fully justify rationally to someone not disposed at the outset to accept those commitments, however intelligent and discursive that interlocutor might be” (306).

the difficulties inherent in using texts not only to express one's philosophy, but also to educate others. Before the essay form had come to dominate philosophy, Greek and Roman philosophers made use of a variety of literary genres, from letters to epic poetry to dialogues, each of which provided a unique set of literary tools for a philosopher. Regardless of the genre chosen, the goal was the same: to turn around or free the soul of the student through non-logical means such as paradoxes, metaphors, and modeling of appropriate learning behaviors. In ancient philosophy, these non-logical elements of philosophical texts are critical to their success as indoctrinating works, and so were as fundamentally important to the text's construction as the expression of a set of propositions or rational arguments.

## **Plato's Dialogues**

Plato's philosophy provides an excellent case-study for the examination of the role of these non-logical elements in philosophical education for two reasons: first, he was writing at time of great cultural change regarding education and literacy, and so it seems likely that Plato as an author would have been particularly attuned to the question of how to create philosophical education through a text, and that his readers would have shared his concern; and second, the comments on writing and education from his dialogues suggest that these issues were a enduring concern for Plato. Plato's response to these challenges was not to make his philosophy more explicit but, if anything, purposefully to obscure it. The dialogue form in which he wrote prevents an easy exposition of his key philosophical principles. The reader must decide for herself whether there is some abstract truth in a statement by Socrates, or the Athenian Stranger,

or even Thrasymachus,<sup>5</sup> or whether in fact the “truth” of Plato's philosophy can be observed only indirectly, in the gaps between what is said by any particular character, or in any particular exchange.<sup>6</sup> Yet perhaps one of the greatest challenges to a reader is the paradox of the physical presence of the dialogues: what does it mean for philosophy to be written down at all?<sup>7</sup> In a passage from the *Phaedrus*, Socrates attacks the notion that a reader can ever investigate a written text,<sup>8</sup> and earlier in this same dialogue he suggests that the very invention of writing is responsible for a deterioration of men's memories and a rise in sophomoric individuals – those people who think that they are wise, yet actually

5 To this list we could also reasonably add Timaeus and the Eleatic stranger.

6 Or, in the words of Nehamas (2000), “The Socratic dialogues demand of their audience what Socrates asks of his interlocutors: to examine their beliefs on any subject of importance to them, to determine to what other beliefs they are logically related, to accept only those that are comparable with one another, and to live their lives accordingly” (42).

7 One might further push this point to question whether entangling philosophy in any kind of verbalization is an inherently fraught task. Indeed, some interpreters of Plato see Socrates' comments in the *Phaedrus* less as an attack on writing than as a problematization of the tendency of one individual to hold onto his interlocutor's *words* rather than his underlying *meaning*. One of the remarkable features of the *Phaedrus* is the extent to which Socrates and Phaedrus both, though speaking, are in fact surrogates for the words (and not necessarily texts) of others. Harris (1988) illustrates the problems with identifying “speaker” or “audience” in the *Phaedrus* with the help of schematic diagrams, and comments, “There are, for instance, a good many other nominees for the speaker's chair. Consider the number of voices Socrates takes on, either by invoking some authority or by invoking some fiction.” (169). Thus the spoken word is just as vulnerable as the written one to “wander about everywhere.” Taking a different position, Burke (1997) sees the central conflict in the *Phaedrus* not as between the written and spoken word, but as between monologue and dialogue. Under this interpretation, Plato offers a critique of the uninterrupted monologue and its written corollary – the philosophical treatise – by his very use of the dialogue form. These two positions are not a thorough sampling, but do represent two distinct arguments against reading the *Phaedrus* as a cut and dried condemnation of written texts and support for verbal communication.

8 *Phdr.* 275d: “ταῦτόν δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι: δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὡς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρη τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεὶ. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ γραφῆ, κυλινδεῖται μὲν πανταχοῦ πᾶς λόγος ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐπαίουσιν, ὡς δ' αὐτῶς παρ' οἷς οὐδὲν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσταται λέγειν οἷς δεῖ γε καὶ μὴ. πλημμελούμενος δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐν δίκη λαιδορηθεὶς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀεὶ δεῖται βοηθοῦ: αὐτὸς γὰρ οὔτ' ἀμύνασθαι οὔτε βοηθῆσαι δυνατὸς αὐτῷ.”  
 “And so also with written words: you might believe they spoke as if they had thoughts, but if you should question any of their sayings, wishing to know more, they say only one and the same thing, always. And once it has been written, every word wanders about everywhere, equally amongst those with understanding as amongst those with whom it does not belong at all, and it does not know with whom it should speak or not. But when wronged or unjustly attacked it always needs the aid of its father: for on its own, it does not have the power to defend or to support itself.”

only appear to be so.<sup>9</sup> C. L. Griswold, in his article “Irony in the Platonic Dialogues,” articulates the difficult position the reader is placed in when encountering such attacks on writing within a text:

In writing these criticisms of writing, Plato creates a tension between the surface meaning of the text (what is said in the text) and the form of the text itself (and by extension all of Plato’s dialogues). In so doing Plato as it were silently points to his own position about writing, a position partly at odds with that which he puts in Socrates’ mouth. That is, by the deed of writing, Plato denies that Socrates’ criticisms of writing are so decisive. By writing dialogues, he partially accepts the criticisms.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, we might point to Plato's use of the dialogue form as key to his understanding of the very nature of philosophy – that it is inherently dialectical.

One of the projects of this dissertation is to examine how, beyond the use of the dialogue form, Plato is able to create philosophical texts that avoid Socrates' charge: he crafts a text that can be questioned, and that does not only answer with one and the same thing. I have chosen the *Republic* as my key text precisely because it is a work in which the dialogue form increasingly becomes *pro forma* as it progresses. Aside from the first book, it does not qualify as one of the aporetic, early Socratic dialogues, therefore it does not seem eligible for the same kind of defense of its existence as, e.g., the *Euthyphro*.<sup>11</sup>

The *Republic* has at its heart a praise of dialectic, and yet contains relatively little dialogue. Its very existence is puzzling: what is it, and what are its purposes?<sup>12</sup>

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9 *Phdr.* 275a-b.

10 Griswold (2002) 95.

11 That is to say, that it is meant solely to cause the reader to question his own assumptions about life, and that, because the dialogue itself expresses no positive philosophy, it avoids Phaedrus-like charges against writing.

12 In this project I am highlighting one of the purposes of the *Republic* in order to demonstrate the interpretive benefits of regarding the composition of the *Republic* as pedagogically driven. However, such a focus is not intended to deny the possibility of Plato having multiple purposes in mind when

## The Project

I begin to address this question by affirming that the *Republic* is not only a text *about* education, but that it is a text that itself attempts to educate its reader. I suggest that through reading the *Republic* as a text whose intentions are pedagogical first, a fundamentally different understanding of its philosophy and structure emerges. But before I can explore how Plato has crafted a philosophical, educational text, it is helpful to explore some of the broader cultural trends in both education and writing in the period leading up to the composition of the *Republic*. In chapter 1, “Educating Athens”, I survey changing Athenian attitudes towards education from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, with a special focus on the rise of the concept of *paideia*. Although scholars sometimes speak of the “*paideia*” of heroes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as I discuss the word *paideia* itself does not appear in these Homeric texts; rather, the concept of a systematized higher education is a late fifth century BCE phenomenon. This chapter also clarifies some misconceptions that sometimes arise around ancient education – the idea that teachers were not paid, or that students learned primarily in an intimate one-to-one relationship with their teacher – and relates those misconceptions to the privileged position that Plato’s dialogues have historically held in modern understandings of ancient pedagogical notions. Finally, in this chapter I investigate some of the ways in which the

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composing his work, and his readers and contemporaries having uses for those texts that diverge from Plato's expectations. In his article, “*Phaedrus* and the Politics of Inscription,” Berger (1994) points out the inconsistencies in the presentation of the idea that knowledge can be passed directly from teacher to student (and, as it were, “inscribed” on the student's soul) *even when the teacher and student are in direct conversation* without the mediation of texts. Further, Berger suggests that Plato's readers are meant to be dissatisfied with the notion of knowledge-transfer, as “the more [Socrates] rephrases and insists on the ideal, the more he sows seeds of doubt [in the reader] as to its viability” (106). This reading suggests that Plato not only expected agency on the part of his readers, but indeed that in places his dialogues contain propositions that the reader is meant to question and even reject.

*Republic* has been regarded as a prescriptive text on education. Unlike these earlier readings, my approach to the text is to regard it as *itself educating* the reader, rather than as describing a system of education. Although descriptions of education (in the ideal city of Kallipolis) do exist, in later chapters I contend that these descriptions are primarily intended to have a protreptic and paedeutic effect on the reader, and are not meant to be taken as Plato's theories on education.

The development of systems of *paideia* is intimately tied with the phenomena discussed in my second chapter: the rise of disciplines and the explosion of the written word. In chapter 2, "Texts and Fourth Century Athens," I conduct a historical survey of the evidence for literacy and texts in the seventh to fourth centuries BCE, and show the gradual increase in texts and literacy did not replace oral cultural in Athens, but rather supplemented it. Medical texts, oratorical works, and the Socratic dialogues written by Plato's contemporaries have certain striking similarities: they each reference the disciplines with which they are in competition; they show signs of engaging in internal debates within their own discipline; and the texts alone are insufficient for a student to gain basic competency in a field. In this chapter I outline the multiple functions of such texts, each of which play some role in the texts' composition. These texts collectively form a point of comparison for the second half of my dissertation, in which I focus on Plato's *Republic*.

My third chapter, "Beginning the *Republic*," examines the various Socratic interlocutors of book 1 as negative models for the reader. As such, these interlocutors take the role of "failed students" for the reader (just as Glaucon and Adeimantus will later

model being “successful students”). My discussion of Cephalus et al. as “students” of Socrates is conducted against the backdrop of understanding the *reader* as the intended recipient of *Plato’s* educational efforts. The degree to which these characters themselves desire (or not) to be Socrates’ students does matter, but only inasmuch as Plato sees such desires integral to the philosophical development of an individual. In keeping with my larger goal of investigating the educational function of passages of the *Republic*, in this and subsequent chapters I discuss Socrates’ interlocutors as his “students” not because they are viewed or view themselves that way *within the dialogue*, but because that is a role that the reader may assign to them in order to understand better what an excellent philosophical student is like.

As I show in the third chapter, in book 1 Plato makes clear what an excellent philosophical student is not. Each of Socrates’ initial interlocutors lacks one or more crucial character traits, and Socrates’ conversations with each fail because of this lack. In order to successfully engage with Socrates, an individual must possess passion, creativity, and deference to the dialectical process. Furthermore, the very philosophical technique employed in the first book – the *elenchus* seen so often in so-called “early” Platonic dialogues – ultimately results in *aporia* or a lack of success. I contend that Plato deliberately shows the weaknesses of the *elenchus* in the first book in order to argue against the philosophical methodologies of his fellow authors of Socratic dialogues, and in order to showcase the new philosophical methodologies that he displays in the remainder of the *Republic*. This chapter also demonstrates how attention to the pedagogical structure of the *Republic* shows it to be far more structurally unified than it is

often regarded. In chapters 4-5 I continue to show that a reading of the *Republic* as an educating text can help explain some of its apparent disjoints.

In the fourth chapter I examine the “two starts” to the *Republic*: the first at the beginning of book 2, and the second at the beginning of book 5. By looking at the starts of these two “sections”, I show that important work is done in books 2-4 to prepare the reader for the radical reevaluation of knowledge that will come in books 5-7. In addition, by considering the educational system of Kallipolis against the backdrop of the discussion of chapter 2, on the rise of competing disciplines in the fourth century BCE, I relate much of Socrates’ commentary on ideal pedagogy to *Plato’s* dual goals of elevating philosophy and dismissing medicine and rhetoric.

In the fifth chapter, “Speaking in Images – lies, myths, and allegories,” I consider the use of stories within the *Republic*, and what such stories can tell us both about Plato’s theories of how education occurs as well as about how the *Republic* is meant to function. This chapter contains three case studies: 1) the myth of the metals; 2) the series of allegories in books 5-7; and 3) the myth of Er. I attend to the effect that the given story is meant to have on the psychology of the reader within each case study, but I also consider how these effects build upon each other as the *Republic* progresses.

By locating the work within the intersection of competing pedagogies, new disciplines, and the recent rise of texts, I understand the *Republic* as functioning on a number of different levels. It dismisses the merits of other disciplines, privileges Plato over other philosophers, and simultaneously molds and guides its reader towards Plato’s particular ethical and epistemological system. Although the *Republic* has been read as a



work on ethics, on political philosophy, and on psychology, by reading it first as a work that educates its disparate components and topics resolve.

# 1. Educating Athens

## 1.1 Introduction

As preparation for my investigation into the pedagogical strategies of Plato's *Republic*, I consider in this chapter the changing landscape of Athenian education in the fourth century, and in the following chapter the increasing prominence of texts, both in Athenian society generally as well as in educational practices. The purpose of this first chapter is to provide context for Plato's work, and therefore it is not intended to be a complete discussion of the Athenian educational system. Indeed, I discuss only a few of the many sub-topics within the history of education, and even those are addressed only as fully as necessary for the particular pedagogical elements that I explore when addressing the *Republic*.

I begin my discussion with the problematic definition of Athenian “education”, and then survey some of the approaches scholars have taken to define and describe this phenomenon. Beginning from an overview of the rather scanty physical and textual evidence for “schools” (as in physical buildings whose purpose was expressly education),<sup>1</sup> I provide my own discussion of the key developments related to education in

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1 This is not to say that every school had to be conducted within a specific, designated building, but rather that the presence of such buildings would be indicative of the rising prominence of a system of education built around one teacher with many pupils, and the relocation of educational activity from the private, familial setting to a more public location. Indeed, as I discuss below, educational activities could take place in a variety of locales. As Lynch (1972) points out “any suitable structure or open place might be used for the study of music and letters” (34), and the study of *gymnastike* often occurred in a privately owned palaestra, which was often a rented portion of a public gymnasium (35). Thus we find a correlation between the private, unsystematized education of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE in Athens, and the absence of buildings or locations solely dedicated to educational functions. Gradually, following the death of Socrates, particular teachers begin to set up permanent schools in public and private locations adapted to this new function, such as Antisthenes' use of a public gymnasium and Isocrates' private school near the Lyceum (50-54), culminating in the establishment of Plato's Academy.

Athenian culture in the period in which Plato was writing. Finally, I consider one way in which scholars have previously fit Plato into this debate over education – by reading Plato's educational theory into the discussions of the education of the guardians in the ideal city of Kallipolis.

## 1.2 The Language of Education

It has become somewhat traditional in classical scholarship to speak of Athenian education in terms of *paideia*.<sup>2</sup> Whereas education (*e + duco*) connotes the leading out from ignorance to knowledge, a process that can occur in any number of fields and on any number of subjects, *paideia* is inseparable from the notion of becoming an adult citizen.<sup>3</sup> In some respects this Greek notion of education is narrower than modern conceptions: it excludes, for example, practical training in some kind of vocation.<sup>4</sup> Yet,

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2 Freeman's 1912 work *The Schools of Hellas* describes a three stage education, relying mostly upon Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon for his history. He does not use the term *paideia* for education in his overview. It was Jaeger in 1939 who inextricably links this term with scholars' thought on Greek education by making *paideia* the central unifying theme for his three volume study. Marrou continues the use of the term in his 1948 work *L'Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* (translated by George Lamb in 1956). Specifically, Marrou (1956) finds the term *paideia* useful because it distinguishes between connotations of the modern word "education" and the ancient practice: "When we think of education we mean, in the first place, the schools: hence the sometimes excessive importance we attach to teaching-problems in modern society...For the Greeks, education – *paideia* – meant, essentially, a profound and intimate relationship, a personal union between a young man and an elder who was at once his model, his guide and his initiator" (31). Not all scholars of Greek education have taken up the term *paideia*; Beck eschews it in his 1964 work *Greek Education*. However, the influence of the works of Jaeger and Marrou can be seen in modern scholars' preference for the term; for example, see Robb (1994), esp. pp. 33, 41 n. 25, 149.

3 For discussion on the modern distinctions in scholarship between pedagogy and education, see Too (1998) 5-7.

4 Though doubtlessly apprenticeships and even some group instruction in trades and crafts occurred, surviving Greek literature is almost universal in belittling of these "banausic" arts. In the *Republic* Socrates proposes that those concerned with banausic arts have a weak rational element, in that they have allowed their lives to be dictated by their desires for luxury (9.590c5). See Nightingale (2001) 134, Barclay (1961) 79-84. However, Greek ideals regarding banausic arts likely competed with practical concerns. As early as the laws of Solon, in his law that "no son who had not been taught a trade should be compelled to support his father," we can see a concern with Athenian citizens having practical skills (Plutarch *Sol.* 22.1).

in another way, the Greek notion of *paideia* is incredibly broad: its end-product is not knowledge of one *particular* ability, but the cultivation of the necessary skills and moral and political outlook for an individual to participate fully as a citizen in society.

However, the linking of education with *paideia* is, for the ancient Greeks, a rather late phenomenon, arising in the second half of the fifth century BCE.<sup>5</sup> Although boys (παῖδες) are present in the epics of Homer, they are reared (τρέφω) and taught skills (διδάσκω); the verb παιδεύειν does not appear.<sup>6</sup> When Jason describes the education he received from Chiron in Pindar *Pythian* 4, he uses the noun form from διδάσκω (διδασκαλία) rather than speaking of the centaur's *paideia*.<sup>7</sup> Before the mid-fifth century BCE παιδεύειν and its nominalization *paideia* are rarely used, and when they do appear they do not carry the sense of systematic education; instead, they suggest the notion of rearing or nurturing.<sup>8</sup> This basic sense of *paideia* as rearing continues into the second

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5 Jaeger (1939) notes:

“It would seem obvious for us to use the history of the word *paideia* as a clue to the origins of Greek culture. But we cannot do so, since the word does not occur before the fifth century. That is of course merely an accident of transmission. If new sources were discovered, we might well find evidence of its occurrence at an earlier date. But even then we should be none the wiser; for the earliest examples of its use show that at the beginning of the fifth century it still had the narrow meaning of 'child-rearing' and practically nothing of its later, higher sense.” (I.4-5)

Jaeger instead turns to the term *arete* in his discussion of the early (Homeric) development of Greek culture. But see Robb (1994), who prefers to define *paideia* as “enculturation” for the archaic period, citing the lack of “schools, texts, curricula and the like” as the reason why thinking of *paideia* as “education” can be misleading (41 no. 25). It is unclear what, aside from tradition, causes Robb to speak of the *paideia* of the archaic period at all, rather than dispensing with the Greek and simply speaking of enculturation.

6 τρέφω: *Iliad* 1.251, *Odyssey* 19.368; διδάσκω: *Iliad* 5.51, 11.831, 832, 16.811, 23.307, 308; *Odyssey* 1.384, 8.481, 488, 22.422. See Jones (1997) 21-25.

7 Pind., *P.*, IV, 102.

8 Παιδεύειν: Sappho, fr. S 261A1.8 *SLG*; Pindar, fr. 198A Race; Heraclitus fr. 134 DK; Aeschylus *Pers.* 815. Παιδεία: Alcman, fr. S5.15; Heraclitus fr. 134 DK; Aeschylus *Th.* 18. For a comprehensive study, see Perdicoyianni (1994) 258-62, and Rogers (2005) 16 n. 2.

half of the fifth century BCE, but by the last quarter of that century *paideia* takes on the additional, more technical meaning of a systematic education, and in particular of an education that is explicitly guided or directed.

It is possible that this shift in meaning is related to the shift in educational practices from Homeric times to the late fifth and early fourth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Greek attitudes towards the constitution of a proper education evolved over time, as did the range of available teachers (and, consequently, the availability of that education to the varied population of the polis). These attitudes almost certainly varied between cities-states, as each polis valued different qualities in their respective citizens, and different expectations existed for different social strata.<sup>10</sup> Tracking the development of Greek educational theories and practices is further complicated by the fact that our evidence concerning educational institutions such as schools is spotty at best before the Hellenistic period.<sup>11</sup> Although the education of its citizenry was by no means inconsequential to the health and function of a polis, no single statement survives that can serve as a summary of a given polis's attitude towards education at any particular time. That said, scholars *have* sought to create a picture of the changing face of Greek education from Homeric

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9 *Paideia* maintains the basic sense of “to raise” or “to rear” even once its more technical meaning becomes common, as can be seen in Plato's use of the term in Books 2-3 of the *Republic*. See Ford (2002) esp. 202, 217-218.

10 Most notably, scholars have marked a difference in Spartan and Athenian attitudes towards schooling. See Marrou (1956) 14-26, and Freeman (1912) 11-41.

11 For a review of the literary evidence for schools, see Beck (1964) 72-80. In summing up the evidence, Beck comments, “It is, however, important to note that in none of our available evidence are schools mentioned for their own sake – they are either to be deduced from some other fact, or they are mentioned as incidental elements of some startling event or some national crisis. No writer of classical times bothered to write for us a history of schools” (78). For a discussion of the growth and development of schools in the Hellenistic period primarily based in archaeological and epigraphical evidence, see Nilssen (1955).

times forward, and prominent books such as Henri Marrou's 1948 work *Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité* have molded generations of future scholarship on ancient education. I begin my own survey, then, with a brief review of the findings of Henri Marrou, and offer as contrast a contemporary scholar of his who took a very different approach: Frederick Beck.

### **1.3 Studying Athenian Education**

Scholars must take great care in the face of the various evidentiary problems the study of Greek education presents, yet at the same time they must find some unifying principle around which they might focus their research. One tempting device for such historians of education to employ is to create a narrative of the development of education through a large span of time in ancient Greece, as Henri Marrou did in his landmark work *Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité*. Though this *longue durée* approach to the study of education has the advantage of recognizing Greek attitudes as ever-evolving, it can suffer from the tight constraint on its definition of education (made necessary by the wide scope of the period of study), as well as, in the case of Marrou, from a teleological focus. An alternative approach, taken up by a number of scholars, is to focus on a particular time period in ancient Greece and to broadly survey educational practices and attitudes in that time frame.<sup>12</sup> This approach, too, has its deficiencies, as there is a tendency to define the time period in question quite broadly, and to amalgamate material from earlier or later periods with the sparse evidence from the time under consideration. The result can be a discussion of an anachronistic and stagnant “Athenian Education,”

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<sup>12</sup> For a sample of this approach, see the collection of articles in Too (2001), especially Griffith (2001) 23-84.

which no ancient Athenian of any period would have recognized entirely. Both of these approaches have some insight to offer into the cultural attitudes towards education prevalent when Plato was composing his *Republic*; through an investigation of the findings of scholars with disparate approaches to studying ancient Greek education we can attempt to gain some insight into the context surrounding Plato's work.

For Henri Marrou, the narrative of Greek education was a "progressive transition from a 'noble warrior' culture to a 'scribe' culture."<sup>13</sup> Marrou's treatment of the history of ancient education is far more complex than this self-described "simple-formula," yet his history is, overall, a tale of the gradual professionalizing of education as it transitioned from a "profound and intimate relationship, a personal union between a young man and an elder who was at once his model, his guide and his initiator" available only to the upper-class, through the "Old Education" of gymnasia and the rise of the *grammatistes*, to the revolution of the sophists and beyond.<sup>14</sup> In Marrou's history, the acme of Greek education does not lie in the Homeric ideals or the "golden" fifth century, but in the reforms and developments of the Hellenistic period.<sup>15</sup> When he opens his discussion of Hellenistic education, Marrou encourages his reader to reevaluate the early history of education in Greece under a teleological light, in which the *telos* is achieved in the Hellenistic period.<sup>16</sup> Marrou reveals that "the aim of any historical enquiry is not so

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13 Marrou (1956) xiv. Marrou's ambitious history covers the development of education from Homer's time through to the rise of Christianity in the Roman world.

14 Marrou (1956) 31, 39, and 47.

15 Marrou opens his section on education in the Hellenistic period with the comment, "At this point we reach the very heart of our subject, and our study of the education of antiquity now becomes truly rewarding" (1956, 95).

16 See Marrou's comments, "But here again this development was simply the unfolding of characteristics present from the beginning" (1956, 95).

much the enumeration of stages of development as the analysis and synthetic understanding of its subject-matter, as the latter is found in its mature form, with all of its values fully developed.”<sup>17</sup> For Marrou, the mature form of Greek education can be found in the state-sponsored schools of the Hellenistic period, which serve as the model for modern educational practices. As such, Marrou focuses his history on the Greek education of children and young adults by individuals clearly in the role of “teacher.”<sup>18</sup> Under this history, figures such as the *paidotribes*, the *grammatistes*, and the sophist feature prominently, whereas other Greek practices with educational effects, such as the public display of laws, participation in rites of initiation, and symposia, are largely left unexplored.

Although the picture Marrou presents of Greek attitudes towards education is incomplete, his work is quite valuable for his exploration of the history and development of teacher-centered education. After addressing the distinct educational attitudes of the Spartans, Marrou considers pederasty in Greek education as an extension of the attitudes towards education found in Homer. As Marrou describes it, in Homer the “proper education for...heroes” was for the teacher to set before the student “great examples to be found in the old legends and so arouse the agonistic instinct, the competitive spirit.”<sup>19</sup> These students were selected due to their outstanding potential, and the teacher serves as a mediator between these heroes of the future and the great examples of the past. In the

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17 Marrou (1956) 95.

18 Indeed, Marrou (1956) identifies such a teacher-student relationship as the core feature of Greek education, and points to the development of this feature early in Greek society as helping “to create the particular kind of moral ideal that underlay the whole system of Hellenic education” (29).

19 Marrou (1956) 12.



classical period, the Homeric relationship was modified such that the teacher himself now served as the embodiment of the example for his student. The teacher was neither static nor passive, but needed to progress his own moral development in order to succeed as a standard for his student. The erotic overtones of this relationship ultimately served to strengthen the resolve of both teacher and student to excel: “the elder’s desire to stand out in the eyes of his beloved, to shine, and the younger man’s corresponding desire to show himself worthy of his lover, could not but strengthen in both that love of glory which was, moreover, extolled by the whole agonistic outlook.”<sup>20</sup>

In the picture Marrou paints, the development and gradual expansion of Greek schools supplemented, but did not compete with, these intimate teacher-student relationships. Marrou identifies a new focus on gymnasia, which he relates to an increasing democratization of Greek education. “The new education, intended for all free men, was necessarily of a collective character, and this led to the creation and development of the school.”<sup>21</sup> Yet while both the *grammatistes* and the *paidotribes* spread an education that was “artistic rather than literary” and “athletic rather than intellectual,” one important note suggested by Marrou’s study is that this education did not supplant the more intimate elite education.<sup>22</sup> Instead, it was the coming of the sophists, with their fees for service and their assumption of multiple students at once, that directly challenged older educational attitudes. More specifically, the notion that “knowledge of the truth was less important than the ability to make any particular

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20 Marrou (1956) 29.

21 Marrou (1956) 39.

22 On the distinct educational focus of these schools see Marrou (1956) 43.

audience, *hic et nunc*, admit the probability of any proposition whatsoever,” undermined a pedagogical institution that focused on the ephemeral transfer of ethics, morality, and political prowess from the experienced citizen to his novice pupil.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, while the presence of works such as Aristophanes’ *Clouds* and the content of the charges brought up against Socrates – specifically, his corruption of the youth – speak to a societal concern with some new kind of education, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the older, aristocratic education that Marrou describes existed in reality rather than simply as an ideal. When “Better Argument” speaks in the *Clouds* in favor of the “old education”, he describes boys marching through the streets after their music master, memorizing songs, and generally obeying their elders. The speaker does not wax nostalgic over a faithful pedagogical relationship between a single *erastes* and *eromenos* that mutually benefits teacher and student, except in as much as he acknowledges that boys would have lovers, but states that the young men would not attempt to beautify themselves to stir up the erotic appetites of their older lovers.<sup>24</sup> Much of the evidence for kind of *erastes/eromenos* relationship that Marrou describes comes from Greek pottery, and much of that dates to the archaic period.<sup>25</sup>

We can see Plato playing on the ideal of the erotic, “heroic” education that Marrou

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23 On the educational outlook of the sophists, see Marrou (1956) 51.

24 Aristophanes *Nu.* 975-983.

25 However, some scholars are challenging the traditional consensus that pederasty largely vanishes from vase-painting early in the fifth century. Lear (2008) argues that, “pederastic courtship remains a common motif down into the fourth century. It is true that the explicit depiction of pederastic sex, or even foreplay, becomes rare after the 470s...Explicit depictions of heterosexual sex also disappear in the early fifth century, however; the almost simultaneous disappearance of all explicit sexual scenes seems to point more to a general trend toward prudery rather than to a change in pederasty's status” (175).

describes particularly in his *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*.<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to say the degree to which Marrou's descriptions of Homeric and fifth century attitudes towards education were influenced by Marrou's readings of Plato, whose own works suggest a continuity between the teachings of Socrates and the education of Greek heroes. Plato could have been appealing to some common notion of aristocratic education that had come under threat from the sophists, yet it is equally possible that he himself played a role in crafting an educational ideal that suited his own larger philosophical view of human nature and achievement, and that it is Plato we have to thank for retroactively attaching this educational ideal to Homer. This is not to deny that associations with knowledgeable and prominent older citizen men were an important part of the upbringing of an Athenian youth; rather, what I caution against is the assumption that, prior to Plato, these relationships were conceived of in the formalized fashion in which Marrou describes them.

Like Marrou, Frederick Beck is interested in tracing the development of Greek education, tightly defined, across a historical span, yet Beck's *Greek Education* limits itself to 450-350 BCE. This period of time, for Beck, is "perhaps the most important

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26 The proper, moral, and educational relationship between an *erastes* and his *eromenos* is mostly clearly expressed by Pausanias' speech on lovers (*Smp.* 182b-185c) in the *Symposium*, in which Pausanias explicitly states that he is going to describe the customs in Athens, but it can also be extrapolated from Socrates' speeches in the *Phaedrus*, both on why the unscrupulous lover is bad for his *eromenos* (*Phdr.* 238e-241d) and on how the moral *erastes* would act (*Phdr.* 250d-257b). Socrates mentions *erastes* and their *paidika* in the *Republic*, but specifically states that sexual pleasure must play no role in their interaction (*R.* 403b). Numerous pairs of lovers are mentioned in the Platonic dialogues, including Zeno and Parmenides (*Prm.* 127b5), Clinia and Ctesippus in the *Euthydemus*, Agathon and Pausanias (*Prt.* 315e), and Hippothales and Lysis (*Ly.* 204d). Often Socrates is cast in the role of the *erastes*, including by Lysis (*Ly.* 211a), who responds to Socrates' teachings by whispering to him with "boyish friendliness" (*Ly.* 211a: *μάλα παιδικῶς καὶ φιλικῶς*), and by Alcibiades in the *Symposium*, who charges that Socrates leads boys on by presenting himself as a lover (*Smp.* 222b). This accusation by Alcibiades has more merit when read alongside Socrates' assertion that he is a lover of Alcibiades (as well as philosophy) in the *Gorgias* (*Grg.* 482a).

period in the whole history of education” since it “embraces the thought and practice of virtually all the great pioneers of Classical education, with the exception of Aristotle.”<sup>27</sup> Beck’s work ultimately attempts to understand and contextualize the rise of the “Great Educators” (as he calls them): the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Isocrates. Also like Marrou, the teleological focus of Beck’s work – in this case regarding these great men, rather than Marrou’s Hellenistic schools, as the ultimate flourishing of the Greek educational system – limits the practices that Beck is willing to describe as instances of “education.”

In the introduction to his work Beck surveys attitudes towards education through 450 BCE, both focusing on the degree to which Homer can be understood as an educator as well as reviewing the teacher-pupil relationships that can be found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. At one point in his discussion, Beck notes, “So far the poets have been revealed as ‘educators’ in the sense that they kept alive a large body of traditional knowledge and in their work exerted a strong educational influence in moulding character and ideas. But to what extent can we call them ‘teachers’ in the narrower sense of giving specific instruction to pupils?”<sup>28</sup> He goes on to mention a series of teacher-pupil relationships in Homer’s works, including Artemis teaching Scamandrius to hunt, Zeus teaching Antilochos about charioteering, and Athena apprenticing Phereclus in shipbuilding, before concluding that “the ideal teacher of mythology was the wise centaur Cheiron.”<sup>29</sup>

Beck recognizes the potential to define Greek education quite broadly, and subsequently

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27 Beck (1964) 7.

28 Beck (1964) 47.

29 Beck (1964) 49.

to see a whole host of aspects of Athenian society as having pedagogical functions. Yet, in keeping with his ultimate interest in the Great Educators of Classical Athens, it is Cheiron, rather than Homer, that Beck most associates with education in early Greece. Cheiron “represents the influence on character produced by the pupil’s association with a good master in what we should term a ‘general education,’” and as such can be seen as the forerunner to educational figures of the late fifth and early fourth centuries.<sup>30</sup>

Although Beck and Marrou place the acme of Greek education at different historical points, both scholars associate these high points with the systemization of education; for Marrou, this systemization comes in the form of Hellenistic schools, whereas Beck focuses on the competing theories of education developed by the sophists, Plato, and Isocrates. Underpinning both Beck and Marrou’s work is the notion that the feature central to Greek education is the relationship between a particular teacher and his individual student, and that the roots of that relationship can be found in the works of Homer.

Beck acknowledges that his section on the pedagogical theories of the Sophists is “based on somewhat tenuous evidence” – that is to say, Beck relies largely on the writings of Plato, and supplements these writings both with the scant primary sources such the writings of Gorgias as well as with “various scattered references, mainly late, in other classical authors.”<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Beck is reliant mostly upon the works of Plato – in fact, mostly upon Plato’s *Meno* – to reconstruct the pedagogical method of Socrates. It remains difficult to assess the extent to which these pedagogical theories were rivals to a

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30 Beck (1964) 50.

31 Beck (1964) 149.

pre-existing model of education as represented, in Beck's rendering, by Cheiron.<sup>32</sup>

Although Beck asserts that the presentation of Cheiron as a teacher in Homer and Hesiod allows us to conclude "that there were in times prior to Homer teachers providing some sort of general education by individual instruction as well as men of specialist knowledge who taught their specialty to selected pupils," a more cautious interpretation would acknowledge that we can only identify a notion in the myth of heroic education.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, this notion might have remained in popular consciousness through to the fourth century, but it is equally possible, as mentioned above, that it languished until Plato revived it within his own works. This is the cautious stance that Griffith (2001) takes in noting, "It may be that the family-based pedagogy, represented by the purely human figures of Phoinix, Mentor, and Nestor, is the more firmly rooted in contemporary Greek practice; "Chiron" may represent more of a fantasy, or a dim memory of a now-defunct Bronze Age institution of initiation."<sup>34</sup> We might be similarly suspicious of the presentation of the Sophists as rivals to a modern version of a heroic education, as opposed to rivals to the *grammatistai* or to a notion of education through civic involvement, since this presentation of the Sophists as rivals shows up most clearly in the texts of Plato, where it serves the author's purposes to align his master Socrates with an old and venerable pedagogical methodology against strange and novel new approaches to

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32 Beck (1964) 49: "Cheiron was responsible for the whole development of his pupil, moral, physical, and intellectual, and not merely or solely for the imparting of specific aspects of knowledge."

33 As Griffith (2001) argues, "Within this poetical context, and also within the heroizing visual art of the Archaic period, the figure of Chiron the centaur constitutes a striking educational "institution," whose status and relevance to actual Archaic practice is hard to determine" (34).

34 Griffith (2001) 35.

education.<sup>35</sup>

While Beck and Marrou each find Homeric “roots” for the erotic and individual teacher-student relationship found in Plato, it remains uncertain whether a reader would have *come to* Plato’s text with that ideal in mind, or whether he would have developed that notion as a product of his interaction with Plato’s text.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, there are a wide range of communal educational practices in ancient Greece with which, for the various reasons discussed above, Beck and Marrou deal only in a limited fashion, and which would make up an important component of the educational practices that Plato sought to address.<sup>37</sup>

In brief, Beck and Marrou, different though their interests and styles of scholarship may be, both provide a picture of Athenian education that excludes many of the practices that inculcated a sense of democratic and civic values in Athenian youth. Although Marrou looks to Hellenistic schools and Beck to the “Great Educators”, both depend heavily on a picture of Athenian education that can be gleaned from the works of Plato – and in particular, from the words of Socrates as he criticizes rival pedagogies.

For this reason, their works are only of limited use for a project such as this dissertation,

35 Havelock (1963) downplays the disruptive influence of the Sophists, and instead reads the *grammatistai*, and especially their focus on poetic memorization, as the focus of Plato’s attacks on poetry in the *Republic*: “Such enormous powers of poetic memorization could be purchased only at the cost of total loss of objectivity. Plato’s target was indeed an educational procedure and a whole way of life” (45).

36 Whitehead (1993) offers a cautionary note in extrapolating from Plato to a larger Athenian value system: “The peripherality of Plato’s thought to the real-life world of classical Athens and its democratic mentality is not something that our generation needs to be elaborately convinced of” (38).

37 More recent scholarship has done much to flesh out the varied components of the education of an Athenian youth, emphasizing the role of institutionalized age-groups, participation in cult, and military training in the enculturation of an Athenian citizen. Griffith (2001) provides a thorough overview of the various Athenian institutions that contributed to the education of young Athenian men. See further discussion below.

which questions the comprehensive nature of the picture of Athenian education that Socrates' words provides, as well as the traditional reading of the *Republic* as a descriptive proposal of a new pedagogy for Athenian youth. I turn next to a survey of some elements of Athenian education that are not featured in Marrou and Beck's works, or that are not discussed much by Socrates in the *Republic*, before concluding this chapter with a review of the "traditional" reading of the *Republic* to which I alluded above.

#### 1.4 Learning to be Athenian

Citizenship in Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE was not contingent upon the attainment of a certain level of formal education; citizenship was defined almost entirely by birth (and was granted through merit or service to foreigners and metics only under extraordinary circumstances).<sup>38</sup> However, by Plato's time most Athenian citizens were assumed to have at least a basic level of literacy: the ability to make out and to write letters.<sup>39</sup> Though the sausage seller in Aristophanes' *Knights* counts himself as barely educated, he can read and write (180, 1235-9). Citizens might depend upon their ability

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38 For more on Athenian citizenship laws, in particular following the reforms of Pericles, see Hansen (1999) 94-97. Hansen points out that the process for naturalization was a lengthy one made up of "a special procedure involving two Assembly meetings, of which the second was required to have a quorum of 6000 and the voting had to be by secret ballot" (94). In the surviving record, the majority of these naturalization ceremonies were for foreign princes or statesmen, and can therefore be thought of as honorary.

39 See Ober (1989) 158: "In order to function as a citizen, and certainly in order to carry out the responsibilities of many of the magistracies, the Athenian citizen needed a basic command of letters. On the other hand, it is unlikely that many Athenians were fully literate in the sense that they read easily and frequently, for pleasure and instruction." Robb (1994) suggests that initially the elite were educated privately by a *grammatistes* in reading and writing, but during the course of the fifth century writing schools began to supplement and in some cases replace this private instruction, making a basic level of literacy accessible to a larger class of individuals (189). His description of the evolving Athenian educational system is plausible, but we cannot say at this time whether such *grammatistai* would have taught *only* reading and writing (and, if so, at what level), or also encouraged some analysis of the current canon. I return to the question of the rise of literacy in Athens in chapter 2.



to scratch out names to participate in ostracism<sup>40</sup> or to make out posted decrees and laws,<sup>41</sup> but reading and writing do not appear to have occupied a privileged position in Athenian notions of education.<sup>42</sup> That said, in the surviving literature it is common to find someone who can write but who is considered uneducated; it is a very rare thing to be educated but not able to write.<sup>43</sup>

Athenian models of education were not based upon the development of reading, writing, and math skills, all of which form the core of modern public education. Instead, in discussions such as that of “Old Education” in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, the focus is on physical training and music.<sup>44</sup> These two branches - physical education (taught by the *paidotribes*), and music (by the *kitharistes*) – occupied positions above grammar/writing (taught by the *grammatistes*).<sup>45</sup> Although the *kitharistai* taught their pupils *mousike*,

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40 Of course, the presence of the practice of ostracism is not a guarantee for even functional illiteracy (the ability to make and make out letters) amongst the majority of the population. Broneer (1938) writes of a cache of 191 *ostraka* that were the product of only fourteen different hands. While the existence of these *ostraka* does not argue *against* widespread functional illiteracy, it does undermine the use of *ostraka* as evidence for popular literacy. Cf. Robb (1994) 208 no. 7.

41 Although citizens could also have those laws read to them by others; see further discussion in chapter 2.

42 Perhaps this attitude can be attributed to the practical nature of writing, and its subsequent connections with banausic skills. See Beck (1964) 83.

43 Plato *Lg.* 689d.

44 Note that the following discussion does not include activities that modern scholars might identify as providing a civic or political education, which includes attendance at tragedies, religious practices, military training, and inclusion in institutionalized age-groups. For a survey of the Athenian institutions that might have had a pedagogical function, see Griffith (2001). Greek comedy and tragedy have also been recognized by scholars as serving a valuable pedagogical function within the Athenian *polis*, and there are certainly pedagogical strategies common to theater and philosophy. However, the focus of this project is on the intersection between philosophy, education, and *texts*, and as such does not address issues of performance and philosophy. For the debt philosophy owes theater in its performative and critical character, see Mononson (1994) 172-197; for the co-option of elements of comedy and drama by Plato into his dialogues, see Nightingale (1995) 60-92, 172-192.

45 Beck (1964) 80-1.

which included singing, dancing, and memorizing and reciting poetry, they did not necessarily teach reading.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the inclusion of this third component – *grammata* – in descriptions of education only becomes typical in the fourth century BCE sources; although it is possible that *grammatistai* were a part of the fifth century Athenian educational landscape, our sources make this difficult to judge.<sup>47</sup>

Although a general discussion of “Athenian education” elides innumerable important distinctions – between developments from the fifth to fourth centuries, and between various economic classes in Athens – such generalities can often be found in the primary sources themselves. For example, when Protagoras describes the ‘current state’ of education within Plato’s *Protagoras* (which has a dramatic date in the 430s BCE), he offers a thorough description of the education of a young Athenian boy from his early youth to his early adulthood. However, Protagoras caps off his discussion by stating that he has just described what “the most able”, by which he means “the wealthiest”, do: “the sons of these, who begin to go to school at the earliest age, are set free at the latest.”<sup>48</sup>

Not only are we left to wonder what extent of the Athenian population qualifies as “the

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46 Morgan (1999) 48.

47 Lessons involving reading and writing are depicted on the Berlin Douris vase (c. 480 BCE), as well as depictions of *musike* and *gymnastike* (Berlin no. 2285). See Blanck (1992) 24-25, who relates the figures depicted on the Duris vase directly to the descriptions of education in Plato: “Die bekannteste Darstellung dieser Art bietet die Schale des Duris in Berlin, auf der alle drei Fächer illustriert sind, die nach Platon (Protagoras 325c-326b; Leges 7,809-810) zusammen die Paideia, die Erziehung, ausmachen; nämlich die *grammata*, Schreib- und Leseunterricht, dann Lektüre und das Auswendiglernen von Prosa und Gedichten, die *musiké* mit Musikunterricht und Tanz sowie die *gymnastiké*, der Sport.” I discuss the relevant passage of *Protagoras* below, but as a whole I am far more cautious than Blanck in accepting that the presence of scenes of reading and writing on vases is indicative of general literacy. It stretches the evidence to go from few depictions of writing on vases to the statement that “daß in der jungen athenischen Demokratie das Beherrschen und Nutzen der Schrift dem Bürger etwas Wesentliches geworden ist” (Blank 1992 25).

48 *Prt.* 326D: *καὶ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν οἱ μάλιστα δυνάμενοι - μάλιστα δὲ δύνανται οἱ πλουσιώτατοι - καὶ οἱ τούτων ὑεῖς, πρωαίτατα εἰς διδασκάλων τῆς ἡλικίας ἀρξάμενοι φοιτᾶν, ὀψαίτατα ἀπαλλάττονται.*

wealthiest” under Protagoras' definition, but also how his description of education should be modified for the less wealthy – did their children merely attend school for less time, or was the content of their education qualitatively different? Similarly, when historically should we locate this description – one which is supposedly set within the fifth century, but which was written in the early fourth? When the education of Athenians is described within such dialogues as made up of *grammata*, *mousike*, and *gymnastike*, and yet *grammata* receives scant mention within fifth century sources, it is difficult to know whether Plato is accurately reflecting fifth century practices, or is generalizing from the practices of his own time.<sup>49</sup>

Just as “reading, writing, and arithmetic” is not a comprehensive description of modern elementary education – one could argue that history or social studies occupies as much of the curriculum as any of these three – so too we should not assume from the fact that the ancient sources themselves mainly discuss education in terms of *grammata*, *mousike*, and *gymnastike* that these subjects were the sole components of an Athenian education.<sup>50</sup> However, these three areas of study did likely form the core of education at

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49 *Grammata*, *mousike*, and *gymnastike* in Plato: *Prt.* 312a-b and *Clit.* 407b-c. See Morgan (1999) 50.

50 This list excludes any mention of basic arithmetic, for example, even though some basic ability to figure accounts must have been required to maintain the economics of a household. Consider, for example, the opening of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in which Strepsiades commands his slave to bring a light and tablets, so that he might take account of his current debts, including calculating the interest he owes (*Nu.* 18-20). The fact that Strepsiades is using written notation to keep his accounts, and further that he is able to calculate interest on these accounts, goes unremarked upon within the play. And yet none of the descriptions of educational practices in the play – either at Socrates' school or in the debate between the better and worse arguments – mention the teaching of basic arithmetic. From this absence I do not think that we should conclude that mathematics had no place in Athenian education, but rather that it was not considered one of the key components. Morgan (1999) posits that the lack of discussion of mathematics in our surviving literature on education might be related to the particular genres of pedagogical material that survive (in which the authors are interested in “literary criticism, oratory, or philosophy”) or else might be because mathematics “had a reputation as a practical skill, and not one with widespread cultural implications and hence not one which invited discussion in our sources” (53).

the formal schools to which we have scattered references in Greek literature; although we have evidence that physical schools – by which I mean buildings devoted to educational activities – existed, we have little evidence for the curriculum of such institutions.<sup>51</sup> Similar evidential constraints prevent us from commenting on the attendance rate or prevalence of these schools, although some scholars have hypothesized that “to go to school and to be trained in a few elementary disciplines had become fairly normal for an Athenian citizen by the middle of the fifth century.”<sup>52</sup> Certainly Better Argument’s speech in the *Clouds* (961-983) presents as a common experience for boys to go to a music teacher and a physical trainer, and it is possible that such schools allowed for the democratization of a basic level of Athenian education.<sup>53</sup>

In addition, it is important to remember that, *contra* Marrou, we needn’t assume that education exclusively or even primarily occurred for the majority of citizen children within the context of a discrete teacher-student relationship. Civic participation, whether as a fully functioning citizen attending the Ecclesia or the people’s courts, or as a youth undergoing cult initiation or associating in institutionalized age-groups, is a component of

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51 This evidence includes Pausanias’ account of a school of sixty boys in Astypalaea in 496 BC (IV 15.6), a tragedy in Herodotus in which a roof fell in on a school in Chios in 494 BC, killing one hundred and nineteen boys (VI 27), and Thucydides’ tale, in the context of a narrative on the brutality of the Thracians, of the massacre of all the boys in a school at Mykalessos in 413 BC (VII 29). Thucydides in fact mentions that the boys’ school was the “largest in the town”, a comment that implies that multiple schools existed in one town, but does not tell us how many, how large, or what their function. Aeschines mentions a “school-room” (τὸ διδασκαλεῖον) in his recitation of a Solonic law governing the behavior of teachers (διδάσκαλοι) and the sense of the passage is that the average juror would have sent his son to such an institution for at least a limited period of time (1.9-12).

52 Raaflaub (1983) 532. See also Marrou (1956) 43 and Beck (1964) 77ff, 80 ff.

53 Beck (1964): “The school as we know it in the classical period as a means of providing, in separate compartments, the three types of education for the whole citizen body was thus created by the social pressures engendered by the rise of democracy and the commercial pressures of increasing trade, reacting with the already existing aristocratic tradition of education” (80).

the education of Athenian males that probably played a much larger role in the establishment of a common standard of basic knowledge than did any private education.<sup>54</sup>

And so we can summarize this rough sketch of Athenian educational practices up to the mid-fifth century as follows: the pupil would be educated in music or poetry, writing, and physical activity by three separate teachers; the level of private education attained would vary with the disposable income available, but would be supplemented by free public activities available to citizens, such as attendance at or participation in tragedies; the presence of writing in educational contexts (and in society more broadly) gradually increased in the fifth century;<sup>55</sup> some of the educational activities took place within the context of spaces defined for such use, but equally could take place within spaces, such as public gymnasia, temporarily adapted as “classrooms”; and while the ideal of a one to one student-teacher relationship might have existed, the practice of having one teacher attend to a group of students, just like the practice of that teacher charging for his services, not only existed in the fifth century, but was not considered particularly remarkable. In the next chapter I examine the introduction of written texts into this pedagogical environment, but I conclude this chapter by considering some of the ways in which scholars have related Plato's *Republic* to Athenian attitudes towards education more generally.

## 1.5 Plato's Theory of Education

A great deal of the difficulty in forming a picture of the Athenian educational

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54 For the education of adult citizens, see Ober (2001), esp. 194-195. For the role of institutionalized age groups on the education of Athenian youth, see Griffith (2001).

55 I focus more extensively on the rise of texts in the fifth and fourth centuries in chapter 2.

practices in the fifth century stems from the fact that, as mentioned above, most of our commentary on education comes from those either critiquing the status quo (or critiquing changes to the status quo) such as Aristophanes, or those proposing a new model of education, as Plato or Isocrates have been thought to be doing. Indeed, for the historian of education, Plato presents an intriguing source: he seemingly outlines current educational practice while at the same time he delineates his own opinions on proper education. One of the difficulties with reading Plato, and in particular Plato's *Republic*, in this way is that such a reading relies upon the dual assumptions that Socrates is speaking for positions that Plato wishes to advocate, and that Socrates' portrait of alternatives to this Platonic model of education is a fair one. I return specifically to the *Republic* in chapter 3, in which I begin to investigate reading this text neither as prescriptive nor as descriptive, but rather as paideutic. Here, in the context of this discussion on Athenian education, it is helpful to outline the alternative approach to reading the *Republic*, an approach that does regard it as presenting an outline of the ideal education in the form of the education of the guardians in Kallipolis.

In the introduction to the 1935 publication of R. L. Nettleship's *The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic*, Spencer Leeson says that although “much has been written about the educational sections of the *Republic*” still “there is no publication in English other than this Essay which treats Plato's views on education as a single whole.”<sup>56</sup> It is no accident that Leeson described Nettleship's essay as on “Plato's views”, for in his seminal work Nettleship makes little distinction between comments made by Socrates

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56 Nettleship (1935) v.

and views held by Plato himself.<sup>57</sup> Nettleship is not alone among scholars, both of his day and subsequently, in his strong identification of Plato's views with Socrates' statements, but what is unique in Nettleship's work is author's ultimate goal: he is providing an exegesis of Plato's *Republic* in order to uncover ideas and programs that might be useful within the context of late nineteenth century British schools.<sup>58</sup>

Nettleship regards Plato's views on education as synonymous with Socrates' descriptions of the education of the guardian class in Kallipolis. Occasionally, Nettleship makes reference to Greek educational practices more generally, as when he explains to his modern reader that, although two years of exclusive physical exercise might seem excessive, “We must remember, however, that Plato was thinking of something more analogous to an incipient military service than to the games of our schools.”<sup>59</sup> More

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57 See Nettleship's (1935) discussion of Socrates' description of the education of the guardians:

“And in another famous passage, to which we shall have to refer more than once, the young citizen who is being educated is compared to an animal at pasture; from the things which he sees and hears about him he assimilates, little by little, the good or the evil which they embody...It is this feeling of the assimilative power of the soul which leads Plato to attach such immense importance to the circumstances and environment of life, and makes him on the whole more disposed to attribute moral evil to bad nurture than to inherent vice.” (6)

In this section on “The Nature of the Soul”, Nettleship clarifies and explains the positions taken by Socrates in the *Republic* with reference to a larger Platonic view of morality and human goodness, a view that Nettleship has extrapolated from other Platonic dialogues, but also found evidence for in the *Republic* itself.

58 In some cases, Nettleship (1935) advocates British schools take up the opposite position from that which he finds in Plato, due to fundamental differences in the national character. For example, in his discussion of the censorship of poetry found in the *Republic*, Nettleship comments:

To Plato, with the restlessness and instability of Greek political life before his eyes, the one thing needful seemed to be to establish in society a permanent 'ethos', a traditional character, which should be able to resist the shocks of party-spirit and individual caprice. And if this could only be done by a system of education, which should receive each citizen at birth and retain its hold upon him through life, it was no mere fancy to watch with a jealous eye the first symptoms of innovation in the system, even in matters so apparently trivial as popular songs. To us, with our national gift for forming and carrying on traditional modes of life and thought, it will often seem that in education we need more exhortation to adopt new ideas than to remain faithful to old ones (79).

59 Nettleship (1935) 89.

frequently, Nettleship explains Plato's educational scheme *in vacuo*, referencing only the philosophy expressed (through Socrates' words) in Plato's other works.

Nettleship's work has been called an exercise in “philosophical teaching,” as well as a work in the “history of philosophy”, and these descriptions have been used to distinguish Nettleship's approach to Plato from that of scholars such as Jaeger and Havelock, whose work is classed as “historical scholarship.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, before passing judgement on the relative merits of these two approaches, it is sufficient to note that they are, in fact, distinct. Nettleship is concerned with bringing Plato's philosophy to bear on contemporary British educational practices, and as such his exegesis of Plato focuses on pointing out the ideas within the *Republic* that could fruitfully be related to British schools and on providing cultural background to clarify those sections of “Plato's” philosophy with which Nettleship believes his own reader would have difficulty. Yet Nettleship shares with Jaeger and Havelock a reading of the *Republic* that holds that, at its heart, the dialogue can be read as a treatise on the ideal education for Athenian youth.

This approach to reading the *Republic* presents Plato as some kind of a dogmatist, and finds the words of Socrates to be a “mouthpiece” for the thoughts of Plato, especially in sections of monologue such as those found in the middle books of the *Republic*.<sup>61</sup> This

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<sup>60</sup> In his forward to a later publication of Nettleship's essay, McClintock (1968) emphasizes the virtues of Nettleship's approach to Plato in the face of the more contemporary scholarship of Jaeger and (especially) Havelock. McClintock not only calls Nettleship's work “philosophical teaching” while Jaeger and Havelock are mere historical scholars, but also argues that the former kind of work is inherently more valuable than the latter. Wellman (1970) outlines some of the major figures and schools of scholarship engaged in the debate over how to read Plato and attempts to bring Nettleship's scholarship closer to that of Jaeger and Havelock by calling it work “in the history of philosophy”, which he defines as concerned with “the tradition of ideas, doctrines, and systems which have attempted to bring to consciousness and expression the modes in which human reason manifests itself in its continuing search for truth” (352).

<sup>61</sup> While it is not *necessary* for an individual to ascribe to the mouthpiece theory in order to discuss the “theories” and “thoughts” of Plato, it is very common. Consider the entries in *Feminist Interpretations*



approach is hardly new or recent – the debate over whether or not Plato was a “dogmatist” whose positions could be largely inferred from the words of characters such as Socrates, Timaeus, and the Athenian and Eleatic Strangers existed even in antiquity, as we see in Diogenes Laertius.<sup>62</sup> Diogenes Laertius himself advocates that Plato does, in fact, reveal his own position through four characters (the four listed above), in the cases where Plato himself has a firm grasp on the matter.<sup>63</sup>

This is a debate that continues in scholarship today, although rarely with the assumption that Socrates is always *merely* the mouthpiece of Plato.<sup>64</sup> Instead, conditions are used to decide when Socrates (or another character) is to be taken as Plato's mouthpiece. For example, those who employ a developmental approach to Plato's dialogues hold that the dialogues can be arranged chronologically to align with Plato's

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*of Plato*, ed. Tuana (1994), which overwhelmingly assume the words of Socrates represent the thoughts of Plato, although this assumption is not explicitly stated. The descriptions by Socrates of the education of the guardians from the *Republic* (as well as discussions of education in the *Laws*) feature prominently in each of the essays in “Plato on Women,” the first half of the volume (Vlastos, Smith, Canto, Saxonhouse, Spelman), and are taken as descriptive of *Plato's* views on education. Indeed, more often than not the mouthpiece assumption is never explicitly stated; perhaps one of the more obvious cases is Paul Shorey's (1933) *What Plato Said* – the fact that *Plato* (barring the letters) never said anything does not enter into the discussion of the work.

62 3.51: Ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλὴ στάσις ἐστὶ καὶ οἱ μὲν φασι αὐτὸν δογματίζειν, οἱ δ' οὐ, φέρε καὶ περὶ τούτου διαλάβωμεν. αὐτὸ τοῖνον τὸ δογματίζειν ἐστὶ δόγματα τιθέναι ὡς τὸ νομοθετεῖν νόμους τιθέναι. δόγματα δὲ ἑκατέρως καλεῖται, τὸ τε δοξαζόμενον καὶ ἡ δόξα αὐτή.

63 3.52: ὁ τοῖνον Πλάτων περὶ μὲν ὧν κατεῖληφεν ἀποφαίνεται, τὰ δὲ ψευδῆ διελέγχει, περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀδήλων ἐπέχει. καὶ περὶ μὲν τῶν αὐτῶ δοκούντων ἀποφαίνεται διὰ τεττάρων προσώπων, Σωκράτους, Τιμαίου, τοῦ Ἀθηναίου ξένου, τοῦ Ἐλεάτου ξένου. For a review on the ancient debate over the relationship between the words of Socrates and the views of Plato, see Tarrant (2000) 67-82.

64 Nails (2000) outlines some of the difficulties with the mere mouthpiece stance, including first that “Socrates unarguably says and does *some* things in the dialogues of Plato that he says and does in the extant dialogues and fragments of other writers of the Socratic *logoi* genre” and so “there is at least a minimal sense in which Plato's character is *either* true to the historical Socrates *or* deliberately constructed in response to that Socrates of the popular imagination” (18, italics original). Nails also questions, “Who is Plato's mouthpiece when someone else's arguments are stronger, in in passages that purport to be autobiographical of Socrates” in further support that the mere mouthpiece hypothesis is untenable (18-19).

development as a philosophical thinker, and that as Plato develops his philosophical views the portrait of Socrates in the dialogues changes from a largely historical figure whose words belonged to Socrates himself to a character of Plato's design through whom Plato asserts his own philosophy.<sup>65</sup> A dialogue such as the *Republic*, whose middle books in particular are usually classed by developmentalists as “middle dialogues”, is an example of a presentation of Socrates in which Plato works out his own positions in the guise of his mentor.<sup>66</sup> Alternatively, readings such as those given by Kraut (1992) do not assume that one particular individual stands in for Plato; instead, the interlocutors' speeches all taken together can be thought to represent Plato's thought, because “unless we have good evidence to the contrary, we should take Plato to be using the content of his interlocutors' speeches, the circumstances of their meeting, and whatever other material he has at his disposal, to state conclusions he believes for reasons he accepts.”<sup>67</sup> In this latter approach more room is available for a “literary” interpretation of the dialogues, in which the form and presentation of the philosophy is given *some* weight, but still the actual words of the interlocutors – and the main interlocutor in particular – are given the most weight. For scholars working within the strictures of either of these approaches,

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65 Compare Vlastos' own account (1991) of the developmental process, “As Plato changes, the philosophical persona of his Socrates is made to change, absorbing the writer's new convictions, arguing for them with the same zest with which the Socrates of the previous dialogues had argued for the views the writer had shared with the original of that figure earlier on” (53).

66 For ordering the dialogues based on stylometric grounds, see Brandwood (1992). Alternatively, the dialogues can be ordered “by literary tact, historical imagination, or personal hunch” (Kahn 1997: 47). It is difficult to place the *Republic* within the “early, middle, and late” schema based on stylometric grounds, since it contains sections that match stylometrically with each of these periods. However, most developmentalists locate the main body of the *Republic* as 'middle' (Irwin 1977: 291-293; Vlastos 1991: 46-47; Kraut, ed., 1992: xii, 46 n. 57; Fine 1992: 215 n. 1), although there is some disagreement about the location of book one. On the problematic relationship of book one to the rest of the *Republic*, see chapter three.

67 Kraut (1992) 29-30. For a similar position, see Irwin (1992) 51-89.

Socrates' descriptions of the education of the guardian class in the *Republic*, as well as the pedagogical theory contained therein, represent Plato's views on education.

There are a number of reasons why particular scholars resist some version of the mouthpiece theory, but many of these reasons begin with the simple observation that Plato wrote dialogues, rather than treatises. Indeed, in spite of the reflection by Taylor (1956) that Plato is one of the few ancient authors whose “works seem to have come down to us whole and entire,” outside of Plato's letters we do not find any work in which Plato speaks for himself, and so the existence of Plato's philosophy almost exclusively in dialogue form cannot be considered as an accident of preservation, but rather as the design of the author.<sup>68</sup> Scholars are divided about what to conclude from this observation about the genre of Plato's philosophy; for example, those of the “Tübingen school” hold that Plato's true philosophy can only be found in “unwritten doctrines.”<sup>69</sup> Others, including some ancient interpreters, maintain that Plato was a skeptic; he writes in dialogues that largely end in *aporia* because he has no positive doctrines to offer.<sup>70</sup> Yet a third response, which can be thought of as occupying a middle ground between the “mouthpiece theorists” and the “anti-mouthpiece theorists,” is to conclude that Plato *did* hold some doctrines – in particular, those doctrines that appear throughout the dialogues, such as the existence of the soul or the notion of an abstract good – but he deliberately

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68 “Plato is the one voluminous writer of classical antiquity whose works seem to have come down to us whole and entire. Nowhere in later antiquity do we come on any reference to a Platonic work which we do not still possess” (Taylor 1956: 10).

69 For representatives of the Tübingen school, see Gaiser (1959a), Gaiser (1959b), and Krämer (1959). Cf. Press (2000), especially 30 n. 12 on the Tübingen school.

70 The “New Academy” of Carneades and Arcesilaus supported the notion that Plato was a skeptic. See Long and Sedley (1987) 445-49. For a modern scholar who advocates the position that Plato was a skeptic, see Stemmer (1992).

couched those doctrines in dialogue form, either to avoid assuming a position of power or authority over his reader, or to encourage his reader to arrive at these doctrines through her own philosophical reasoning.<sup>71</sup>

The rationale behind why an individual is or is not rejecting the mouthpiece theory becomes particularly important when one considers the philosophy in the middle books of the *Republic*. These books, which contain both Socrates' description of the education of the guardians in Kallipolis as well as Socrates' description of the line of knowledge and the allegory of the cave, do have some interaction between Socrates and his interlocutors, but on the whole are more monologues by Socrates than dialogues between equal participants. The absence of a true challenge to Socrates by his interlocutors in these books undercuts the notion that Plato wrote in dialogue form to avoid setting up the text as an authority over its reader.<sup>72</sup> As well, while book 1 presents the kind of lively exchange between a variety of interlocutors and Socrates that one could argue is meant to foster a reader's own dialogue with the text, beginning with the second half of book 2 the *Republic* no longer contains the same polyphony of voices. This is not to say that the *Republic* ceases to be a dialogue, nor to deny that those readers who resist associating Plato's thoughts with Socrates' words can still do so on the grounds that the text is composed in dialogue form, but rather this is to say that the case against taking

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71 See, for example, the position argued by Blondell (2002), who states both that Plato chooses dialogue to avoid an authoritarian stance and that in so doing he suggests that philosophy can only be practiced through self-contemplation: "by avoiding [a treatise] in his own voice, Plato evades the charge of authoritarianism – though he may, at the same time, expose himself to the different charge of evading responsibility. Dialogue form also enables him to avoid the implicit claim that his – or anyone's – philosophical views can in fact be coherently conveyed through assertive discourse." (41).

72 I am speaking of the middle books of the *Republic* quite generally here. Glaucon and (to a less degree) Adeimantus *do* present some resistance to the ideas of Socrates in places, yet their comments mostly result in further monologuing by Socrates (albeit, on a different topic), rather than a discussion between those characters present.

Socrates as a Platonic mouthpiece becomes increasingly difficult as the *Republic* progresses.

In the chapters to follow, I resist the temptation to assume Socrates is speaking for Plato. However, my reasons for rejecting this approach to Plato are not only, or even *mainly*, because that Plato wrote in dialogues. Instead, I argue that the *Republic* is a work that is constructed to alter gradually a reader's philosophical outlook, and as such *even if it were written as a treatise*, we could not extract propositions from the logic of the work and construct an absolute "Platonic philosophy." As I discuss, beginning in chapter 4, the positive philosophy of education presented by Socrates is not to be taken as a general philosophy of education of Plato, but rather as an argument to allow the reader to gradually recognize her own lack of knowledge and need for intellectual rigor.

Before I turn to the *Republic* proper, and the pedagogical strategies it employs, I consider the greater environment in which the work was both created and circulated: the professionalization of higher education and the proliferation of texts. As I discuss in chapter 2, these two phenomena co-evolved, and it during this period, in which fields such as oratory, medicine, and philosophy were both professionalizing and producing texts, that the *Republic* was composed. While Socrates is seen in Plato's dialogues as engaging with prominent figures of the mid to late fifth century, the Platonic text itself – and especially Plato's *Republic* – is engaged with the radical cultural changes of the early fourth century.

## 2. Texts and Fourth Century Athens

### 2.1 Introduction

There are two interrelated shifts that we can identify in the educational practices of the second half of the fifth century: the first is the rise in the prominence of books, and the second is the growing professionalization of fields such as oratory, medicine, and philosophy. In this chapter, I consider how, exactly, these shifts are related. In other words, what use do these developing fields have for texts – specifically, how do the stochastic arts of medicine and oratory use texts pedagogically? Such an investigation can offer valuable insight into the intersection between orality and literacy in education, and help us to see how ancient educators creatively employed the technology of writing to serve a variety of needs for their growing disciplines. I have chosen to pair medicine and oratory because both of these arts are in a similarly epistemologically difficult position. First, these fields must define themselves as viable intellectual enterprises – a particularly difficult task for medicine and oratory, because while both fields argue that they provide their students with a *techné* that is superior to that offered by philosophy, neither can promise the kind of access to absolute truths that tantalizingly appear in philosophical texts. Second, both of these fields seem to be inherently skill based, and to require the development of such skills under the watchful eye of a teacher through some kind of mentorship. As these fields were in direct competition with philosophy for pupils, it is useful to preface our investigation of the pedagogy of Plato's *Republic* with a

survey of what his protreptic text was meant to turn students *away* from, as well as how it was crafted to direct students *towards* philosophy.

This chapter begins with a consideration of the history of texts and literacy in ancient Greece, including the increasing presence of texts in the fifth century and the interplay between texts and orality in Athenian society generally. Next, I turn to the late fifth and early fourth centuries. I examine how texts could be used to define a field in opposition to competing disciplines, and how medicine and oratory incorporated texts into their pedagogy. Finally, to complete the survey of the kinds of pedagogical writing to which Plato was responding, I consider the works of philosophical contemporaries of Plato – the writers of the *Sokratikoi logoi*.

## **2.2 Texts in Fifth Century Athens**

As of the fifth century, writing had been a continuous part of Greek culture for approximately four hundred years, since *c.* 800 BCE, but it originated in this region far

earlier.<sup>1</sup> At some point around 800 BCE the Greeks developed alphabetic writing.<sup>2</sup> This writing seems to have been an adaptation of a dialect of Phoenician from the eastern Mediterranean, and shows some variance in letter formation from one Greek settlement to another.<sup>3</sup> Although much of our evidence for early writing comes in the form of

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1 Our earliest forms of writing in the Greek world are the so-called 'hieroglyphic' signs identified by Arthur Evans in Crete. In this script, which dates from 2000-1650 BCE, objects such as an arrow or a head are represented pictorially (Chadwick 1970, 12). This hieroglyphic script became increasingly stylized and simplified, until around 1750 BCE the script has evolved into the phase that Evans defined as 'Linear A.' In both of these phases, it appears that the writing was pictographic or logographic in nature; that fact, combined with their limited use – primarily, in agricultural records – has likely rendered impossible the potential for deciphering the script in either of these two phases. While we can guess the meaning behind a particular Linear A sign, primarily through tracing it back through the hieroglyphic phase and then conjecturing the real world correspondent object for that sign, we cannot get any sense of the language being recorded here; we cannot know whether one word at all resembled another based on such pictographic or logographic representations. Linear A fades out by 1450 BCE, and is replaced by Linear B. The relationship of Linear B to an earlier system, Linear A, is, as Chadwick puts it, “perplexing” (14). Linear B differs from its predecessors in being a syllabic script. Linear B seems to have been put to many of the same uses, such as lists and records, as Linear A, and we have no reason to suspect that its introduction marked a change in the makeup of the kinds of individuals who could write. However, in the shift to a syllabic script the potential is germinated for the increased dissemination of writing amongst the populace. Certainly this shift marks a very different conception of the relationship between the spoken and written word; with Linear B, objects are now represented by how they are named, rather than by how they appear. Unfortunately, our evidence allows us to do little more than speculate about the socio-economic developments or changes in use that fomented the shift to Linear B. Our evidence for Linear B disappears with the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces, and writing does not appear again until the end of the “Dark Ages” (ca. 1100-750). Yet, when writing does appear, it once again takes on a syllabic form.

2 Goody and Watt (1963) discuss the very different kinds of literacy found in societies with pictographic or logographic based scripts when compared with those which have phonetic scripts. In societies whose script comes from “word signs”:

“it is a striking fact that – for whatever ultimate causes – in Egypt and Mesopotamia, as in China, a literate elite of religious, administrative and commercial experts emerged and maintained itself as a centralised governing bureaucracy on rather similar lines. Their various social and intellectual achievements were, of course, enormous; but as regards the participation of the society as a whole in the written culture, a wide gap existed between the esoteric literate culture and the exoteric oral one...” (314).

Later in the article, Goody and Watt propose some of the consequences of literacy, including a transition from a myth-based to a historical or fact-based society (321-326) with individuals who possess knowledge or facts unavailable to the society as a whole (334-337). For a response to Goody and Watt on these later points, as well as to other scholars who link literacy with the social and economic advancement of a society, see Thomas (1992) 15-28. Thomas also reminds her readers that pictographic systems of writing have an advantage over syllabic writing in areas with a great deal of variation in dialect, since “the signs have the same meaning to all but are pronounced quite differently” (56).

3 Herodotus tells us (Hdt. V 58): “οἱ δὲ Φοίνικες ... ἐσήγαγον διδασκάλια ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ δὴ καὶ γράμματα, οὐκ ἔοντα πρὶν Ἑλλήσι ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, πρῶτα μὲν τοῖσι καὶ ἅπαντες χρέωνται Φοίνικες:



inscriptions for purposes ranging from dedication to ownership claims, these inscriptions ranged in both the complexity of their composition and the fineness of the execution of the writing. Two of the earliest inscriptions on pottery are both in metrical form: the 'Dipylon Vase' and the 'cup of Nestor'.<sup>4</sup> The line on the Dipylon vase makes use of Homeric vocabulary and appears to commemorate a successful feat of dancing; possibly it was inscribed by a symposium host to be given as a prize in a contest, or possibly it was added to the oinochoe later by the successful dancer himself. For our purposes, what is significant about this particular early inscription is the suggestion of an interplay between an oral tradition and the new practice of writing.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2.1 *The Written and Spoken Word*

The intersection of writing and literature is difficult to plot. Ever since the publication of Milman Parry's research on oral composition theory, which was further developed by his student Albert Lord, Homer has largely been regarded as an oral poet, and the two great early epics of ancient Greece – the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* – as the

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μετὰ δὲ χρόνου προβαίνοντος ἅμα τῇ φωνῇ μετέβαλλον καὶ τὸν ῥυθμὸν τῶν γραμμῶτων.” The exact nature of the process of the creation of the Greek alphabet is shrouded in mystery. For a survey of some of the evidence, see Jeffrey (1961, revised 1990) 1-42.

- 4 The so-called Dipylon Oinochoe, National Museum, Athens, ca. 720 BCE. The line in question is “ὄς νῦν ὄρχηστῶν πάντων ἀταλώτατα παίζει / τῷ τόδε ...” or “Whoever now of all the dancers plays most gracefully, to him this...” For a consideration of the possible reasons for the particular line of Homeric hexameter to appear on this vessel, see Robb (1994) 21-43. The inscription on the cup of Nestor (National Museum, Athens, 730-720 BCE) is more lengthy: “Νέστορος [εἰμι] εὖποτ[ον] ποτήρι[ο]· / ὄς δ’ ἂν τοῦδε π[ίησι] ποτηρί[ου] αὐτίκα κῆνον / ἴμερ[ος αἰρ]ήσει καλλιστ[εφάν]ου Ἀφροδίτης.” or “Nestor's cup I am, good to drink from; whoever drinks of this cup empty, straightaway the desire of beautiful-crowned Aphrodite will seize” (LSAG: 233, no. 1).
- 5 The vast majority of our early Attic inscriptions are some form of property identification, either identifying the owner of an object (be it an individual or, in the case of a dedication, a god) or the giver (as is especially the case in dedications). It is noteworthy that when these identifications stretch beyond a simple word or two, they almost invariably take a hexametrical form. See Robb (1994) 44-45. Our evidence in investigating the history of early writing is limited to writing inscribed on pottery or stone; other materials, such as the wooden tablets that supposedly preserved the laws of Solon, have largely perished (Thomas 1992 57).

products of an oral, rather than literary, culture.<sup>6</sup> It is against the backdrop of this oral society, however conceived, that the alphabet is developed.<sup>7</sup> Much of our knowledge of the uses to which writing was put is hampered by the variable survival rate of materials. Pottery and stone survive at a much higher rate than letter, wood, waxed tablets, or papyrus; conversely, although bronze and gold are quite durable, the valuable nature of the material makes it difficult to guess the survival rate of such plaques.

That said, although we cannot hope to have a full picture of the development and spread of writing in ancient Greece, from the physical remains of writing we can trace the use of writing from private uses, including dedications and demarcations of ownership, to

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6 See Adam Parry's translations of Milman Parry's work, collected in Parry (1971). What is meant by regarding Homer as an "oral poet" and how an "oral society" is imagined to have functioned ever-evolving. Parry and Lord focused on the use of Homeric epithets, arguing that a long tradition of bards had developed a series of formulae that any particular singer could rely upon for his on-the-spot composition. The singer would select the appropriate epithet, formula, or half-line to appropriately complete the dactylic hexameter as he produced it. However, more recent scholarship has emphasized the interplay between memorization and composition. At the very least, Parry and Lord's thesis requires that the oral poet rely on his extensive mental collection of epithets and the like, and is able to call such "line fillers" up on the spot. Once this possibility is introduced, there is little to prevent the hypothesis that in fact the bard might also have whole sections of text, still formulaic, upon which he might call, such as scenes of banqueting or arming for battle. Yet a close analysis of the language of the Homeric poems shows that the language of speeches are, in general, more grammatically complex and rely upon more varied vocabulary than the language of narration (Griffin 1986). This analysis raises the possibility that such speeches, though hardly formulaic, were composed in a separate process from that of the narration – in other words, that such speeches were potentially crafted by the bard in private, memorized, and then recalled when the bard reached the appropriate moment in the story. For further discussion on the interplay between memory and improvisation, as well as a review of some of the criticisms of the "Parry-Lord thesis", see Thomas (1992) 29-51.

7 Powell (1991) finds a direct relationship between the completion of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the development of the Phoenician alphabet for the Greek language. Powell argues that the Homeric epics that we currently possess were almost entirely the product of one particular bard working in concert with the inventor of the alphabet ("Palamedes") to record a new, longer, and more complex version of older sung episodes (250). Alternatively, Woodard (1997) argues against Powell's position, and indeed the idea that "a writing system would be expressly engineered for such a high-minded and noble purpose as recording poetry and not for some baser, or at least broader, utilitarian end seems not altogether probable" (253). Woodard instead asserts, and defends mostly on the basis of historical linguistics, that the origin of the Greek alphabet was the adoption of the Phoenician script by Cypriot scribes.

its appearance as a feature of the public sphere.<sup>8</sup> We can supplement this evidence with ancient sources describing written materials that do not survive to us, such as the *Axones* of Solon, which the literary record tells us were inscribed on wood and set up in the Royal Colonnade c. 600 BCE (Aristotle, *Ath.* 7). Although Solon's noticeboards have not survived, from this same period we find comparanda for the display of inscriptions of civil law in the form of legal instructions from Chios and sacred laws from Tiryns.<sup>9</sup> Yet this monumentalizing of law does not supplant oral traditions; indeed, the officials known as *mnemones*, or 'remembrancers', who can provide testimony for matters such as court proceedings, not only continue to function down into the classical period, but reference is made to the irrefutable nature of their testimony within an inscription itself.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of the fifth century BCE, we do find a shift from reliance on oral laws to the written record. Athenians turn to written law in response to a series of constitutional struggles and have the laws of Drakon and Solon, as well as current law, codified and inscribed for public display.<sup>11</sup> Notably this codification is scarcely finished (400/399) before the marble law-code becomes obsolete. The constant revision of law and composition of new laws made such a public display symbolic rather than practical, and in court cases after 399 no mention is made of this display; rather, orators reference a

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8 On the early use of writing to mark or define ownership and property, see Johnson (1983) 63-8.

9 Chios: Meiggs and Lewis (1969) nos. 8, 13. Tiryns: *LSAG*: 58-63. See Thomas (1992) 65-73.

10 Meiggs and Lewis (1969) 32.20-21. See Thomas (1992) 69.

11 Lysias 30 describes the actions of one Nikomachos, a leading figure on the codification board. For the fragments of the so-called "Wall of Nikomachos" see *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 104.5-6 = Meiggs and Lewis (1969) 86 and Fornara (1977) no. 15B. See Hansen (1991) 162-164; Robb (1994) 141-142.

specific *stèle* or the papyrus records kept in the state archive in the Metroon.<sup>12</sup> The period of constitutional crisis is an extraordinary situation in which both the democrats and the oligarchs claim their understanding of Athenian law as correct, and so there is a need to shift from personal citation or memory of law to public display and agreement. When Athens is not in such a crisis, it is no longer essential that all citizens have (theoretical) access to all current law; it is enough that these laws are written somewhere, and that they can be called upon if necessary.

Thus even in a case where, to our modern eyes, there seems to be a distinct advantage to written practices over oral ones, we do not find that writing entirely supplants traditional practices rooted in orality. Laws might now be written, but when evoked they are read out to the jurors rather than displayed for the jurors to read for themselves.<sup>13</sup> In other aspects of Athenian public life we find written documents largely function in conjunction with oral testimony.<sup>14</sup> In the mid-fourth century BCE, an Athenian cannot point to a birth certificate to prove either his or his parents' citizenship; rather, once male children are eighteen, those seeking to be recognized as citizens are added to their deme register only after their demesmen have voted on the matter by

12 The last extant court speech that mentions the display in the Stoa Basileios is Andokides' *On The Mysteries*, commonly dated to 399 BCE, although MacDowell (1962) argues for dating it to 400 (204-5). See Hansen (1991) 164; Robb (1994) 143-146. The creation of a central archive in Athens probably occurred between 409 and 404 BCE (Boegehold 1972).

13 Robb (1994) describes this process as being a kind of witnessing, "Thus the laws were treated as a form of evidence that might be presented before the court, and the pleader was himself responsible for presenting them" (140).

14 Thomas (2009) emphasizes the rather late appearance of written contracts for private individuals, and points out that even once they appear, "trust in writing cannot simply be assumed to override trust in witnesses. As Antiphon puts it in his first speech, a dying man anxious to name his murderer will call witnesses from his friends and relatives and tell them who the murderer was; failing that he will write and use slaves as witnesses (I 28-30). Writing might be called upon when personal trust is lacking" (27).

appealing to their own knowledge of the candidate and the candidate's family history.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, if his request to be recognized is denied, or if his citizenship is later challenged, he must prove his identity in court, primarily through the use of witnesses who might testify as to his family's Athenian ancestry.<sup>16</sup>

Just as the use of writing within the public sphere of Athenian life shows an interplay between orality and literacy, so too does private use of texts. As mentioned above, the role of writing in the composition of the Homeric epics is a fraught issue. Later poets, such as Hesiod, Sappho, and Alcaeus, write poetry of a more individualistic nature, which presupposes that it will be passed down in an unaltered form with the identity of the original author intact – a presupposition which may be taken to indicate the use of texts to preserve a particular rendering of a poem.<sup>17</sup> These poems were still located firmly within a performance culture – both for their recitation as well as for their composition – and yet it is possible that the increased use of texts is responsible for the shift in tone and subject matter from Homeric to archaic poetry.

At the beginning of the fifth century depictions of written documents begin to appear within the subject matter of vase painting.<sup>18</sup> In almost every scene in which the content of the documents can be discerned, the scrolls appear to contain verse writing

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15 Aristotle, *Ath.* 42.

16 For more on the interplay between oral practices and texts in legal contexts in fifth and fourth century Athens, see Cohen (2003) 78-96.

17 For more on the use of texts by archaic poets, see Knox (1985) 3-4; Bowie (1981).

18 Immerwahr (1964) 17-48 and Immerwahr (1973) 143-47. Forty-five of these scenes were collected by Immerwahr, and their sudden appearance at the beginning of the fifth century was taken by Immerwahr as indicative of a relationship between literacy and the development of Athenian democracy.

(rather than prose).<sup>19</sup> These scenes usually depict a male adolescent reading, reciting, or singing in the presence of an older individual, usually male as well.<sup>20</sup> Rarer are depictions of adults reading; these are mostly confined to scenes of women reading amongst themselves.<sup>21</sup> Although many activities – such the presentation of libations for the dead (by men or women) – can be conveyed through the presence of a solitary individual, depictions of reading overwhelmingly show it to be a communal activity in the fifth century.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, it is unclear from the schoolroom scenes involving adolescents that *reading* is the ultimate goal of the depicted activity, rather than the memorization of a particular hymn or poem. Here our modern intuitions do not necessarily aid in interpretation – while under our educational system students read aloud to prove that they know their letters, and with the ultimate goal of reading independently, there is no indication from the vase paintings that the text is anything more than a technology to aid in memorization, and a great deal of indication in the literary record that memorization of poetry, rather than skill in reading, was the ultimate goal of a proper Athenian education.<sup>23</sup>

And yet, although literacy might not have been the primary goal, it was a

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19 The one possible exception is a fragment of an Attic red-figured cup by the Akstorides painter, ca. 470-450 BCE, now located in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, CA (86 AE 324). See Immerwahr (1973) and Robb (1994) 186-188.

20 Although a red-figured cup by the Sabouroff painter (ca. 460 BCE), located in the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam, depicts a boy singing before an older woman.

21 These figures perhaps represent the muses, or perhaps the women are depicted reading in order to highlight their upper-class status. See Blanck (1992) 26, Cole (1981).

22 Knox (1985) 7.

23 As we find in Protagoras' description of education (*Prt.* 325e-326a). See Berger (1994) 82, Robb (1994) 188.

consequence both of educational practices that began to integrate texts as pedagogical tools, and of the increasing presence of texts within the political and economic lives of Athenians. It remains possible in Plato's time to be a participatory citizen with minimal literacy, especially if the citizen in question can rely on a friend or his fellow citizens e.g. to identify his name when it arises for jury duty.<sup>24</sup> However, by the composition period of the *Republic*, writing has had a presence in the social and political lives of Athenians for over a century, and by now is nearly ubiquitous.<sup>25</sup> It should not be surprising to find the use of texts transform from an *aide-mémoire* for the memorization of poetry to a tool in a variety of newly emerging disciplines.<sup>26</sup>

As the preceding discussion cautions, we should not assume that the arrival of written prose works in these fields supplants the use of teachers; rather, we should imagine that the relationship between oral communication and written texts continues to be one in which the text serves the oral practices. Rather than envision a solitary reader, we should suppose communities of readers, perhaps led by a particular teacher-figure, or

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24 As Thomas (2009) comments, “Between the faltering or illiterate ostraka of the 480s and 470s and the more sophisticated record keeping of the mid-to-late fourth-century democracy, the very active democratic citizen (and I stress “active”) will have had to change. What worked as ‘functional literacy’ in the democracy of the 470s was not so functional two generations later, let alone three or four” (42).

25 In addition to the presence of writing on vase-painting, in publicly displayed laws, and in other civic functions such as jury duty, characters are also depicted reading in Greek tragedy and comedy. Indeed, one scene in Euripides' *Theseus* (fr. 382, from Athenaeus 10.454b-c), which involves an illiterate shepherd describing the shapes of letters, depends upon the audience being able to figure out the letters (they spell ΘΗCEΥC) in order to understand the joke. Note that this scene does not require an advanced level of literacy, but rather the ability to recognize letters and to sound out a name. Blanck (1992 25-26) interprets from this evidence that the majority of Athenians could read and that “der *aggrammatos* eher die Ausnahme war” (29), although he does not define precisely what he means by literate/illiterate (or *grammatos/aggrammatos*). See Harris (1989) for a discussion of “levels” of literacy, esp. pp. 3-24.

26 Books were also tools that aided in both the performance and composition of theater – actors used texts to help learn their roles, and Aristophanes' intertextual references to Euripides and Aeschylus suggests a careful study of their works. Kleberg (1967) 4.

perhaps reading amongst themselves.

### 2.3 The Rise of Disciplines

During this same period in which texts are becoming increasingly widespread, the world of human knowledge is being colonized and claimed by a variety of emerging disciplines. In the first stasimon of Sophocles' *Antigone* (332-372), the “Ode to Man,” dated to the 443/2, we can see a growing recognition of the power and potential of *logos*.<sup>27</sup> By means of an instrument (349: μηχανή) or skill (365: τέχνη) man farms, hunts, and traps, but he also builds, protects, and rules. He has taught himself speech and reason, and uses the power of his mind to protect his city and to save himself from the ravages of disease. The tone of this choral ode is ambiguous – at once praising the feats of man while at the same time ominously recalling how man can vacillate from good to evil – and ultimately concludes with the wish that the speaker never be visited by, or “think the thoughts of” (372: ἴσον φρονῶν) a man who acts disgracefully.

The allusions in the “Ode to Man” to both medicine and politics or oratory, as well as the notion of man “teaching himself” (357: ἐδιδάξατο), all suggest certain *kinds* of knowledge that can be both taught and learned. Indeed, one of the major projects of the growing number of intellectual fields in the late fifth and fourth centuries is to define specifically what kind of knowledge belongs to a given field, and the potential benefits – personal, economical, and political – for a student who possesses that knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Aristophanes of Byzantium dates the *Antigone* to 442 or 443, based on the notion that Sophocles was awarded a generalship in the opposition to the revolt of Samos primarily because of the success of the *Antigone*.

<sup>28</sup> As Poulakos (2004) notes, “Although the Sophists did not have a common approach to rhetorical education, their differences can be understood as variations of a central theme: the command of *logos* is the means par excellence to personal and political power” (75).



Sophists and orators demonstrate the merits of their system of argumentation through a display performance – an *epideixis* – and doctors similarly might publicly demonstrate their competence.<sup>29</sup> In fact, we can imagine a kind of grand tour of Greek city-states, of which Athens is one stop, which fosters an exchange of ideas throughout the Greek speaking world.<sup>30</sup>

These demonstrations do not have to take an oral form.<sup>31</sup> But regardless of the medium of transmission, the common mission of these demonstrations is the same: for the author, be he a sophist, natural philosopher, doctor, or orator, to differentiate himself from his competitor, and to present his own claims about the nature of rationality, logic, and sound argumentation. Frequently, this self-definition included not only an explanation of the benefits of one's own system of thought, but also a display of the flaws inherent in other fields. For example, when historians and doctors advocate for an inductive approach from particulars to general principles, they not only establish the logical validity of their own fields, but also challenge the position of natural philosophy – which promotes the deductive form of reasoning of working from postulates to particulars.<sup>32</sup> Thus, these burgeoning fields are not only defining *themselves* in this

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29 Jouanna (1992) 109-59.

30 As Thomas (2000) points out, we must refrain from overemphasizing the importance of Athens to these intellectuals, since “not only did intellectuals travel extensively in this period, but even our relatively slight evidence indicates that Athens was only one of several stops made by some of these men, thus that they had not needed Athens exclusively to support their activities” (13).

31 As I discuss further below, these arguments and advertisements for one particular field of study also can be spread through written media – and in some cases seem to have been composed *exclusively* to be read.

32 Lateiner (1986) observes, “Medicine and history worked from concrete particulars up to generalizations, unlike natural philosophy which arrived at the nature of man and men at the bottom end of its non-empirical chain of reasoning. The medical writers and Herodotus were both acutely aware of this conflict and reject theorizing that is not grounded in sensible particulars” (17). Jones (1946) describes this conflict in loaded terms by stating that the Hippocratic writers were “defending medicine

period, but more specifically are defining themselves *in opposition* to other methodologies.

How can such a demonstration exist in written form? We can see one example of this contest between disciplines in the Hippocratic writing *On Ancient Medicine*, generally dated to between 430 and 400.<sup>33</sup> That work opens with a direct attack on the notion that medicine can be practiced from general postulates to particular treatments: all those who “hypothesize for their argument a hypothesis of their own” are in error about how to practice medicine.<sup>34</sup> The repeated use of ὑπόθεσις and its related verb in this first sentence is deliberate; from the very beginning the author establishes a criticism of those who propose to practice medicine from the deductive process of going from general theories to particulars, and he repeats this criticism throughout the work. Later, in section 15, the author professes confusion with how natural philosophers could even imagine that their “first principles” could serve as a basis for medicine, given that there is no empirical experience of absolutes such as hot, cold, dry, or moist.<sup>35</sup> In that passage, there is not

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against superstition, pseudo-philosophy, and rhetoric” (23).

33 Jones (1946) places the composition of *On Ancient Medicine* to c. 430-400 BCE. For a discussion of the difficulties of dating the Hippocratic corpus, see Thomas (2000) 24-25. Thomas offers as a solution to this problem of dating that a set of writings (*Airs, Waters, Places; On the Art; Breaths; On Ancient Medicine; On the Sacred Disease; and On the Nature of Man*) can be profitably thought of as containing ideas that were in circulation more generally in this period, even if a specific given Hippocratic work cannot be dated precisely.

34 *VM* 1.1-5: Ὅποσοι μὲν ἐπεχείρησαν περὶ ἰητρικῆς λέγειν ἢ γράφειν, ὑπόθεσιν αὐτοὶ αὐτοῖς ὑποθέμενοι τῷ λόγῳ, θερμὸν ἢ ψυχρὸν ἢ ὑγρὸν ἢ ξηρὸν ἢ ἄλλο τι ὃ ἂν θέλωσιν, ἐς βραχὺ ἄγοντες τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς αἰτίας τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι νούσων τε καὶ θανάτου, καὶ πᾶσι τὴν αὐτὴν, ἐν ἣ δύο ὑποθέμενοι, ἐν πολλοῖσι μὲν καὶ οἷσι λέγουσι καταφανέες εἰσὶ ἀμαρτάνοντες,

35 *VM* 15.1-5: Ἀπορέω δ' ἔγωγε, οἱ τὸν λόγον ἐκεῖνον λέγοντες καὶ ἄγοντες ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐπὶ ὑπόθεσιν τὴν τέχνην τίνα ποτὲ τρόπον θεραπεύουσι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὥσπερ ὑποτίθενται. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς, οἶμαι, ἐξευρημένον αὐτὸ τι ἐφ' ἑωυτοῦ θερμὸν ἢ ψυχρὸν ἢ ξηρὸν ἢ ὑγρὸν μηδενὶ ἄλλῳ εἶδει κοινωνέον. One could read the reference to these qualities “themselves” (ἑαυτοῦ) as evidence for the circulation of a theory of Forms in this period.

only a criticism of philosophy, but an advocacy of what we might call sense-based or perception-based knowledge.

Such a position is the exact opposite of that advocated by a philosopher like Empedocles, who uses a criticism of the limited nature of human perception as the basis of his advocacy of philosophy and of deductive reasoning from first principles. Perhaps we should not be surprised, then, when things take a turn for the personal in section 20 of *On Ancient Medicine*, where the author criticizes Empedocles by name. Empedocles, the author asserts, is one of the individuals who claims that it is not possible for any one to know medicine who doesn't know the nature of man. But the author himself professes that anything said or written by sophist or physician has less to do with the art of medicine than with the art of writing:

*VM 20: ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο μὲν, ὅσα τινὶ εἴρηται ἢ σοφιστῆ ἢ ἰητροῦ ἢ γέγραπται  
περὶ φύσιος, ἧσσον νομίζω τῆ ἰητρικῆ τέχνῃ προσήκειν ἢ τῆ γραφικῆ.*

This passage nicely highlights not only the tensions between philosophy and medicine, but also between written and oral kinds of teaching. With his word placement, the author has created an enclosed unit of the things that are said or written by ignorant sophists or doctors – all of these kinds of statements are of a piece, and all are similarly ignorant of the proper practice of medicine.<sup>36</sup> The art of medicine cannot be captured by words, and those who try are merely practicing the art of writing.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the author does not simply assert that medicine's inductive process is superior to the ungrounded, deductive

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36 I thank Dr. Joshua Sosin for bringing the particular wording of “εἴρηται ἢ σοφιστῆ ἢ ἰητροῦ ἢ γέγραπται” to my attention.

37 For an interpretation of Plato's *Phaedrus* as similarly critical of attempts to capture thought in words (even spoken words), see Burke (1997).

reasoning of philosophers or sophists for the practice of medicine, but also claims some of philosophy's traditional territory – namely, regarding *phusis* – for his discipline.

Nor is *On Ancient Medicine* simply negative. In the opening section of the work, after dismissing those who rely on hypotheses, the author presents a positive defense of medicine as a *techne*. In essence, *On Ancient Medicine* argues that from the fact that there are bad doctors and good doctors, we can induce that there must be an art with regards to which they are good or bad.<sup>38</sup> There is a very nice near circularity here, in which the field of medicine itself is defended by means of the very kind of reasoning which it practices and advocates. And it is precisely after this “dual defense” - a defense of medicine and an example of inductive reasoning in action, that the language of *hypothesis* returns at the conclusion to the section.<sup>39</sup> And so the structure of the opening to *On Ancient Medicine* is as follows: an attack on hypothesis-based fields, a defense of medicine as an inductive field, and then a recapitulation of the notion that hypotheses are unnecessary.

While the above example of *On Ancient Medicine* shows one moment of conflict between two disciplines, it is not an isolated case.<sup>40</sup> We can similarly find in the writings

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38 VM 1.2: εἰσὶν δὲ δημιουργοὶ οἱ μὲν φαῦλοι, οἱ δὲ πολλὸν διαφέροντες: ὅπερ, εἰ μὴ ἦν ἰητρικὴ ὅλως, μηδ' ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσκεπτο μηδ' εὐρητο μηδέν, οὐκ ἂν ἦν, ἀλλὰ πάντες ὁμοίως αὐτῆς ἄπειροί τε καὶ ἀνεπιστήμονες ἦσαν, τύχη δ' ἂν πάντα τὰ τῶν καμνόντων διοικεῖτο. νῦν δ' οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν πασέων οἱ δημιουργοὶ πολλὸν ἀλλήλων διαφέρουσιν κατὰ χεῖρα καὶ κατὰ γνώμην, οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ἰητρικῆς.

39 VM 1.3: διὸ οὐκ ἠξίουσαν αὐτὴν ἔγωγε κενῆς ὑποθέσεως δεῖσθαι ὥσπερ τὰ ἀφανέα τε καὶ ἀπορεόμενα, περὶ ὧν ἀνάγκη, ἢν τις ἐπιχειρῆ τι λέγειν, ὑποθέσει χρῆσθαι, οἷον περὶ τῶν μετεώρων ἢ τῶν ὑπὸ γῆν: ἃ εἰ τις λέγοι καὶ γινώσκοι ὡς ἔχει, οὐτ' ἂν αὐτῷ τῷ λέγοντι οὔτε τοῖς ἀκούουσι δῆλα ἂν εἶη, εἴτε ἀληθέα ἔστιν εἴτε μή. οὐ γὰρ ἔστι πρὸς ὃ τι χρῆ ἀνεπέγκαντα εἰδέναι τὸ σαφές.

40 Another medical text that similarly attacks the methods of natural philosophy is *On the Nature of Man*. As Thomas (2000) describes the conflict, “The author of *On the Nature of Man* opens his work by objecting to what is essentially a position taken by philosophical monists, but probably also by many who regarded themselves as doctors. The atmosphere of intellectual interaction and debate is vividly illustrated here...The debate here seems to be a live one between contemporaries or near

of Herodotus an attempt to define the methodology of the historian, and to craft that definition in contrast with the methods used by other disciplines.<sup>41</sup> As well, the strategy of definition through differentiation continued to be practiced in the fourth century, as we can see in the works of Isocrates. In his *Antidosis*, Isocrates explicitly positions himself in opposition, as well as in a superior position, to those who “claim to turn people toward temperance and justice.”<sup>42</sup> Yet, for the purpose of contextualizing the project of the *Republic*, it is of interest not only how these various disciplines negatively used texts as a part of their contest with other fields for similar intellectual territory, but also how stochastic arts positively used texts to advance their own discipline’s growth and development.<sup>43</sup>

In the following section, I turn specifically to those fields that incorporated texts into their *paideia*, and investigate the various ways in which these written works could function in an educational context. After a brief overview of the general picture of readership in this period, which adds to the earlier discussion from section 2.2 regarding the growth of texts and literacy in Athens by commenting on the cultural position of those

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contemporaries” (155).

41 See Thomas (2000), especially chapters two (“Medicine and the ethnography of health”) and five (“Wonders’ and the natural world: natural philosophy and *historie*”).

42 Isocrates 15.84: ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην προσποιουμένων προτρέπειν ἡμεῖς ἂν ἀληθέστεροι καὶ χρησιμώτεροι φανείμεν ὄντες.

43 Broadly speaking, stochastic arts are those whose fields are “by nature variable and lacking in fixity,” and whose practitioners must consequently “do more than acquire a mastery of the formal precepts of their art” (Allen 1994, 88). Note that Isocrates often describes his art in stochastic terms, but does not use that particular label. Rather, it is Plato who calls the soul trained in rhetoric a “stochastic soul” that *seems* to have been trained in a craft, but in fact merely is good at guesswork (*Grg.* 463a6-b5). As I discuss further here and in the subsequent sections below, one of the tasks that rhetoricians like Isocrates and medical practitioners faced was to defend their chosen fields as real crafts – *technai* – while at the same time resisting a claim to universally applicable or teachable knowledge.

texts, I then turn to some of the “stochastic arts” - specifically, medicine and oratory – that are making use of texts at this time. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the other kinds of philosophical texts that can serve as direct predecessors to Plato's own work.

## 2.4 Teaching With Texts

In the *Phaedo*, Socrates describes coming upon an individual reading a book by Anaxagoras (97c-98c). While listening to the reading of one particular philosophical point, Socrates becomes excited by the prospect that in Anaxagoras he has found a teacher of a similar mind to his own.<sup>44</sup> Socrates, eager to learn more of Anaxagoras' teachings, then acquires and reads more of Anaxagoras' philosophy – that is to say, he obtains and reads more texts by Anaxagoras. Unfortunately, Socrates is disappointed by the content of Anaxagoras' books, which differs from his own assumptions about how Anaxagoras would develop his philosophy, and so Socrates fails to find in the writings the teacher that he seeks.

Another scene of reading appears in the opening of the *Theaetetus*. In the dramatic frame of this dialogue, Terpsion asks his companion Euclides to relate a discussion that Socrates once had with Theaetetus. Euclides responds that he can repeat it, but not from memory; instead, he has written down the dialogue, as Socrates reported it to him, and has had Socrates correct portions of it. Euclides does not loan the dialogue to Terpsion; that possibility is not even suggested. Nor does he himself read from his

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<sup>44</sup> *Phd.* 97d: “ταῦτα δὲ λογιζόμενος ἄσμενος ἠύρηκέναι ὄμην διδάσκαλον τῆς αἰτίας περὶ τῶν ὄντων κατὰ νοῦν ἐμαυτῷ, τὸν Ἀναξαγόραν...”

own draft.<sup>45</sup> Instead, both men listen to a slave boy reading the dialogue aloud.<sup>46</sup>

In each of these scenes, books are used both individually and communally. An individual might privately read a particular book for close study, as Socrates did with Anaxagoras' works, or might compose one for personal reference, as was the case with Euclides. Yet when these texts functioned socially – which is to say, when one individual would share a text with another – in both instances they are read aloud rather than loaned out for private reading.<sup>47</sup> Although these texts are read aloud, the reader himself is not associated with the knowledge in the text. The identity of the reader in the *Phaedo* is not an important enough detail for Socrates to remark upon, and in the scene from the *Theaetetus* the internal dialogue is read by a slave.<sup>48</sup> In these displays of reading, we find that it is not the reader who is important, but the words that he is speaking. These words, preserved in a written text, can bring an author's thoughts to an individual or group of men, even though the teacher in question cannot appear.<sup>49</sup>

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45 Unlike Phaedrus at *Phdr.* 230e.

46 Tarrant (1996) 133: “In allowing the slave to read, [Euclides] is allowing the book to speak for itself; in allowing the book to speak for itself he is testing its ability to be released into the public domain, and thus to speak to others as well.”

47 Powell (1991) suggests that the reasons texts are so often shown being read aloud is primarily practical, “It would likely have been impractical for each participant in the discussion to have his own copy of the text, and this would have necessitated a certain amount of reading aloud to the others, in addition to any discussion of the content of the text” (246).

48 Because in both these instances a slave or otherwise unidentified figure reads the text, rather than one of the main characters of the dialogue, the remaining individuals stand in a neutral position to the words. Svenbro (1993) notes of the ancient Greek habit of reading aloud that, “Ancient reading indeed takes the specific form of an exercise of power over the voice of the reader. The voice has to submit to the written word. It is crucial in the confrontation that takes place through the medium of the writing, between the writer and the reader...In these circumstances, the reader has but one means of resistance: he can refuse to read” (47). We can note in the scenes of reading from the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo* that there is another form of resistance: the figure reading aloud can be a tertiary figure, not involved in the central dialogue.

49 In the *Theaetetus* the author of the internal dialogue, Euclides, is in fact present. But, as Euclides' introduction makes clear, the content of the internal dialogue was shaped by Euclides' desire to

Prose texts begin to appear in a wide range of fields in the late fifth century. As Powell (1991) describes it, “the target audience of these prose writers was rather wider, the literate, educated elite in general, and their works therefore represent an intellectual level in between moral philosophy and popular morality.”<sup>50</sup> Sophists, medical writers, and orators all make use of these texts, and yet these writings did not replace the role of the teacher.<sup>51</sup> Even into the fourth century, when prose texts have become even more common, Aristotle observes that men cannot become expert physicians from studying texts, although these texts can be useful as references for those who have been properly trained.<sup>52</sup>

Aristotle allows that in some cases, such as the study of laws, an individual might have enough natural aptitude that he can gain *some* profit from the study of a text without a teacher.<sup>53</sup> However, Xenophon suggests in his *Memorabilia* that the more common perception was that a man simply cannot have sufficient natural ability for a field such as

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accurately reflect what Socrates had related to him. So we may consider Socrates the true (and absent) author of this text.

50 Powell (1991) 235.

51 Indeed, in many cases the only way to obtain a copy of a book was to have one made, and likely copied from the author's original. One of the ways in which Euripides was able to expand his own library was by having a slave who was trained as a clerk, and who was dedicated to obtaining and copying books. Kleberg (1967) 5. Euripides' library was particularly famous, and Aristophanes mocks the tragedian's use of books in his composition of his plays (*Ra.* 939-943). Comedy provides evidence for the increasing prominence of books and booksellers. In addition to depicting characters reading, Aristophanes repeatedly makes reference to booksellers and books (*Ra.* 1114, *Au.* 1288), and Callias is said to have written a *Grammatike Tragodia*, in which the chorus were booksellers (Athenaios 7.276a; 10.448b; 10.453c). See Blanck (1992) 26.

52 *EN* 1181B: “οὐ γὰρ φαίνονται οὐδ’ ἰατρικοὶ ἐκ τῶν συγγραμμάτων γίνεσθαι. καίτοι πειρῶνται γε λέγειν οὐ μόνον τὰ θεραπεύματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἰαθεῖεν ἂν καὶ ὡς δεῖ θεραπεύειν ἐκάστους, διελόμενοι τὰς ἕξεις: ταῦτα δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἐμπείροις ὠφέλιμα εἶναι δοκεῖ, τοῖς δ’ ἀνεπιστήμοσιν ἀχρεῖα.”

53 *EN* 1181B.



medicine. He offers an imaginary scenario in which an applicant for the office of public physician states that he has never had a teacher and will teach himself the craft through a process of experimentation, much to the amusement of the other men involved in the discussion.<sup>54</sup> Men in fields such as medicine and philosophy, Xenophon states, must have teachers.

Part of the difficulty with learning these kinds of fields from texts is that the arts of medicine and oratory are not such that rigid rules for their practice can be written down and passed on. As mentioned earlier, these are stochastic arts – they are arts whose subject matter varies and, therefore, whose practitioners need to develop not only an understanding of their field, but also an understanding of how to recognize and categorize the shifting information a given situation presents. Indeed, in a number of texts we can see that a self-awareness of the difficulties inherent in teaching an art or skill that cannot be defined precisely, especially in opposition to those fields, like natural philosophy, that propose to have general rules that can be universally applied. It is perhaps because of this problem of self-definition that oratory and medicine so often present natural philosophy as their competitor. A philosophy like that advocated by Empedocles, for example, suggests that one need understand only the fundamental makeup of the universe, and all decisions – be they what to do politically in a given situation or how to cure an ailing individual – can be deduced from those grand propositions. Such a philosophy presents much stronger claims to objective knowledge than that which can be asserted by medicine or oratory, and so if those fields are to compete for students with

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<sup>54</sup> *Mem.* 4.2.5.

philosophy, they must in some way contend with the notion that philosophical knowledge is superior.<sup>55</sup>

The commonality between these fields goes beyond their critiques of natural philosophers and sophists and their assertions that they are, in fact, teaching a real *technē*. Both oratory – as represented by Isocrates – and the field of medicine – as seen through the Hippocratic corpus – position themselves not only with regard to a growing number of competing disciplines, but also as a part of a dialogue between *texts*. *On Ancient Medicine* comments in its opening lines that it is challenging those others who have taken it upon themselves to speak *or write* about medicine.<sup>56</sup> Isocrates takes on the trappings of an oral argument in his *Antidosis*, but then points to the textual nature of this discussion when he suggests that the arguments should not be attempted all at once, but rather should be reviewed at leisure so as to not tire the audience.<sup>57</sup>

These stochastic arts seem to be precisely the kinds of *technai* that could not be conveyed through writing, and yet for these fields to be competitive they must respond in this increasingly present medium as well. I turn now to a more specific look at how authors within these fields respond to the challenge that philosophical treatises present, and attempt to produce their own texts that can have an *paideutic* effect on their readers.

First, I consider texts within the Hippocratic corpus and how they might have functioned

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55 Ober (2004) describes Isocrates as conscious of the need to challenge the claims made by Plato, “By the early decades of the [fourth] century, Platonic dialectic already threatened to monopolize the term *philosophia*, reserving what had become (in educated elite circles, anyway) a prized word for an intellectual undertaking that had no sympathy for the sort of education and *technē* championed by Isocrates” (26).

56 *VM* 1.1: Ὅποσοι μὲν ἐπεχείρησαν περὶ ἰητρικῆς λέγειν ἢ γράφειν.

57 *Isoc.* 15.12: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις μὴ ζητεῖν εὐθὺς ἐπελθόντας ὄλον αὐτὸν διελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον μέρος ὅσον μὴ λυπήσει τοὺς παρόντας.

both as guides and as advertisements for the field. Next, I focus on the works of Isocrates, and more specifically his *Against the Sophists* and *Antidosis*, to explore his attempt to create a new kind of paideia. Finally, I return to the discipline of philosophy, and consider the rise of the Socratic dialogue in light of the preceding discussion of the use of texts by teachers of medicine and oratory.

#### **2.4.1 Teaching with Medical Texts**

A medical work such as *On Ancient Medicine* is highly cerebral: it is a polemical work, and does little to describe the actual practice of medicine, beyond outlining the inductive method. But what are we to make of texts that discuss the more gritty details of medical practice? How can these texts function, if they are not simply tools for self-education?<sup>58</sup> An examination of the content of medical treatises such as *On Joints* and *Places in Man* reveals a curious mix of general information with vague descriptions, which are of little use to an individual without independent practical knowledge of medical practices. For example, a treatise might help an individual identify when a particular course of action such as cauterizing a wound is necessary, but it offers no description of the actual procedure of cauterizing.<sup>59</sup> As a whole, the use to which these texts could be put is difficult to define. They contain general arguments for their efficacy, which seem designed for those who have not already adopted the texts' particular breed of medicine, but at the same time the descriptions of the actual practice of medicine are dependent upon prior knowledge, often of a practical nature. These texts were composed

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58 As Morgan (1999) notes, "...it is ironic that the written record of the Classical period preserves no explicit reference to texts being used for teaching" (60).

59 Craik (1998) 198.

to be accessible and usable by a wide variety of readers, and functioned very differently based on the context in which they were being read.<sup>60</sup>

For example, Hippocrates' treatises frequently make mention of the importance of recognizing the right *kairos* for healing. *Aphorisms* opens with the brisk statement, "Life is short, but skill is long; the opportunity (*kairos*) is quick, but the experience is perilous and the judgment is difficult."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, the beginning of the *Precepts* states, "Healing is a matter of time, but it is also a matter of opportunity (*kairos*). But knowing these things, it is necessary to practice medicine not by holding first to persuasive theories, but (by holding) to experience combined with reason."<sup>62</sup> This focus on *kairos* serves to underscore the limitations of the text itself. Texts might instruct in reason or theories, but only the experience gained through some sort of apprenticeship can yield understanding about when the *kairos* is upon you. This kind of apprenticeship can teach physical skills such as trepanning, but it is also necessary for the pupil to learn how to intuitively factor a patient's presentation of symptoms with medical theory in order to proscribe an appropriate treatment regime.<sup>63</sup> Thus, these texts can suggest the kinds of learning that one might attain under the direction of an expert in the field. They can emphasize the importance of seeking out just such an expert for personal medical advice, as well as for a

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60 Svenbro (1993) describes the consciousness of an ancient writer of the future acts of reading that his text will facilitate: "Just as he foresees his own absence, the writer foresees the presence of his writing before the reader. The reading constitutes a meeting between the reader and the written marks of someone who is absent. The writer foresees this meeting, plans it carefully" (44).

61 Hippocrates *Aph.* 1.1: "Ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρῆ, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξύς, ἡ δὲ πείρα σφαλερῆ, ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπή."

62 Hippocrates *Praec.* 1.1: "ἄκεσις χρόνῳ, ἔστι δὲ ἠνίκα καὶ καιρῷ. δεῖ γὰρ μὴν ταῦτα εἰδῶτα μὴ λογισμῷ πρότερον πιθανῶ προσέχοντα ἰητρεύειν, ἀλλὰ τριβῆ μετὰ λόγου."

63 On the importance of *kairos* in the Hippocratic corpus, see Eskin (2002) 97-113.

potential apprenticeship, precisely by pointing out the limits of what can be conveyed through written means about the art of medicine.

Yet the fact that these treatises do not advertise themselves as providing an independently sufficient instruction to become a doctor does not mean that they were not useful in the practice of medicine. Lists occupy a prominent position in a number of early Hippocratic treatises, and their presence suggests that these texts could be used as an *aide-mémoire* for practitioners at various stages of their careers.<sup>64</sup> But there is another possible explanation for the presence of lists within these texts, beyond their function as a reference for newly minted or experienced doctors. In his examination of the medical histories in the *Epidemics*, Miller (1990) theorizes that the process of writing down a case study transforms that event from an individual physician's experience to a data point that can factor into the ongoing effort of Greek physicians to develop further their medical theories.<sup>65</sup> Drawing on the work of Jack Goody and Walter Ong, Miller argues that medical writings, and in particular medical writings that contained lists, “if studied correctly and learned accurately, could function as an epistemological tool and, in a sense, a metaphor with which the relatively obscure and rather invisible realm of disease processes could be rendered somewhat more clear.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, such lists could aid the field of medicine both internally and externally. Externally, such data points elevate individual, fallible experience to objective facts, and so give a basis for medicine that can stand up to Empedoclean criticisms. Internally, these lists served as a vehicle for the

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64 Lonie (1983) 150.

65 Miller (1990) 11-40.

66 Miller (1990) 32. I discuss some commonalities between philosophical and medical texts below.

exchange of knowledge and development of theories across the medical field.<sup>67</sup> We can therefore point to three potential functions of these texts: as advertisements of the field and of the importance of apprenticeship, as a physical reminder and confirmation of the teachings that an individual underwent, and finally as a medium for instantiating the practice of medicine.

While we have discussed the competition between medicine and philosophy, in these medical texts we also see a field that is struggling to exclude related practices, such as magical healing and soothsaying, and to define within itself what constitutes the medical art. For example, in the opening of *On the Sacred Disease*, the author is at pains to de-mystify the disease of epilepsy, precisely because he does not want magic healing to encroach upon the practice of scientific medicine.<sup>68</sup> In *On Regimen in Acute Diseases* 3, the author complains that those things that are especially deserving of being consigned to writing are undetermined by physicians themselves, many of whom insist on mixing their medical knowledge with folk wisdom, and in the process they expose medicine to the censure of the masses. In an inversion of the opening passage from *On Ancient Medicine*, in *On Regimen in Acute Diseases*, the author states that when practitioners differ so much among themselves, it causes the public at large to lose faith in the field.

The text suggests that a work such as itself can be valuable in uniting physicians around a

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67 See Dean-Jones (2003): “The ancient Greek view of medicine as a human skill discovered and developed over time could encourage one to add one's own discoveries to the store of existing medical knowledge” (113).

68 *Morb. Sacr.* 1.1: Περί μὲν τῆς ἱερῆς νόσου καλομένης ᾧδ' ἔχει · οὐδὲν τί μοι δοκέει τῶν ἄλλων θειοτέρη εἶναι νόσων οὐδὲ ἱερωτέρη, ἀλλὰ φύσιν μὲν ἔχει ἦν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ νοσήματα, ὅθεν γίνεται. Φύσιν δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ πρόφασιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐνόμισαν θεῖον τι πρῆγμα εἶναι ὑπὸ ἀπειρίας καὶ θαυμασιότητος, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔοικεν ἐτέρησι νοσοῖσιν

single course of medical action, and thereby can strengthen each of their individual medical practices.

Taken together, then, these passages show various ways in which medical texts played a role in the growth and development of this burgeoning field. They allowed experienced physicians to refine their craft and build on data gathered by others, while at the same time serving as reference materials for new doctors on everything from the appropriate medical practice in a given situation to how to argue for a particular treatment regimen.<sup>69</sup> These texts helped to advance Hippocratic medicine in the reader's mind more generally, as they attacked the practitioners of other fields such as natural philosophy, but also advertised one particular individual – the author's – medical competency.<sup>70</sup> As the medical field expanded in the fifth century from a *techne* handed down within a family to one that could be taught to relative strangers, these texts functioned not only as references for those students without a personal local teacher, but also as the initial advertisement to induce a student to study with a far-off teacher in the first place.<sup>71</sup> As we turn to the works of Isocrates, we find similarly multilayered texts, designed to function in various ways in various contexts.

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69 *Morb.* I.1.

70 As Dean-Jones (2003) points out, the fact that the medical treatises that survive to us are largely anonymous does not necessarily mean that they were intended to be disassociated from their authors, especially given the “rampant egotism” of these treatises (118 n. 56).

71 On the expansion of medical training beyond the familial setting, see the report of Hippocrates' practices as given by Galen in his *Commentary on the Oath*. See Rosenthal (1956). I echo Dean-Jones (2003), who offers a cautionary note on the variety of teachers and students in the medical field, “This is not to say that there were not also traditional practicing physicians who took on apprentices locally. Rather, it was the aristocrats of the medical world, established in the traditional medical centers, who would expect to attract students who could afford to travel further and pay more” (119-120).

#### 2.4.2 Teaching How to Speak

A passage late in Isocrates' *Antidosis* echoes the Sophoclean passage mentioned earlier in this chapter. Near the end of this speech, which purports to be a defense of Isocrates' life and teachings, there is a praise of the power and products of *logos*. Through *logos*, humanity has not only gained the ability to persuade one another, but has transformed itself from a group of beings who live like other animals to creatures that have cities, laws, and various *technai*.<sup>72</sup> Like the chorus in the Ode to Man, Isocrates attributes much of man's distinction from animals and mastery over the world to his ability to reason and speak, yet Isocrates' portrait of the moral consequences of the pursuit of *logos* is far more positive than that given in the stasimon from the *Antigone*. This difference stems not only from the nearly century-long gap between the composition of these two works, but also from the polemical nature of Isocrates' work – in some ways, he can be regarded as arguing against the kind of ambiguous (or even negative) position towards *logos* that the Sophocles' chorus describes.<sup>73</sup>

Isocrates' defensive attitude towards *logos* and rhetoric is a common thread that connects a speech from his early career – *Against the Sophists* – with his *Antidosis*. Although these two speeches more or less bookend the Isocratean corpus, and are likely separated by more than thirty years, both concern themselves with the definition and establishment of an Isocratean pedagogy that is distinct from that of other sophists, and at

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72 Isoc. 15.254: ἐγγενομένου δ' ἡμῖν τοῦ πείθειν ἀλλήλους καὶ δηλοῦν πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς περὶ ὧν ἂν βουληθῶμεν, οὐ μόνον τοῦ θηριωδῶς ζῆν ἀπηλλάγημεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνελθόντες πόλεις ὠκίσσαμεν καὶ νόμους ἐθέμεθα καὶ τέχνας εὗρομεν, καὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντα τὰ δι' ἡμῶν μεμηχανημένα λόγος ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ὁ συγκατασκευάσας.

73 The *Antidosis* is traditionally dated to 353 BCE, when Isocrates was 82 years old. For background on liturgy trials, as well as the position of both teaching (*sophists*) and rhetoric in fourth century Athens, see Too (2008) 1-26.



the same time is preferable to the teachings of philosophers.<sup>74</sup> Early in *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates attacks other teachers for making rosy promises, and in the process discrediting the whole field of education.<sup>75</sup> Like the medical texts cited above, Isocrates presents an image of himself as competing with individuals within his own discipline – individuals who, through their poor practices, make matters worse for everyone. As the opening polemic continues, Isocrates derides those teachers who don't acknowledge the epistemological limits of their teaching, and who falsely (according to him) claim that they can give their pupils the ability to make the right choices in life and therefore to be happy and prosperous.

Later in this speech, Isocrates turns his focus specifically to philosophy, and discredits not only the idea that philosophical knowledge is universal, but in particular criticizes the notion that any student can learn philosophy (13.12).<sup>76</sup> Those who make such claims, Isocrates argues, are incorrectly applying the rules of a skill such as the physical ability to write, in which the task at hand does not change based on conditions or circumstance, to a skill whose successful execution is constantly changing (13.12).

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74 Isocrates quotes his *Against the Sophists* in *Antidosis*, and he describes it as a speech produced when he was beginning to pursue his profession (15.193). Some have dated this speech to 390, soon after Isocrates is supposed to have opened his school for rhetoric (Eucken 1983: 5), but an exact date is difficult. See Livingston (2001) 42. For a more cautious approach to dating *Against the Sophists*, including a rejection of the use of biography in the *Antidosis* as evidence, see Too (1995) 152-156.

75 Isoc. 13.1: εἰ πάντες ἤθελον οἱ παιδεύειν ἐπιχειροῦντες ἀληθῆ λέγειν, καὶ μὴ μείζους ποιῆσθαι τὰς ὑποσχέσεις ὧν ἔμελλον ἐπιτελεῖν, οὐκ ἂν κακῶς ἤκουον ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν: νῦν δ' οἱ τολμῶντες λίαν ἀπερισκέπτως ἀλαζονεύεσθαι πεποιήκασιν ὥστε δοκεῖν ἄμεινον βουλευέσθαι τοὺς ῥαθυμῆν αἰρουμένους τῶν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διατριβόντων. τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἂν μισήσειεν ἅμα καὶ καταφρονήσειε πρῶτον μὲν τῶν περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατριβόντων, οἱ προσποιοῦνται μὲν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ζητεῖν, εὐθὺς δ' ἐν ἀρχῇ τῶν ἐπαγγελμάτων ψευδῆ λέγειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν;

76 See Ober (2004) on Isocrates' personal goals for his speeches: "If he wanted to be a player in the major leagues of Athenian intellectual life, Isocrates had to enter the critical fray and demonstrate that his *paideia* offered a distinctive and effective means for focusing and expressing the non-canonical list of elite concerns about Athenian democracy" (29).

Isocrates maintains in this passage that it is a combination of natural ability and practical experience that makes for an excellent orator, and a teacher can only have a limited impact on the latter – the experience. What kinds of experience? In 13.15, Isocrates explains that formal training gives organization to men’s speeches and provides them with sources from which to draw arguments.<sup>77</sup> Yet beyond that, the mere presence of a teacher can be instructive – those skills which cannot be taught through words can be learned through an imitation of the teacher’s example of oratory.<sup>78</sup>

In this early speech of Isocrates, there are a number of similarities to the rhetorical stances taken by texts in the Hippocratic corpus, and in particular by *On Ancient Medicine*. Both texts define and advocate their respective arts by attacking the claims of others – claims that these texts suggest at best are falsely optimistic and at worse are fraudulent. Both texts present themselves as competing in a marketplace of ideas, in which various fields vie for prestige, students, and, ultimately, money. Yet in addition, both Isocrates and the author of *On Ancient Medicine* do not define the benefits to their accepting readers as monetary;<sup>79</sup> rather, the reader who accepts the teachings or medical advice from a practitioner of the brand of medicine that is advocated in *On Ancient Medicine* receives the best medical help that human knowledge and experience can offer,

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77 Isoc. 13.15: ἡ δὲ παιδείησις τοὺς μὲν τοιοῦτους τεχνικωτέρους καὶ πρὸς τὸ ζητεῖν εὐπορωτέρους ἐποίησεν, οἷς γὰρ νῦν ἐντυγχάνουσι πλανώμενοι, ταῦτ' ἐξ ἐτοιμοτέρου λαμβάνειν αὐτοὺς ἐδίδαξεν...

78 Isoc. 13.17-18: τὸν δὲ διδάσκαλον τὰ μὲν οὕτως ἀκριβῶς οἷόν τ' εἶναι διελεῖν ὥστε μηδὲν τῶν διδασκῶν παραλιπεῖν, περὶ δὲ τῶν λοιπῶν τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν παράδειγμα παρασχεῖν, ὥστε τοὺς ἐκτυπωθέντας καὶ μιμήσασθαι δυναμένους εὐθὺς ἀνθηρότερον καὶ χαριέστερον τῶν ἄλλων φαίνεσθαι λέγοντας.

79 Indeed, one of the charges that Isocrates makes against his fellow teachers is that they are obsessed with obtaining money from their students, and with putting a price on what should be a priceless activity (13.6-7).

and the individual who seeks out Isocrates' teachings has the best chance of all of possessing and fostering a sense of justice and temperance.<sup>80</sup>

Isocrates' *Against the Sophists* ends before he provides any thorough account of his own teaching. Instead, he devotes the majority of this work to an attack on the rhetorical teachings and promises of others, and occasionally drops hints that *his* pedagogy does not suffer from these faults.<sup>81</sup> He opens section 22 with the claim that, in order that he not seem “to speak beyond [his] means,” he will lay out for his audience why he has come to have the view of rhetoric that he has.<sup>82</sup> And yet it is with this statement that our text of *Against the Sophists* ends, without any treatise, handbook, or even outline of Isocrates' principles of rhetoric.<sup>83</sup>

Interesting for our investigation on texts and teaching, no handbook on rhetoric survives from Isocrates, although Roman and Byzantine authors believed that such a technical treatise did exist, but was lost by the late Hellenistic period.<sup>84</sup> We have reason

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80 Isocrates precedes this claim with a caveat (13.22): ὅλως μὲν γὰρ οὐδεμίαν ἡγοῦμαι τοιαύτην εἶναι τέχνην, ἥτις τοῖς κακῶς πεφυκόσι πρὸς ἀρετὴν σωφροσύνην ἂν καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἐμπούησειεν: οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ συμπαρακελεύσασθαί γε καὶ συνασκήσαι μάλιστα ἃ οἶμαι τὴν τῶν λόγων τῶν πολιτικῶν ἐπιμέλειαν.

81 See 13.3, where Isocrates describes himself as acknowledging the limits of human knowledge; 13.12, where he again notes that he does not hold that philosophy has the powers that it claims for itself; 13.15, where he states that his own view natural ability plays a key role in success as an orator; 13.17, where he argues that a teacher who knows the elements of good speech can pass these elements on to his student.

82 Isoc 13.22: ἵνα δὲ μὴ δοκῶ τὰς μὲν τῶν ἄλλων ὑποσχέσεις διαλύειν, αὐτὸς δὲ μείζω λέγειν τῶν ἐνότων, ἐξ ὧν περ αὐτὸς ἐπέισθη οὕτω ταῦτ' ἔχειν, ῥαδίως οἶμαι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις φανερόν καταστήσειν.

83 Whether section 22 is, indeed, the conclusion of *Against the Sophists*, and if not, how much additional text was lost, is still debated by scholars. For a summary of the various positions on this issue, see Too (1995) 162-164.

84 Cicero mentions an Isocratean *artem*, but has not seen it himself (*On Invention* 2.7); Philodemus reports that Isocrates left behind *technas*, but does not have firsthand knowledge of them (*Rhetoric* II 122, IIS); Soter states that Isocrates wrote a rhetorical *technen* (Radermacher B 24,12). For more on the ancient and modern controversy over the existence of Isocratean handbooks, see Too (1995) 164-167.

to be suspicious of this “lost treatise”, given that no citations from it survive, nor does Isocrates himself quote from it in his later treatises. Given that one of his later treatises, the *Antidosis*, is a summation and defense of his teachings, and given that in the *Antidosis* Isocrates quotes extensively from the “greatest hits” of his corpus, it seems strange that, had he written such a treatise, he would fail to mention it. And so it seems likely that Isocrates never wrote a treatise. Instead, the ending of *Against the Sophists*, with its promise and then immediate abandonment of the reader, compels intrigued students to seek out Isocrates and learn what was, supposedly, in those missing pages. Like the Hippocratic discussions of the importance of knowing the right *kairos*, Isocrates makes paramount the development of the ability to recognize the right course of action in a given set of circumstances, and like the medical writers he neatly side-steps having to divulge this stochastic art in writing.

When we turn from Isocrates’ early work *Against the Sophists* to his late work the *Antidosis*, we find a similar demarcation of Isocrates’ teachings from those of other rhetors as well as from the teachings of philosophers. In the opening to his *Antidosis*, Isocrates claims to be inspired by his recent loss to an unnamed individual in a liturgy trial. The process of defending himself in that trial inspired him to compose and distribute an apologia to another set of charges altogether: his defense is of his profession of rhetoric, and of his practice of teaching. We can see a secondary source of inspiration for the *Antidosis* as the trial of Socrates, for in his own work Isocrates defends himself against the charges of “making the weaker arguments stronger” (15.15) and corrupting the youth (15.89). This latter inspiration is gradually revealed through the course of the

text, which at the beginning only states that it is a defense against slander, without detailing the content of those slanderous remarks (15.6).

Although Isocrates has assumed the pretext of an *apologia*, this assumption is far looser than that of Plato in his *Apology* of Socrates; for Isocrates, his imaginary prosecutor is not examined, there is no deliberation of the jury and sentencing phase, and, perhaps most importantly, there is no water-clock.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Isocrates draws the reader's attention to the extraordinary length of his “speech” early on, stating that individuals who read his text should not attempt to go through the whole thing all at once but should approach it little by little.<sup>86</sup> Though Isocrates uses the language of spoken discourse, this speech is intended to be approached as a text.

So what kind of text is it? It is neither handbook of rhetoric, nor an outline of Isocrates' practical teaching. Instead, Isocrates describes his general theories of education, many of which are presented in his *Against the Sophists* as well: in particular, that his more modest claims for his teachings are preferable to the hyperbole of others (15.84) and that oratory is an art that requires natural skill from the pupil guided by a practical education from a teacher (15.202-206).<sup>87</sup> But *Against the Sophists* is largely negative, and while Isocrates attacks the positions held by other prospective teachers, he scarcely mentions his own teachings. In contrast, the *Antidosis* foregrounds Isocrates as

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85 Although Isocrates does appeal to the “water-clock” at 15.320 as a rhetorical device for bringing his “speech” to a close.

86 Isoc. 15.12: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις μὴ ζητεῖν εὐθὺς ἐπελθόντας ὅλον αὐτὸν διελθεῖν, ἀλλὰ τοσοῦτον μέρος ὅσον μὴ λυπήσει τοὺς παρόντας.

87 Isocrates gives the broadest description of his understanding of the proper Athenian education at *Panath.* 26-34. There, he describes the essential components of the Athenian educational system (26) and cautions against individuals engaging in certain intellectual pursuits, such as mathematical study or eristic dialogues (26: τοὺς διαλόγους τοὺς ἐριστικῶς), once they have come of age (28).

the central teacher and mentions his competitors as foils for showing his own skill as a teacher.

Again and again the *Antidosis* portrays Isocrates as an active teacher whose lessons have produced excellent citizens of the Athenian democracy. Isocrates does not mention any students in *Against the Sophists*, but in the *Antidosis* he repeatedly refers to the fact that he has and has had a number of students, many times in response to particular charges brought by his prosecutor. In section 40, Isocrates suddenly introduces a new piece of “evidence” from his fictional accuser - that the king of Salamis gave him gifts in order to learn oratory from him. He brings up this charge not only to deny more generally that he engages in the kinds of teaching contracts that his rivals participate in, but also to display the kinds of people who could believably be thought to desire him as a teacher. In fact, Isocrates’ prosecutor continues his charge by stating that Isocrates has had more students “than all those who devote their time to philosophy.”<sup>88</sup> While Isocrates leaves this claim in the mouth of his “opponent”, he does himself assert that he has had a number of students who have chosen to stay with him for three or four years, and who valued him so much that they were tearful at their departures (15.87-88). These were students who came to him initially because of his great reputation – a reputation he achieved through written and distributed speeches.

In his discussions of the evolving characters of his students, Isocrates carries the boundaries of oratory’s lessons into philosophical territory. In section 101, Isocrates mentions that his accuser has brought up his association with Timotheus in an attempt to

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88 Isoc. 15.41: ἐγὼ δὲ πλείους εἰληφώς, ὡς φησιν ὁ κατήγορος, ἢ σύμπαντες οἱ περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διατρίβοντες.

discredit both men. Isocrates does not deny the association, nor does he deny responsibility for Timotheus' actions. Instead, he states that if Timotheus were a bad man who committed bad actions, then Isocrates should be punished right alongside him, as if he were guilty as well.<sup>89</sup> This statement is, in part, a kind of sleight of hand from Isocrates: if Isocrates should be punished for Timotheus' bad deeds, then surely he should be rewarded for his good deeds, which Isocrates then enumerates. But for our present study into the pedagogical claims of Isocrates' texts, what is interesting about the Timotheus passage is that it implies a direct connection between Isocrates and his students' morality. And how does he accomplish this moral education? In section 84-85, Isocrates claims that he exhorts his pupils to follow a virtue and wisdom that are commonly recognized, as opposed to the kind of moral standards that philosophers set up – standards that are unrecognized by others and debated over by themselves.<sup>90</sup> Overall, Isocrates' descriptions of the moral education he provides his students is as vague as his descriptions of his oratorical pedagogy, and similarly seems to depend upon the physical presence of the teacher as a model.<sup>91</sup>

While *Against the Sophists* presents the image of a newcomer on the educational scene, who is still defining his practice against that of others and who can get students only if he keeps them from being lured away by his more boastful competitors, the

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89 Isoc. 15.106.

90 Isoc. 15.84: ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην προσποιουμένων προτρέπειν ἡμεῖς ἂν ἀληθέστεροι καὶ χρησιμώτεροι φανείμεν ὄντες. οἱ μὲν γὰρ παρακαλοῦσιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν φρόνησιν τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλων μὲν ἀγνοουμένην, ὑπ' αὐτῶν δὲ τούτων ἀντιλεγομένην, ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ τὴν ὑπὸ πάντων ὁμολογουμένην.

91 Cf. Isoc. 13.17-18.

*Antidosis* is the portrait of a successful teacher who is much admired and who is sought out by individuals from across the Greek-speaking world, from young Athenian citizens to kings. And yet this is not to say that Isocrates' struggle to define his discipline is over; he is still at great pains to describe its particular mixture of raw talent shaped by practical experience under a knowledgeable teacher. Isocrates' *paideia* is a *process*, and as such it cannot be described or transmitted textually.<sup>92</sup> Rather than provide concrete examples of the pragmatics of his teaching in his defense of his life's work, Isocrates gives examples of the kinds of results one might expect from his teaching, in the form of his own speeches. Within the *Antidosis*, Isocrates quotes from his *Panegyricus* (15.59), *On the Peace* (15.66), *To Nicoles* (15.73), and *Against the Sophists* (15.194). These quotations have the effect of heightening the reader's awareness of the textuality of not only this speech, but of Isocrates' other speeches as well. Yet at the same time, through his refusal to present practical examples of his teachings Isocrates underscores the need for an interested potential student to seek him out in person in order to pursue a rhetorical education.<sup>93</sup>

Several of the observations about the various functions of medical texts hold true for Isocrates' speeches, and especially his *Antidosis*, as well. This speech allows Isocrates to define his own pedagogical practices by attacking the teachings of others. It advertises

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92 Cf. Isoc. 15.192: *περὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς φύσεως καὶ τῆς ἐμπειρίας ταῦτα γινώσκω: περὶ δὲ τῆς παιδείας οὐκ ἔχω τοιοῦτον λόγον εἰπεῖν: οὔτε γὰρ ὁμοίαν οὔτε παραπλησίαν ἔχει τούτοις τὴν δύναμιν.*

93 Poulakos (2004) discusses the shift in focus, from teachers seeking students to students traveling to teachers, signified by Isocrates opening a school in Athens: "Like the older Sophists, Isocrates taught rhetoric. But while they had traveled from city to city to teach the new *techne*, he opened a school in Athens and had students travel there to attend (*Antidosis* 87-88; 224; 226). With this new arrangement rhetoric stopped being a nomadic show on the road and was given for the first time an institutional home" (74).



his skill and desirability as a teacher thorough reports of the number and devotion of his students. Yet it can also serve those students who have experienced Isocrates' teaching. In the inclusion of quoted passages from Isocrates' other speeches in the *Antidosis* there is a parallel to the use of lists and general descriptions of medical practices in medical texts: these speeches in and of themselves cannot teach one rhetoric, but they can serve as reminders to one who has been educated about some of the techniques and principles that the pupil had previously learned in person.

Like the authors of the medical texts discussed above, Isocrates can use a distributed text to increase his reputation as a teacher, and to encourage individuals to seek him out for a kind of apprenticeship. These texts can continue to reinforce the teacher-student relationship after the student has left Isocrates' physical presence. Finally, through his texts Isocrates can challenge the views presented by his rivals, often also in textual form.<sup>94</sup> In both the medical community and in Isocrates' brand of pedagogy, the text serves the teacher's interests – it does not replace the teacher for the student.

#### ***2.4.3 Teaching with Philosophical Texts***

We can carry many of these observations about the interplay between texts and oral pedagogy into a discussion of the rise of philosophical texts within communities of

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<sup>94</sup> I have not here direct addressed the great rivalry between Isocrates and Plato, who both had schools in Athens, and whose works were each doubtless shaped by their consciousness of the presence and claims of the other, except in my brief discussion of the relationship between Isocrates' *Antidosis* and Plato's *Apology*. Nightingale (1995) describes Isocrates as motivated to cast philosophical activity as "Athenian" in nature, in opposition to (as she describes it) the "outsider" status that Plato advocates (13-59); Ober (2004) states that in order for Isocrates to find a "secure and prominent niche for himself in the intellectual/critical community" he needed to respond to Plato's critiques of rhetoric and present his own *paideia* as a valid alternative to Plato's philosophy (26-31); Morgan (2004) casts the *Antidosis* as a direct response to the claims made by Plato in his *Republic* (129-151). It is my purpose in this chapter to show the general environment in which Plato composed his *Republic*, and as such to outline the broad common themes that appear in the written texts of teachers from a variety of fields, and so I do not address the specific intertextual issues between Isocrates' and Plato's works.

learners. Philosophical texts have been already obliquely mentioned in the discussion above, as it is often natural philosophers or sophists who serve as the oppositional figures against which Hippocratic writers and Isocrates define themselves. I conclude this discussion of the educational and cultural background to Plato's *Republic* with a review of the use of texts by his philosophical contemporaries – those writers of the dialogues called by Aristotle the *Sokratikoi Logoi*<sup>95</sup>.

The writers of philosophical dialogues were working within the larger, well-established tradition of philosophical writing. The term “philosophical writing” perhaps needs some clarification, because the use of the word φιλοσοφεῖν before the fourth century is rare, and when it is used it is unclear that it has a technical meaning.<sup>96</sup> In its fifth century usage, the term indicated a general “intellectual cultivation” instead of a specific kind of pursuit; it is first in Plato, and more specifically most clearly in the *Republic*, that we find the attempt to isolate a particular kind of activity, practiced by a particular kind of person, as φιλοσοφία.<sup>97</sup> Yet, although a particular author might not have described himself as “practicing philosophy”, we can trace the growth of a set of writings – both in poetry and in prose – focusing on metaphysics, epistemology, and

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95 Aristotle, *Po.* 1447b11.

96 For a list of the occurrences of φιλοσοφεῖν and its cognates through the end of the fifth century, see Havelock (1963) 280-1 and corresponding notes. He helpfully comments that one barrier to identifying “philosophical” literature “exists in the form of a modern presumption, in which we all share, as to what the word ‘philosopher’ signifies” (280). Consider Pericles’ assertion, in Thucydides 2.40, that the Athenians, “cultivate beauty without extravagance, and pursue knowledge without becoming weak” (φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ’ εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας). While a modern reader might not classify the intellectual activity of the average Athenian as φιλοσοφία, Pericles had no such difficulties using the term in a general sense (although we can see in the phrase “ἄνευ μαλακίας” some acknowledgement that the pursuit of knowledge can be taken to destructive extremes).

97 See Nightingale (2001) 14-21; Havelock (1963) 281.

cosmology.<sup>98</sup>

Ionian thinkers began to write down natural philosophy in the sixth century BCE. According to Themistius, Anaximander was the first of the Greeks to publish a *logos* about nature.<sup>99</sup> To him we can add Anaximenes of Miletus as one of the earliest authors of philosophical prose.<sup>100</sup> Yet referral to these two authors as individuals, let alone to their writings, does not occur before Aristotle.<sup>101</sup> The first philosopher whose work is referred to by his contemporaries is Xenophanes of Colophon, who wrote in meter rather than in prose.<sup>102</sup> In his work we find an investigation into the relationship of poetry and truth as he uses the poetic form to criticize his predecessors' depictions of the gods. Xenophanes can perhaps be understood as offering up an alternative form of poetry, one in which the pleasures of poetry are in service to greater truths.<sup>103</sup> Other early philosophers, notably Parmenides and Empedocles, followed Xenophanes' lead in composing their philosophy in meter. These poetic works must have had some influence

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98 Defining what is considered “philosophy” is a difficult task still today. As Stroud (2000) notes, “No form of words alone can serve to identify a remark or a thought as philosophical. We must understand the task or question those words or thoughts are a response to and how they are meant to be taken for the particular philosophical purpose at hand” (x).

99 Themistius *Or.* 26.317: (Ἀναξίμανδρος) ἐθάρρησε πρῶτος ὧν ἴσμεν Ἑλλήνων λόγον ἐξευγεῖν περὶ φύσεως συγγεγραμμένον. Diogenes Laertius describes Anaximander's writings as being in list or summary form: “Τῶν δὲ ἀρεσκόντων αὐτῷ πεποιήται κεφαλαιώδη τὴν ἔκθεσιν” (DL II.2).

100 For a discussion of Pherecydes as the author of the oldest Greek book in prose, see Kahn (2003) 142-144.

101 Guthrie (1962) 72. See Harris (1989) 64.

102 Guthrie (1962) 368.

103 However, the fragmentary and disparate nature of the survival of Xenophanes' writings makes it difficult to describe him as having a philosophical program. Nightingale (1995) argues that Xenophanes' rejections of Homer's and Hesiod's portraits of the gods were *ad hominem* attacks, and “should not be mistaken for the *explicit and systematic differentiation of a new genre of discourse/thought from other genres of discourse/thought*” (20 n. 21, italics original).

on Plato's writings, but we can even more strongly see the debt that Plato owes to the development of a philosophical genre of prose.<sup>104</sup>

In the fifth century, the sophists continue in the Ionian tradition and compose their philosophical treatises in prose form.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, they exhibit a fascination with language as such, including: “Protagoras' interest in the correct genders of nouns and moods of verbs, Prodicus' views on the distinction of synonyms...and Hippias' study of orthography.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, some have argued that this kind of analysis of language only becomes possible once the written word becomes common-place.<sup>107</sup> This is the position advanced by Goody and Watt in their 1963 article, “The Consequences of Literacy,” who describe Plato and Aristotle's “system of rules for thinking itself” and “analysis of a problem into its constituent elements” as a logical procedure that is “essentially literate.”<sup>108</sup> Yet, as Thomas (1989) argues, it is difficult to defend the position that literacy *causes* this kind of change in thinking, especially given the lag-time in Athens between the development of the alphabet and the appearance of philosophy.<sup>109</sup> Rather,

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104 For a discussion of the development of Greek prose in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, see Kahn (2003).

105 The observations by O'Sullivan (1996) on the use of the book as a symbol by fifth century sophists are helpful, “There is a real sense in which [the sophists] seem to be presenting their prose as the successor to the poetry of traditional Greek culture, and in this they pre-figure the dominance prose was to achieve in the fourth century. But to do this they had to adopt the book as their symbol” (117).

106 O'Sullivan (1996) 116.

107 As stated by Robb (1994): “Once language has been reduced to written form – becomes, as it were, an object and not a flowing sea of sounds – its components can be analyzed, a process begun by the Greek philosophers and sophists” (267). Or, as Ong (1988) puts it, “The distancing which writing effects develops a new kind of precision in verbalization by removing it from the rich but chaotic existential context of much oral utterance...Orally managed language and thought is not noted for analytic precision” (103-104).

108 Goody and Watt (1963) 330.

109 Thomas (1989): “One may point out, for instance, that the alphabetic system took three centuries to

perhaps we should recognize that “it is not literacy itself which is enlightening, but the way it is used.”<sup>110</sup>

For the sophists, their texts were supplemented by their physical presence as they traveled and advertised their teaching.<sup>111</sup> The fact that the sophists took pay for their teaching is made particularly prominent in the dialogues of Plato, but we should remember that this focus on their professionalization of teaching is largely intended to establish a clear distinction between the activities of the sophists and those of Socrates.<sup>112</sup> After all, as discussed above, Athenian youths participated in a variety of educational activities that required a kind of tuition.<sup>113</sup> But a new development was occurring in the educational environment of Athens in the second half of the fifth century.<sup>114</sup> Sophists, orators, and doctors were all making their areas of expertise available on a wider scale

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have its 'inevitable' effect in the field of philosophical argument...Sparta's slight use of alphabetic writing does not support the 'technological determinism' that Goody and Watt implied. In fact, one may further insist that the theory is disproved for the Spartan case and questioned for Athens” (22).

110 Thomas (1989) 22.

111 Diogenes Laertius describes Protagoras and Prodicus as both earning money by reading out their works (9.50): οὗτος καὶ Πρόδικος ὁ Κεῖος λόγους ἀναγινώσκοντες ἤρανίζοντο.

112 In the *Apology*, Socrates makes a particular point of mentioning the fees charged by Gorgias of Leontini, Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis (*Apol.* 19e). Socrates himself could not afford Prodicus' fifty drachma course, but had to attend his one-drachma course instead. (*Crat.* 384b-c).

113 Nightingale (1995) underscores the *foreignness* of the sophists as inextricably related to the challenging new model of education they present: “As foreigners, the sophists were by definition engaging in transactions that were not embedded in Athenian social and political relationships” (22). Later, Nightingale speaks to a rising Athenian fear in questioning, “How could a foreigner who had cut himself off from family and civic connections and therefore owed no allegiance to anybody but himself offer an education that was beneficial to Athenian citizens and, indeed, to Athens herself?” (23).

114 Robb (1994) emphasizes the activities of Socrates as an extension of earlier oral educational practices, and the activities of the sophists as an assault upon those earlier practices: “Socrates is invited to help educate their sons through associating (*sunisthi*) and conversing with them in the traditional manner of oral societies” (202). Robb points out “the final institutionalization of the *paideia* of young men in their *meirakion* years, a development of the advancing literacy of fourth century and of Athenian philosophical schools, was greatly to diminish the importance of all levels of *sunousia*, including the erotic, as part of the Greek educational process” (204).

than previously possible. As discussed in the two sections on professional texts above, there was a dynamic interplay between the establishment of teachers within these fields and the development of texts: as schools developed, textbook-like materials began to appear, yet at the same time these treatises served as recruiting tools for those very schools and teachers. Some, such as Gorgias, resisted the notion that an argument could be frozen into a text, and instead advocated improvisation and seizing upon the proper *kairos*.<sup>115</sup> Yet even these sophists found it advantageous to distribute examples of their work in written form; like the medical writers who emphasize the proper *kairos* in the Hippocratic corpus, these sophists can use written texts to underscore the importance of seeking out and studying with a particular teacher.

At the end of the fifth century a new kind of philosophical prose developed: the philosophical dialogue. Although the works of Plato and Xenophon are the earliest examples of this genre to survive in their entirety, Plato did not invent this form.<sup>116</sup> There are two figures – both obscure – who are candidates for the “inventor” of the Socratic dialogue. Alexamenus of Teos was supposedly named the genre's originator by Aristotle, but nothing further is known of this figure.<sup>117</sup> The other candidate is “Simon the shoemaker”, whom Diogenes Laertius describes as the first to record the words of

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116 The decision to regard Plato as working within a tradition or, conversely, as inventing a novel kind of philosophical writing is insufficiently supported by the survival of the writings of his contemporaries. Tarrant (1996) states that “when writing the dramatic dialogues [Plato] may have had no straightforward model at all...though it is in this context that he is supposed to have been inspired by the mimes of Sophron and other dramatic writing” (129). Tarrant emphasizes the novel nature of Plato's project in casting him as a writer who is attempting to capture features of oral narrative in the written form. In contrast, Kahn (1996) sees Plato's writings as very much the product of an interaction with the works of his contemporaries (see esp. 1-35). For more on the origins of the Socratic dialogue, see Clay (1994).

117 Aristotle *Po.* 1447b11; *De Poetis* fr. 3 Ross (=Rose<sup>2</sup> 72). See Kahn (1996) 1.

Socrates.<sup>118</sup> Although these two figures are shrouded in mystery, we do have remains from four other Socratic authors – Antisthenes, Aeschines, Phaedo, and Eucleides – as well as additional fragments and anecdotal information on other composers of Socratic dialogues.<sup>119</sup>

These *Sokratikoi logoi* all postdate the death of Socrates. There are Socratic interlocutors – notably, Alcibiades and Aspasia – common to the dialogues of several different authors.<sup>120</sup> Perhaps we could attribute these commonalities to a famous historical interaction between Socrates and a particular individual, but it is more likely that the juxtaposition of specific historical figures with Socrates allowed for the exploration of particular philosophical themes, and so became popular subject matter. Indeed, if we follow further the possibility that these conversations are ahistorical, then a level of intertextuality appears between the writers of the *Sokratikoi logoi*.<sup>121</sup> Particularly for the early Platonic dialogues, we can imagine that these writings themselves existed in a kind of dialogue with the works of rival Socratics, as Plato attempted to respond to the challenges represented by his contemporaries and to establish himself as the definitive successor to Socrates.<sup>122</sup> If we keep the earlier discussion of professional texts in mind, a

118 Diogenes Laertius 2.123.

119 These have been compiled by Giannantoni (1990) as *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (= *SSR*).

120 Eucleides is supposed to have written an *Alcibiades* (D.L. II.108), as is Aeschines (*SSR* V A 200). The *Aspasia* of Aeschines has been reconstructed by Ehlers (1966), and it might be in response to this dialogue that Plato decided to feature Aspasia in his *Menexenus*. See Kahn (1996) 28.

121 Kahn (1996) 23-29 proposes a set of dialogues “in conversation” with each other: Plato's *Ion* (c. 394-392 BCE), followed by Aeschines' *Alcibiades* and *Aspasia*, and finally Plato's *Menexenus* (386-385 BCE).

122 Or, as Kahn (1996) describes it, “The intellectual world to which Plato's own work belongs is defined not by the characters in his dialogues but by the thought and writing of his contemporaries and rivals, such as the rhetorician Isocrates and the various followers of Socrates...We can thus situate Plato within a literary community of Socratic authors reacting to one another's work” (2). For a catalogue of

rivalry with contemporary philosophers for students and prominence further justifies Plato's composition of texts, even (and perhaps especially) if philosophy was ultimately to be an endeavor conducted face to face.

The urge to write was disproportionately strong amongst Socrates' followers.<sup>123</sup> As Paul Vander Waerdt points out, “a remarkable number of [Socrates'] associates became authors of *Sokratikoi logoi*: of the eighteen Socratics whom Plato's *Phaedo* mentions as being present or absent on Socrates' last day (cf. *Phd.* 59B-C), nine are attested to have written Socratic dialogues.”<sup>124</sup> Due to their presentation of characters in dialogues, these works are classified by Aristotle as descended from the genre of mime, and specifically from the mimes of Sophron.<sup>125</sup> This relationship between the *Sokratikoi logoi* and Sophron's *Mimes* was further strengthened by the anecdotal tradition that connects Plato to Sophron; in the colorful story told by Diogenes Laertius, Plato encountered the works of Sophron in Sicily, brought these works back to Athens, and slept with a copy of the mimes beneath his pillow.<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately for this narrative, Plato's early dialogues predate his visit to Sicily (ca. 390-387 BCE), and thus this story makes for “pretty reading and difficult literary history.”<sup>127</sup> But this story, along with a tradition that connects Plato to the comedies of Epicharmus, does establish a relationship for ancient

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Platonic passages which seem to be allusions to the work of other Socratics, see *SSR* 1:358-73.

123 This fact is either ironic when combined with Socrates' criticisms of writing in the *Phaedrus*, or further evidence that the words of *Socrates* are ironic in this dialogue.

124 Vander Waerdt (1994) 3.

125 Aristotle *Po.* 1447b11; *De Poetis* fr. 3 Ross (=Rose<sup>2</sup> 72).

126 Diogenes Laertius 3.18.

127 Clay (1994) 35.



readers between the Socratic dialogues and the comic genre.<sup>128</sup> To this we might add as an influence the Attic comedies, especially given that these works were the earliest to feature Socrates himself as a character.<sup>129</sup>

In addition to the relationship to comedy discussed by ancient authors, modern scholars have found influences from biography and tragedy. The genre of biography offered the Socratics – and Xenophon in particular – a venue in which they could manipulate historical realities with possibilities or plausibilities for their own philosophical goals. Or, as Momigliano has argued, “The Socratics experimented in biography, and the experiments were directed towards capturing the potentialities rather than the realities of individual lives. Socrates, the main subject of their considerations... was not so much the real Socrates as the potential Socrates. He was the guide to territories as yet unexplored.”<sup>130</sup> Meanwhile, the genre of tragedy provided a model for writing about a figure with such a well known and unhappy fate. “In dealing with history, the literary Socratics who wrote after Socrates' death could exploit a resource available to both the tragedian and the historian; the actors in the events they narrate or dramatize were unaware of the full implications of their words and actions.”<sup>131</sup> Indeed,

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128 For the relationship between Plato and Epicharmus, see Diogenes Laertius 3.9-17. Plato's knowledge of Epicharmus is studied by Gigante (1953).

129 Most notably in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, but also in Ameipsias' *Connus*. For the relationship of Attic comedy to the genre of *Sokratikoi logoi* more generally, see Clay (1994) 41: “Socrates *komoidopoioumenos* is, I would argue, significant for the history of the *Sokratikoi logoi* as they are to be placed in the context of ancient literary genres. The Attic comic poets of the 420s produced low and ludicrous imitations of Socrates made ridiculous; and, as Plato knew, they did manage to capture the cruder and most apparent features of his complex physiognomy.” For an exploration of Plato's use of the comic genre within his dialogues, see Nightingale (1995) 172-192.

130 Momigliano (1971) 46.

131 Clay (1994) 45-6.

Plato took advantage of this resource not only in his depictions of Socrates, but also through the skillful selection of Socrates' interlocutors, many of whom also had famous (or infamous) activities and deaths.<sup>132</sup>

A variety of literary genres, then, contributed to the formation of the *Sokratikoi Logoi*, and the distinct styles of two Socratic authors – Plato and Xenophon – demonstrate that the philosophical dialogue was at this point still quite a malleable form. Defining the debt that the philosophical dialogue owes to other Greek genres depends largely upon which Socratic author – and in some cases, which work of which author – one chooses as the focus of study. Yet although in content and style this new genre is mostly related to biography, tragedy, and comedy, as I have suggested above we should also consider the *use* of these texts, and as such it is fruitful to compare them, as I have begun to do above, with the medical and rhetorical texts proliferating during this period. Such a comparison helps to bring to the foreground the twofold pedagogical function of these texts: the use of these texts as a starting-off place for discussion within a particular academic environment, as well as the circulation of these texts more generally as a tool for advertisement and recruitment. It is within the context of their pedagogical use that the degree to which these philosophical texts could respond to and improve upon the education and values presented by rivals – both from within philosophy as well as from other fields – becomes particularly critical.<sup>133</sup>

To return to the section of the *Phaedrus* that was discussed in the introduction, it

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132 See, for example, Plato's use of dramatic irony in book one of the *Republic*, as discussed by Gifford (2001).

133 Nightingale (1995) offers an excellent discussion of Plato's incorporation of poetry, rhetoric, tragedy, and comedy into his dialogues as a means to define and market the new field of "philosophy."

seems that, within the larger context of Athenian education, texts had a far richer life than that which Socrates presents.<sup>134</sup> Rather than defenseless orphans, philosophical writings might better be thought of heralds, announcing the presence of a great philosophical figure; as champions, fighting bloodless battles with rivals; or perhaps as interlocutors themselves, engaged in an intertextual discussion. It is with this fuller portrait of the Athenian educational milieu in the beginning of the fourth century, and the changing role of texts within that environment, that I now turn to Plato's *Republic*, in order to see how Plato manages to craft a text that intrigues, recruits, and teaches a new crop of philosophers.

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<sup>134</sup> *Phdr.* 275d.

### 3. Beginning the Republic

- Κινδυνεύει γοῦν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Ἀδείμαντε,  
ἐκ τῆς παιδείας ὅποι ἄν τις ὀρμήσῃ,  
τοιαῦτα καὶ τὰ ἐπόμενα εἶναι. ἢ οὐκ ἀεὶ τὸ  
ὅμοιον ὄν ὅμοιον παρακαλεῖ;  
- Τί μήν;  
- Καὶ τελευτῶν δὴ οἶμαι φαῖμεν  
ἂν εἰς ἓν τι τέλεον καὶ νεανικὸν ἀποβαίνειν  
αὐτὸ ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ καὶ τούναντίον.  
- Τί γὰρ οὐκ; ἢ δ' ὅς.  
- Ἐγὼ μὲν τοίνυν, εἶπον, διὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἂν  
ἔτι τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐπιχειρήσαιμι νομοθετεῖν.

“At any rate Adeimantus,” I said, “it seems likely that from wherever one starts one’s education, that determines what follows. Or doesn’t like always encourage like?”  
“It does.”  
“And I suppose we would say that the end result is a complete and vigorous thing which is either good or the opposite.”  
“Why not?” he said.  
“That is why I,” I said, “would not try to legislate about such things.”  
R. 425b-c

#### 3.1 Pedagogy in the Republic

Concerns about education – ranging from how a person can ever come to learn anything at all to whether or not a teacher is responsible for the conduct of his students – permeate a great number of Plato’s dialogues. Plato establishes a link between an individual's theory of education, epistemology, and understanding of human rationality, and in so doing he delineates important areas of inquiry that a philosopher must address before the education of a potential pupil could begin. For example, across Plato’s dialogues we find investigations into what makes a qualified teacher shift to discussions about the nature of knowledge itself (*Laches*), questions of how learning occurs transform into explorations into the nature of the soul itself (*Meno*), and a growing awareness that, due to irrational elements within the soul, an interlocutor's soul must be appropriately prepared to accept rational argument (*Phaedrus, Republic*). For this early philosopher of education, epistemology, psychology, and ethics are fundamentally inseparable. Knowledge in one area of inquiry is contingent upon an understanding of the other areas, with the ultimate result that a philosophy of education requires the

support of an entire philosophical system.<sup>1</sup>

The above discussion can help explain the wide range of topics in Plato's *Republic*, a work that at first glance seems to lack a unified structure. The question as to whether it is a book on individual moral principles or one on state politics has only the uneasy answer that it is both, although at various points each of these two topics seems to occupy a subservient position to the other in the dialogue. Yet there is one key theme that underlies both the discussions of individual morality and those of political theory: the problem of moral education.<sup>2</sup> The famous allegory of the cave in book seven of the *Republic*, a metaphorical rendering of one individual's philosophical development once he has been freed by his nature and compelled forward by nondescript agents,<sup>3</sup> is introduced by Socrates as a discussion on the effects of education and lack of education.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Note that one of the projects of this chapter is to define Plato's conception of education through examining the pedagogical structure of his *Republic*. If the use of the term "education" seems vague at this point, that is deliberate.
- 2 See Havelock's (1963) interpretation of the focus of the *Republic* in his *Preface to Plato*: "Once the *Republic* is viewed as an attack on the existing educational apparatus of Greece, the logic of its organization becomes clear...That part of the argument which deals directly with political theory occupies only about a third of the nine books, and when it interposes itself, it is to provide successive excuses for progressive discussions of educational theory" (13). I do not go as far as Havelock to say that the discussions of political theory are merely excuses for further investigation into pedagogical issues, for there is substantive political thought at work in the *Republic*, not to mention the consideration of ethics which Havelock also downplays. However much he overstates his case at times, Havelock does demonstrate the pervasive nature of the problem of moral education within the *Republic*.
- 3 *R.* 7.515c3-5: Σκόπει δὴ, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὐτῶν λύσιν τε καὶ ἴασιν τῶν τε δεσμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀφροσύνης, οἷα τις ἂν εἶη, εἰ φύσει τοιάδε συμβαίνοι αὐτοῖς. ("Consider, then," I said, "the release and healing from both their bonds and foolishness, what this release would be like, if something of this sort should happen to them by nature.")
- 4 *R.* 7. 514a1-3: Μετὰ ταῦτα δὴ, εἶπον, ἀπέικασον τοιοῦτόν πάθει τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας. ("After these things then," I said, "compare our nature as regards education and the lack of it to this condition.") Cf. Clay (2000) 230-231. Clay sketches the enduring presence of the allegory of the cave from Cicero to Descartes, and points out:  
"our very words 'education' and 'conversion' go back to Socrates' allegory, which tells how a fettered prisoner is turned around by a philosophical conversion and let out of the cave in which he has spent his life, secure in its flickering and insubstantial reality. For education (*educatio* in Latin) is "leading out," and "conversion" (*conversio* in Latin) is turning around" (231).

Socrates' descriptions of life in Kallipolis focus hardly at all on the mechanics of rule amongst the philosophers, and instead concern themselves primarily with the educational programs for each class.<sup>5</sup> Even some aspects of the *Republic* that might seem a bit eccentric, such as the exiling of certain mimetic poetry in book 10, ultimately can be understood as the result of the work's concern with the proper foundation for moral education.<sup>6</sup>

Yet for all the discussion of education within the *Republic*, given that the period in which Plato is writing is one of pedagogical experiment and change, it can be difficult to untangle when a given educational practice proposed by Socrates would have been accepted by Plato's reader as obvious or uncontroversial and when it would have been thought of as bizarre or innovative.<sup>7</sup> In part, these determinations are difficult because it is not obvious who the *Republic* is meant to educate or how this process of education is

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5 Or rather, these discussions concern themselves primarily with the education of the upper two classes. The bronze class's education is never dealt with distinctly; of their education we know only that they will be exposed to the same myths and censorship as the rest of the city.

6 The "ancient quarrel" between philosophy and poetry is foreshadowed as early as book one. The first two interlocutors of Socrates, Cephalus and Polemarchus, both use the words of popular poets to ground their arguments, although in different ways. Cephalus cites Sophocles for the notion that a man's life is best once his passions have left him (1.329b5-d1), but he puts forth his own definition of justice (1.331a10-b6). Polemarchus' opening sally to Socrates is an assertion that the poet Simonides has the correct definition of justice (1.331d5). Socrates subjects Polemarchus to a more thorough examination than his father, and eventually Polemarchus is led to reject the definition of Simonides, at least in its simplest form (1.335d11-e6).

7 Occasionally Socrates notes that a particular line of argument will seem strange or laughable. Such an instance occurs in book five when Socrates discusses the role of women in Kallipolis. He compares his state to one who has fallen "into a small diving pool or into the middle of the largest sea" and who must "swim all the same" ("ἀλλὰ δὴ ὧδ' ἔχει· ἄντε τις εἰς κολυμβήθραν μικρὰν ἐμπέσῃ ἄντε εἰς τὸ μέγιστον πέλαγος μέσον, ὅμως γε νεῖ οὐδὲν ἥττον." 5.453d5). Thus begins Socrates' discussion of the three "waves" that beset the philosopher contemplating the ideal city. Each wave is a philosophical idea that logically follows, yet runs so counter to common sense or attitudes that it is difficult to accept. These waves could be considered to stand for the internal reaction of the philosopher or for the reaction of the non-philosopher to the philosopher's ideas; in either case, they represent an emotional or non-logical reaction to the logical conclusions the philosopher has drawn. I discuss the three waves further in chapter 4.

supposed to occur. Like the medical and rhetorical texts discussed in chapter 2, the very existence of Plato's *Republic* raises questions about how a text can be involved in the definition or propagation of a discipline. Like those texts from stochastic fields, is the *Republic* meant to direct students towards philosophy, but also designed to make them aware of the importance of studying with a teacher? And if so, how does such a work achieve this shift in direction, or protrepsis?

Each of these questions is complicated further by the structure of Plato's writing; the dialogue form is a slippery literary genre that invites reader participation while it simultaneously evades attempts by that same reader to attempt a universal reading. When we consider the "teacher" in the work we immediately encounter difficulties raised by the dramatic form. Even if Socrates is taken to largely express Platonic positions, within the *Republic* we find those tenets at three removes: (1) Socrates' conversation with Cephalus *et al.* is (2) narrated the following day by Socrates, and all of this is ultimately (3) composed by Plato. When we turn to the question of the "student", matters are even more complicated: the education (1) of those within Kallipolis is discussed by Socrates with Glaucon and Adeimantus, whose own educational progress (2) is observed by the fictional audience (3) of Socrates (to whom the first lines of the *Republic* are addressed), which may or may not be thought of as identical to the actual reader (4?) of the *Republic*. Thus the *Republic* is a layered work, filled with comments and observations on education that are buried at different levels of context, and extracting those messages to form a coherent picture of the educational theory in the *Republic* is a risky endeavor.

Such concerns about the difficulties inherent in rendering a definitive

interpretation of Plato's views on education exist in tension with the inviting nature of the text itself, which encourages the reader to join the conversation in progress. In particular, the first and last books of the *Republic*, the first and last words that the reader encounters, beg to be understood in the context of the work as a whole. The first book distinguishes itself from the rest of the *Republic* through its largely separate cast of characters and distinct style of philosophy, whereas the final book, especially the story of judgment after death rendered as the myth of Er, seems to undermine the philosophical defense of justice that Socrates has been building over the course of the previous eight books.<sup>8</sup> The relationship of these books to the main body of the *Republic* may puzzle a reader, but at the same time that very puzzlement can foster a greater sense of inquiry and engagement with the text.

One virtue of the assumption that the *Republic* is not simply a treatise on education, but rather is a work designed to educate the reader herself, is that it allows books 1 and 10 to be viewed as necessary to the *Republic*'s overarching mission. Under this point of view, book 1 does important preparatory work on the reader's assumptions of how a student of philosophy should act and what form philosophical inquiry should take, and book 10 serves as a kind of final test for the reader by ensuring that she has come to properly identify with the ruling class of Kallipolis and the philosopher's life of contemplation.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Plato's use of the dialogue form seems at

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8 I return to a discussion of the myth of Er in chapter 5.

9 The *Republic* ends with an extended, uninterrupted speech by Socrates. As I explore in chapter 5, this speech is puzzling not simply because it apparently undermines Socrates' previous philosophical work to prove that justice is to be valued *for itself alone*, but also because of the silence on the part of Socrates' interlocutors. The reader is left to puzzle out how this final piece fits with the preceding dialogue; Glaucon and Adeimantus are not vocally present to suggest how the reader should respond.



odds with the internal discussion of the *Republic*, in which mimetic poetry is first scorned, and later banned within Kallipolis. Perhaps even more striking is that the central discussions in the *Republic* are not dialogues at all, but that Socrates' explanations of the importance of dialectic come within the context of allegories and metaphors. Here as well, by locating this figurative use of words within the greater pedagogical mission of the *Republic*, and in so doing attending to the logic of the *Republic* as a whole, rather than to the internal logic of one of its characters, we can see a cohesion in the otherwise apparently contradictory or fragmentary work.<sup>10</sup>

The above serves as a brief outline, which is expanded upon in this and subsequent chapters, of reading the *Republic* as a work that educates. But it remains, of course, an assumption that the *Republic* is meant to have some sort of protreptic or didactic effect on its reader.<sup>11</sup> Among other things, this assumption raises questions about the expected nature of the *Republic's* audience. Was the *Republic* meant to be studied by students of the Academy, already familiar with Platonic doctrines, under the tutelage of Plato or his assigned representative? Or was it intended for broader consumption, as a part of the increased production of prose books in the fifth and fourth centuries?<sup>12</sup> Certainly the text as a whole does not assume technical philosophical knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Nor

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10 See chapter 5.

11 As Blondell (2002) sums up, “Were [the dialogues] designed to be protreptic, paideutic, commemorative, or all of the above? We do not know. In the absence of external evidence, we can only speculate on this matter. There is, of course, no pressing reason to limit them to a single purpose. There may have been as many purposes as there are dialogues, or as there were contexts for reading or performance. Nevertheless, every function that has been proposed is in some sense educational” (28).

12 See Yunis (2007) 10, and the discussion in chapter 2 above.

13 This is not to say that a background in philosophy would not be helpful. Indeed, there are select portions, such as Socrates' calculation at 9.587b11-e4 of how many times more painfully the tyrant lives than the king, that do seem to depend on some background in philosophy (such as the knowledge that

does it even require knowledge of the other Platonic dialogues for, as I explore below, the reader receives a quick education of the pitfalls of the negative philosophical approach of Socrates in book 1, and there is no internal reference within the *Republic* to another conversation of Socrates.<sup>14</sup>

Here we can return briefly to the observations made in chapter 2, and note that we do not have to choose one particular audience for the *Republic*. Just as I earlier described the multilayered quality of texts in oratory and medicine, so too we can expect that Plato's philosophical texts are composed for a variety of different readers. Just like Hippocratic treatises and Isocrates' orations, so too Plato's written philosophy can function as an inducement for new students to his academy, as a reminder for current students of the tenets of Platonic philosophy, and as a challenge to the positions held by his intellectual rivals, both in philosophy as well as in other disciplines. However, while the *Republic* might serve a variety of different functions, I focus mainly on its role as a pedagogical work.

### 3.1.1 *The Republic* as a Pedagogical Work

Once we view the *Republic* as constructed to educate its reader, it becomes difficult to avoid acquiring a number of additional assumptions about the context in which it was used, as well as the identity of its intended reader. It seems fair, with little evidence to the contrary and based on the content of the *Republic* itself, to suppose that Plato intended the audience for the *Republic* to extend to a general audience of educated

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one important number in Pythagorean thought is 729).

14 Compare with the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, which form a “trilogy” with the *Theaetetus*, and possibly a tetralogy with the unwritten *Philosopher*.

Greeks.<sup>15</sup> Presumably there is some interest on the part of the reader in philosophy, and certainly the text takes for granted knowledge of the ancient literary canon of authors such as Homer and Hesiod, but otherwise the text itself has few prerequisites.<sup>16</sup> I argue that book 1 functions as a sorting mechanism for the readers of the *Republic*; it is, perhaps, a response to the problem articulated in the *Phaedrus*, that a book cannot decide in whose hands it ends up (*Phdr.* 275d).<sup>17</sup> A text might have no control over who reads it, but it can suggest to its reader what kind of attitude one should have to be a successful student of the material at hand. Plato accomplishes this feat in the *Republic* by presenting his unknown reader with a series of potential students in book 1, each of whom is shown to lack some essential quality. As I discuss further below, once Plato has characterized for his reader various *inappropriate* interlocutors, in book 2 he brings to the fore two young men, Glaucon and Adeimantus, who, as I show, are highly suited to be Socrates' pupils, and whom the reader may emulate. Thus the largely negative quality of book 1 – wherein Socrates searches in vain for an appropriate interlocutor and the conversation ends in *aporia* – is essential in the plan of the *Republic* as a whole: to find and cultivate a philosophically promising student.

Just as book 1 suggests through its negative portrayals that certain kinds of people are ill-suited to philosophy, so too, through the dialogue's failure to achieve a satisfactory conclusion, does book 1 illustrate the need for a new kind of philosophical discourse – one which is distinct from that offered by Socrates in his aporetic conversations with

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15 Analogous to the wider audience for medical texts and oratory, discussed in ch. 2 above.

16 Again, in terms of specific, technical philosophical knowledge. See n. 13 above.

17 For further discussion of this passage, see the introduction.

Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. Once Plato has dismissed alternate forms of discussion in book 1, he has prepared his reader to accept the dominant role of Socrates in the remainder of the *Republic*. In short, Plato has educated his reader in how *not* to act and think, and this negative approach leaves a reader especially receptive to a new positive program, which begins in book 2.

For the rest of the work the reader is presented with two models of philosophical development: the ruling class in Kallipolis and the brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus. Although, as mentioned above, the layered nature of the *Republic* complicates interpretations of its message, paradoxically it is those very layers that can offer the insight into the means by which Plato seeks to affect his reader. Similarities between the formal education designed within the ideal city and the informal education carried out upon Glaucon and (to a lesser degree) Adeimantus suggest psychagogic techniques that may be extended to the reader herself. For example, Socrates concerns himself not simply with the education of the young philosophers' and guardians' rational capacity in Kallipolis, but with the proper cultivation and shaping of the other aspects of their souls as well. There is reason, then, to suspect that the education of the reader by the *Republic* will not simply rely upon appeals to her rational faculty, but will acknowledge and inspire the other parts of her soul as well – perhaps through the use of myths, which are present both at the level of Kallipolis and at the level of Glaucon and Adeimantus, as well as through the deliberate presentation of puzzles.<sup>18</sup> Thus in chapter 5, I explore the central

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<sup>18</sup> In book seven, during his discussion of the role of the study of mathematics in the education of the rational part of the philosophical soul, Socrates emphasizes the importance of puzzles to arouse the soul, using as his example to contemplation of the nature of unity or the number one (7.524e2-525a1). He concludes, “and so learning about the number one will be among the topics that lead the soul and turn it around to contemplate being.” (καὶ οὕτω τῶν ἀγωγῶν ἂν εἴη καὶ μεταστρεπτικῶν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ὄντος θέαν ἢ περὶ τὸ ἐν μάθησις.)

role that imagery and metaphor play in the *Republic* – central both in terms of their location within the text, as well as in terms of their function in the *Republic's* overall pedagogical mission.

Finally, in the last section of chapter 5 I turn to the last book of the *Republic*, and specifically to the myth of Er. This story is Plato's rather perplexing conclusion to his work. After wrapping up his discussion with Glaucon in book nine with the conclusion that the truly just man, which is to say the man who has his soul ordered according to the proper constitution, would continue throughout his life to strive to maintain that order in his soul and, as a result, would avoid the corrupting politics of his own city, book 9 seems to bring the argument of the *Republic* to a close.<sup>19</sup> And yet, Plato had included a tenth book, in which Socrates argues for the expulsion of certain kinds of poetry from Kallipolis and then articulates the so-called myth of Er, a tale of judgment after death followed by reincarnation. This final book has received a variety of reactions from readers, yet it is seldom viewed as *integral* to the mission of the *Republic*.<sup>20</sup> After discussing some of the difficulties with reconciling this section of book ten with some of the philosophy presented earlier in the *Republic*, ultimately I argue that the *Republic* concludes with a philosophical “test” for its reader, and this test is an essential

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19 As Annas (1982) puts it, as readers we are “surprised to find another book added on” (335).

20 Mattéi (1988) comes close, in arguing that book ten is an epilogue, elevating the previous philosophy to mythic levels (71); my discussion of the myth of Er below can be read in parallel with Mattéi's argument. Yunis (2007) suggests that the myth of Er provides a secondary justification for the just life (23), but this solution does not integrate the myth with the rest of the *Republic*. The most critical stance of book ten can be seen in Annas (1982), in which she calls book ten “gratuitous and clumsy” and notes that, “We can see why Plato thought it relevant to the rest of the *Republic*; but the level of philosophical argument and literary skill is much below the rest of the book” (335). A middle ground between Annas and Yunis is taken by White (1979), who calls book ten “an appendix to the whole work...[and] not a fully cohesive one” (246).

component of the work's larger pedagogical function.

These investigations into the educational methods found at various levels within the *Republic* help to shed light on the question of how Plato envisions that his text will guide a student towards proper philosophical development. My goal in this dissertation is to suggest some of the interpretive benefits in foregrounding the pedagogical purpose of the *Republic*, benefits that include understanding the *Republic* as a very cohesive work, but that also extend to understanding the philosophy within the *Republic* in a new way. As such, I have selected for my discussion a very small sampling of the *Republic*, but a sample that, despite its brevity, still manages to demonstrate the value of viewing the *Republic* under this particular lens. As with my discussion of education and texts in chapters one and two the discussion here is not comprehensive, but rather is selective, and hopefully suggestive.

### **3.2 Problems in Book 1: the Students**

The opening of Plato's *Republic* sets the stage for the dialogue in a number of ways – most obviously, it introduces the work's characters and setting. Yet the relationship of book 1 to the remainder of the *Republic* is complicated by a number of factors. The characters who receive the fullest dramatic treatment in the first book—Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus – are mostly silent in the rest of the work.<sup>21</sup> The carefully described physical and temporal setting does not receive a word of mention in the following nine books.<sup>22</sup> In book 2, Socrates' style of philosophizing undergoes a

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21 Cephalus actually leaves early on in book one to attend to the sacrifice, and does not return (331d).

22 Indeed, time does not seem to pass during the course of discussion in the *Republic*. It is not unusual for the setting of a dialogue to receive scant attention once it has been established; consider the opening of the *Euthyphro* – Socrates and Euthyphro meet on the porch of the King Archon, where Socrates has come because he is being prosecuted for corrupting the youth. Euthyphro has come because he is

shift from negative and aporetic to positive.<sup>23</sup> These distinctions, among others, between book 1 and the rest of the *Republic* have led some scholars to postulate that book 1 was composed earlier in Plato's career as a separate aporetic dialogue, sometimes called the "*Thrasymachus*," that Plato later adapted as the introduction to his treatise.<sup>24</sup>

Regardless of whether or not book 1 was initially composed as a complete aporetic dialogue, the form in which we now have it is as the introduction that Plato chose for his *Republic*. It seems unlikely, given Plato's careful style of writing, that he merely tacked a convenient dialogue onto the beginning of his work; at the very least it is highly plausible that, if book 1 had a prior life as an independent dialogue, it underwent a

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bringing murder charges against his own father. Although Euthyphro's immediate circumstances ultimately inspire the ensuing conversation on the nature of piety, Socrates' situation (and the reader's knowledge of his eventual conviction and execution) give the conversation a sense of urgency and importance. However, in spite of how tightly it relates to the theme of the conversation, once the frame has been established Socrates and Euthyphro refrain from commenting on their setting or circumstances. Instead, it is left to the attentive reader to keep time and place in mind. However, the *Republic* is a considerably longer work; one could forgive a reader for forgetting the time and place of the dialogue by the end. Oddly enough, ultimately the lack of reference to dramatic setting in the rest of the *Republic* serves to tie the opening book all the more firmly to the following nine; it would have been an extreme break for Plato to begin his great work with the opening of book two, where the dialogue begins without preamble. Thayer (1997) uses the lack of reference to the "dramatic present" within the bulk of the *Republic* as evidence that "we, the audience of the *Republic* as distinct from the personae in the dialogue, could be anyone anywhere. It is an open present, then, in which we receive Socrates' story; it is addressed to all persons in any and all times" (96).

23 For more on book two, see chapter 4.

24 Hermann (1839) appears to be the first to propose that book one of the *Republic* was originally a separate treatise on justice (538-40). F. Dümmler is said to have christened this book the *Thrasymachus* in 1895 (Friedländer 1964 305). This view of the separate composition of book one continues in more recent scholarship, including Vlastos (1991) 250. In his work, "Proleptic Composition in the *Republic*," Kahn gives an overview of the history of the "*Thrasymachus*," as well as an evaluation of the evidence for or against its existence (1993). Ultimately he argues for the treatment of book one as integral to the project of the *Republic* as a whole, although he does so with different grounds than I give here. Kahn rightly points out that book one "contains massive anticipation of the following books," and that these elements "serve as deliberate preparation" for the philosophy to come in books 2-10 (136). Yet while Kahn does an excellent job of cataloguing the philosophical points of later books that are foreshadowed in book one, he does not address the dramatic shift in interlocutors between books 1 and 2.

revision process when it was incorporated into the *Republic*.<sup>25</sup> For all of the discontinuities between book 1 and the rest of the *Republic*, the first book functions remarkably well as a foundation upon which the subsequent philosophy may be built. It accomplishes this feat not so much through the introduction of Socratic concepts and values, although it is worth mentioning that many of the figures key to Socratic analogies – the doctor, the ship captain, the shoemaker, and the like – do receive mention in book one (332d10-333a10). Rather, book 1 functions *negatively* by demonstrating the flaws in certain approaches to philosophy, and in certain styles of argumentation. In the succession of Socrates' interlocutors, the reader is presented with a wide variety of potential philosophical students, each of whom is rejected for the role of pupil in the remainder of the work. Should the reader identify herself as the student of this text, the introduction gives ample negative examples of how not to act, but also provides, almost hidden in the background, two positive examples for the reader to emulate.

### 3.2.1 *The Right Students: Glaucon and Adeimantus*

Plato's brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus take up the role of Socrates' primary interlocutors in the remainder of the *Republic*. These two characters do not burst on the scene in book 2 without introduction; indeed, although he has afforded the brothers a relatively spare treatment, nonetheless Plato does provide his readers with some

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25 On Plato's careful composition of the *Republic*: As Quintilian tells it, Plato rewrote the beginning of his work a number of times in his desire to perfect the opening rhythm (*Inst.* 8.6.64 ), and Diogenes Laertius cites Euphorion and Panaetius as telling us that the beginning of the *Republic* was rewritten many times (3.37). See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De Comp. verb.* 25.209. See Riginos (1976) 185-186. In addition to these ancient sources, Kahn (1993) shows a number of discrete points of connection between book 1 and the remainder of the *Republic*. As Kahn concludes, "Unless one believes in extraordinary coincidences, on the hypothesis of an independent earlier composition it will follow that these passages [related to the rest of the *Republic*] must all form part of the later revision, when the *Thrasymachus* was adapted to serve as proem to the *Republic*." If this were the case, roughly half of the *Thrasymachus* would have been rewritten (139).



information on the state of each young man's intellectual development. Since ultimately it is Glaucon and Adeimantus, and not Cephalus or the other metics, whom Plato selects to serve as Socrates' students in the majority of his work, we can see the first book of the *Republic* as an initially unsuccessful search for the ideal philosophical student for Socrates. Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus are each unsuitable for this position, although for different reasons. At the end of book 1 Socrates is disheartened with the conversation's lack of progress, signifying that he has yet to connect with his ideal student(s). Book 2 rectifies this by bringing Glaucon and Adeimantus to the fore of the dialogue, although they have been present all along.

Glaucon is the first character whom Socrates introduces in the *Republic*. He is Socrates' companion as the two leave the Piraeus for the upper city, and he waits with Socrates for Polemarchus, Adeimantus, and the others to catch up with them. After an initial exchange with Socrates in which the two men decide that they must accompany the others back to Polemarchus' house, Glaucon remains silent for a large portion of book one.<sup>26</sup> He does break his silence at one point during Socrates' debate with Thrasymachus: after Socrates states that some of the best people rule in order to avoid a penalty, Glaucon asks Socrates about the nature of this penalty. A brief discussion ensues in which Glaucon comments that he is not convinced by Thrasymachus and encourages Socrates to investigate further the costs and benefits of injustice and justice.

Glaucon's momentary elevation from the role of silent observer in book 1 serves a purpose internal to the logic of the dialogue, in that he redirects the conversation between

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<sup>26</sup> At 1.337d10 he offers monetary support to Socrates, and is described by Socrates as clamoring for Thrasymachus to offer his defense of injustice.

Thrasymachus and Socrates,<sup>27</sup> and allows Socrates to introduce the notion of the reluctant philosopher-ruler, a theme recurrent in the *Republic*. However, Glaucon's brief interjection also allows Plato to provide his reader with a glimpse of the young man's character. Here, as later in the dialogue, Glaucon is a clever and engaged student, but he allows Socrates to dominate their exchange. He does offer up some challenge, but mostly that challenge is limited to asking Socrates to explain himself further or to requesting that Socrates clarify a point or a definition. Glaucon looks to Socrates to provide answers rather than offering up his own alternatives, as Thrasymachus does, and is instinctively sympathetic with Socrates' position. Whereas Thrasymachus mocks the dialectic notion of finding answers through the reciprocal presentation and criticism of ideas, Glaucon prefers this approach.<sup>28</sup> Although his character does not accord with the confrontational manner of the aporetic first book, he proves to be a good fit for the style of the rest of the *Republic*, with its focus on the importance of dialectic for philosophical education.<sup>29</sup>

Adeimantus also receives mention early in book 1 – as a companion not of Socrates, but of Polemarchus. Like Polemarchus, Adeimantus must catch up with Glaucon and Socrates as the latter pause in their ascending journey back to the city; this initial meeting serves to foreshadow the manner in which Adeimantus continues to

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27 For more on the conversation between Thrasymachus and Socrates, see below.

28 For Thrasymachus' mockery of dialectic, see 1.336b8-c5. Socrates offers Glaucon two possible methods of philosophizing. The first is for two individuals (in this case, Thrasymachus and Socrates) to each make a speech in response to each other as advocates for their own position, and then for a separate "jury" to decide the winning argument. The second is to trade off the position of advocate and juror between the participants, with the ultimate goal of reaching mutual agreement. Glaucon opts for the second option (1.348a6-b8).

29 The degree to which Socrates actually engages Glaucon in dialectic is considered below. It is also suggestive of Glaucon's character that he so quickly asks about the "penalty" that will prompt the best people to rule: likely he interrupts at this point in Socrates' debate with Thrasymachus because Glaucon views himself as potentially one of these "best people."

metaphorically lag behind Socrates and Glaucon in his philosophical development in the rest of the *Republic*. However, Adeimantus is further along in his moral education than his companions; while Polemarchus tries to use a playful (and democratic) threat to compel Socrates to join them back at his house by stating that Socrates must either be stronger than the crowd or give in to their wishes, Adeimantus attempts to persuade Socrates by mentioning the torch-relay that will be performed on horseback that evening. This bit of information is Adeimantus' sole contribution to the dialogue of book 1, yet it will prove to be a fair indicator of his character. From the start we can see that Adeimantus will not be sympathetic with the might-makes-right argument of Thrasymachus, yet neither is he able to offer the direct challenge that his brother Glaucon gives. We also see, perhaps, that Adeimantus' interests skew towards the quotidian; like the man on the street, he finds a novel spectacle to be an exciting possibility, and furthermore believes that Socrates will share in his interest.

The two brothers serve as points on a continuum of philosophical development. Whereas in the remainder of the *Republic* Glaucon occasionally challenges Socrates on his definitions or pushes him to further explain the logic behind a point, Adeimantus often represents himself as voicing the concerns of the average person.<sup>30</sup> Yet Adeimantus is not simply one of the masses; Socrates claims that he exhibits a remarkable character

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<sup>30</sup> Adeimantus' version of the challenge to Socrates is not worded as an abstract philosophical challenge like Glaucon's, but rather focuses on the ways in which average people praise justice and condemn injustice, including common myths (2.362e1-367e5). Similarly, after Socrates has introduced the notion of the philosopher-kings in Kallipolis, Adeimantus cannot contradict Socrates' logic, but protests that the average person would not be convinced (6.487b1-d5). See Blondell (2002), "[Adeimantos] quotes more poetry than Glaukon, appears more influenced by it, is more mimetic, and possibly less firm in his own opinions than his brother. This accords with other indications in the *Republic* that despite the similarity in the two brothers' characters, Glaukon has made greater philosophical progress" (241).

(2.367e5), perhaps because, unlike his companions, Adeimantus sees Socrates as someone to learn from, rather than as someone to challenge.<sup>31</sup> Here we can think back to the discussion in medical texts and, in particular, in Isocrates of the importance of natural ability in acquiring a skill.<sup>32</sup> Although none of these texts specifically define what kinds of natural prospective students require, in the *Republic* we have a sense of what is necessary, a sense that comes from two very different kinds of definition: the positive characters of Glaucon and Adeimantus, and the negative models of the Socratean interlocutors of book 1.

### 3.2.2 *The Wrong Student: Cephalus*

Although Plato eventually brings Glaucon and Adeimantus to the fore of the discussion, in the opening of the *Republic* they remain in the background as Socrates faces a succession of interlocutors: Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus. For one reason or another, the involvement of each of these three men in the dialogue is cut short. Each character's retreat from the scene is explained within the dramatic action – Cephalus must attend to the sacrifices, Polemarchus is interrupted by Thrasymachus, and Thrasymachus, infuriated by Socrates, gradually withdraws his willingness to participate – yet within the context of the *Republic* as a text on education there is another explanation for their departures.<sup>33</sup> While a number of scholars have noted the

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31 Socrates notes that he has always admired the character of Glaucon and Adeimantus (“ἀεὶ μὲν δὴ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ τε Γλαύκωνος καὶ τοῦ Ἀδεϊμάντου ἠγάμη”). This attention to the natural abilities of his students is reminiscent of the discussions in other fields regarding the limited results of education. See sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 above.

32 Cf. Isoc. 15.202-206. See 2.3.3 above.

33 Polemarchus and Thrasymachus do remain on the stage, although they become largely silent. The reader is reminded of Thrasymachus' presence again at the opening of book 5. See 4.2.2 Book 5, p. 137.

deficiencies in the characters of book 1, the reading I present below is distinct in demonstrating a *necessary link* between each of the three interlocutors; in short, I have as an assumption that the “lessons” of book 1 build upon each other, and that each subsequent interlocutor is an improvement, but still a failure.<sup>34</sup> Through the course of Socrates’ examinations it becomes apparent that each of these men is an improvement over the last, but each still lacks some element necessary for successful philosophical inquiry. Without intelligent and engaged participants the discussion cannot flourish, and so book 1 ultimately ends with Socrates expressing his dissatisfaction with the results of his inquiry. Yet although no progress has been made on the question of the nature of justice – or, at least, although Socrates *claims* no progress has been made (1.354b8) – the conversation in book 1 plays a valuable foundational role in shaping the reader’s understanding of the proper temperament of the successful philosophical student.

Socrates’ first interlocutor is Polemarchus’ father Cephalus. Polemarchus and Adeimantus succeed in altering Socrates’ plans for the evening and the men all adjourn to Polemarchus’ house, where a gathering is already underway. Socrates mentions the

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34 Moes (2007) sums up his observations about the characters of book one by stating “Socrates’ three interlocutors in book 1 are either too non-philosophical (Cephalus), too obsequious (Polemarchus), or too hostile (Thrasymachus)” (66). Blondell (2002) provides a different description of the three “responses” to Socratic testing in book one, which is more thorough (165-189). I differ from Blondell in the particular traits that I identify as critical to the “failure” of each of Socrates’ interlocutors, as well as in her negative view of Cephalus. Neither Moes (2007) nor Blondell (2002) posit the kind of larger structure to the presentation of the three interlocutors that I suggest here. One scholar who *does* suggest a necessary link between the three men is Reeve (1988). Reeve groups Cephalus and Polemarchus together as “money-lovers” (analogous to the lowest class in Kallipolis), classifies Thrasymachus as an “honor-lover”, and identifies Glaucon and Adeimantus as “wisdom-lovers” - and therefore, the only interlocutors who are candidates to become philosophers (33-41). Reeve’s reading has the virtue of positing a logic behind the presentation of the figures of book one, but unfortunately cannot explain why both Cephalus *and* Polemarchus are present. Nor is his explanation for what distinguishes Glaucon and Adeimantus – that they both “are already familiar with, and sympathetic to, the theory of forms...hence they are philosophic men. For only the latter are naturally qualified to understand and accept that theory (475b11-480a13)” (41) - satisfactory, since the reader does not learn about this feature of the brothers’ prior education for several more books.

presence of Lysias and Euthydemus, two brothers of Polemarchus, as well as Thrasymachus, Charmantides, and Clitophon.<sup>35</sup> However, the attention of Socrates-as-narrator soon turns to the old man Cephalus. Socrates describes him as looking quite old, and as sitting on chair with a wreath upon his head as though he had been offering a sacrifice (1.328c). Cephalus is the first person in the house to greet Socrates; Cephalus comments that his age prevents him from going into town, and he chastises the philosopher for not making the trip down to the Piraeus more often (1.328d). For, Cephalus explains, as he has aged his love of bodily pleasures has faded away, and he now longs for philosophical discussion.<sup>36</sup> Socrates replies that he enjoys very much conversing with those who have lived long lives for, in his view, they can serve as prophets of a sort for the future that awaits us all (1.328e). Socrates asks whether or not old age is a difficult time of life, and the resultant conversation soon turns to the question of whether or not money aids a man in being virtuous, and then to the further question of what exactly it means to be virtuous – or more precisely, what it means to be just. Yet at precisely the point when Socrates seems to be ready to launch into an examination of Cephalus – when Socrates states that “to speak the truth and repay what one has borrowed” is *not* the definition of justice (1.331d) – Polemarchus interrupts, and Cephalus bequeaths the conversation to his son and then departs to attend to the sacrifice.

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35 Lysias, Euthydemus, and Charmantides remain silent characters in the *Republic*. Except for a brief exchange with Polemarchus (1.340a-c), Clitophon is mostly silent as well. Of the younger generation, Thrasymachus proves to be the most vocal participant in the discussion to come.

36 Note that in spite of his assertions that he desires philosophical conversation, Cephalus is not himself willing to travel to seek out this intellectual stimulation, but rather believes that Socrates - a man similar in age to himself - should instead travel to him. We can perhaps see here a shift from the fifth century, in which potential teachers traveled around to various cities, to the fourth century, in which students traveled to schooling centers. See chapter 2.

Plato's presentation of Cephalus has inspired a range of reactions.<sup>37</sup> The fact that commentators cannot agree on the nature of Cephalus' character is not indicative of an anemic or underdeveloped description; indeed, Cephalus is one of the more fully defined characters in the *Republic*.<sup>38</sup> Cephalus seems the picture of the average (non-Athenian) Athenian resident: he believes himself to be content and has lived his life in accordance with common beliefs about justice. He partakes in religious festivals and quotes freely from poets.<sup>39</sup> Though no Athenian citizen, his is a life shaped by education in popular morality, and therefore he should be a ripe subject for Socratic examination. Yet Socrates asks him few questions, allows Cephalus to speak in extended answers, and ultimately permits Cephalus to avoid any thorough philosophical scrutiny.

Socrates' release of Cephalus can be seen as a sign of his respect or of his scorn, depending upon whether one sees Cephalus as a moral individual who has learned from experience or as just another arms manufacturer; the text itself, absent these comparisons,

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37 For Reeve (1988), "Cephalus is an attractive character, portrayed with delicacy and respect. He may not know what justice is, but his experience of life has given him a kind of wisdom that Plato by no means despises (620c3-d2)" (6). Annas (1982) describes him differently: "There are enough malicious touches in Plato's picture of Cephalus to show us that we are being presented with a limited and complacent man" (19). Blondell (2002), citing descriptions of the virtuous individual from later books of the *Republic*, believes that the reader "should suspect some irony" in any compliments that Socrates gives Cephalus (171), and more generally describes Cephalus as having "self-righteous complacency" (171).

38 Garland (1990) describes him as "closer to being identifiably human than any other elderly person in Greek literature" (272). However, Garland finds Plato's treatment of Cephalus to be "condescending" as "the old fellow is paraded before the reader as an object of curiosity rather than as an individual with his own feelings and needs" (272). Garland offers little support of his view of Cephalus as a comic figure in Plato, although his justification might be consistent with that presented by Annas (1982) in n. 37 above.

39 When Socrates first meets Cephalus he describes him as looking as if he had been offering sacrifices (1.328b5), although Cephalus eventually excuses himself from the conversation by commenting that he needs to look after his sacrifices (1.331d5). Cephalus quotes Sophocles (1.329b5) and Pindar (1.331a5) in the course of his discussion with Socrates.

is neutral. Socrates seems to make a decision at the very beginning of his exchange with Cephalus not to subject him to rigorous philosophical scrutiny; one possible reason for this decision is that Cephalus almost immediately bars himself from being one of the Socrates' potential students. It is perhaps the case that Cephalus escapes the Socratic elenchus because he serves as "a sort of living counterexample to Socrates' claim that virtue is a kind of knowledge," and therefore is "an inappropriate subject for the elenchus."<sup>40</sup> Yet if this is so, it is difficult to see why Polemarchus, the son who inherits his father's arguments, *is* considered a worthy subject. Although he has not reached the end of his life, as has Cephalus, there is no indication within the *Republic* that his views and nature depart from those of his father, and no reason not to think that he will reach a similar kind of wisdom in his old age as his father, without philosophical intervention.<sup>41</sup> Yet Socrates *does* choose to engage the son while letting the father be, and this decision suggests some important difference between the two men.<sup>42</sup> Further examination shows that although Polemarchus is the heir to all of Cephalus' possessions, there is one thing that Polemarchus still has that his father explicitly lacks: passion.

Cephalus mentions his lack of erotic passion in nearly the same breath as he

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40 Reeve (1988) 6-7.

41 Although, of course, his life-story will deviate significantly from that of his father. Whereas Cephalus died of natural causes with his wealth intact, Polemarchus suffered under the hands of the Thirty Tyrants. He was executed by the Thirty in 404, almost certainly as a result of the tyrants' desire to acquire for themselves the wealth that Polemarchus inherited from his father. The story of his seizure, execution without trial, and pauper's burial is told by his brother Lysias in a court speech (*Lys.* 12). See Gifford (2001) for the ironic tone the facts of Cephalus and Polemarchus' lives casts over Cephalus' discussion of happiness.

42 One might argue that Socrates *intended* to rigorously challenge Cephalus, but that the latter man evaded scrutiny by departing. However, Socrates does not protest Cephalus' departure, nor does he attempt to entice the older man into staying. Socrates and Cephalus *both* seem content to let the conversation continue as it does, with Polemarchus taking over as Socrates' interlocutor.



greet Socrates, explaining that while his bodily pleasures atrophied, his desire for conversation correspondingly increased.<sup>43</sup> When Socrates asks him about his quality of life, Cephalus again responds with reference to his loss of sexual desire. A man can truly be happy, Cephalus would have it, only once the appetites cease to function as crazed masters over him.<sup>44</sup> Yet Cephalus has not experienced some kind coup d'état within his soul, with reason seizing control. Nor has he actively tamed his bodily desires, making them servants of reason.<sup>45</sup> Instead his physical desires have simply faded away as his body aged, leaving only his intellectual passions.

But what kind of intellectual passion does Cephalus have, now that his physical desires are gone? When he first sees Socrates he exhorts the philosopher to remain, and to engage *the young men* in conversation.<sup>46</sup> He does not suggest that he himself should be a participant. It would seem that his remaining passion is not for finding philosophical truths, but rather for observing a battle of wits. Socrates thwarts this desire when he responds to Cephalus' request not by examining the youths present but instead by engaging Cephalus himself. Socrates states that he believes that the very old have a great deal to teach, and so in the same breath sets up Cephalus as an expert who needs to be scrutinized. Yet those readers who might expect a lively exchange on common wisdom would be disappointed; not only does Socrates offer Cephalus very little challenge, but Cephalus himself seems uninterested in the discussion and seizes immediately upon

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43 R. 1.328d2. Cf. 6.485d5-8.

44 R. 1.329c6.

45 Cf. *Phdr.* 254e5-255a1.

46 R. 1.328d5.

Polemarchus' interjection as an opportunity to return to his interrupted sacrifice. While it might be understandable that Cephalus does not desire to be the subject of a Socratic inquiry, however gently conducted, Cephalus' swift departure seems to contradict his opening assertions regarding his appetite for conversations. Once presented with the chance to watch Socrates spar verbally with the younger men present, Cephalus leaves – so much for his intellectual passion, even in a limited form.<sup>47</sup> The point of Socrates' exchange with Cephalus, it seems, is not to challenge conventional views on justice, as they are left relatively unexamined. Rather, through its failure to develop, the aborted conversation demonstrates the important role that the passions play in philosophy.

Socrates will later describe how those appetites, whose loss Cephalus celebrates, are an essential component of an individual's philosophical development.<sup>48</sup> Without passions cultivated to appreciate order and beauty, there is no drive towards further knowledge; instead, there is only complacency – in other words, the attitude of Cephalus. Though Socrates has presented Cephalus with a refutation of the latter's vague notions of justice, Cephalus retreats to his sacrifice with a laugh, unconcerned. It is his son, Polemarchus, who feels strongly enough to interrupt the conversation, and in so doing presents himself as a potentially more viable candidate for philosophical enlightenment.

### *3.2.3 The Wrong Student: Polemarchus*

Socrates' dialogue with Polemarchus follows a pattern familiar to those

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47 Cephalus hardly lives up to the standard set by Socrates in book 5 (5.475c5-d1): “Τὸν δὲ δὴ εὐχερῶς ἐθέλοντα παντὸς μαθήματος γεύεσθαι καὶ ἀσμένως ἐπὶ τὸ μαθάνειν ἰόντα καὶ ἀπλήστως ἔχοντα, τοῦτον δ' ἐν δίκῃ φήσομεν φιλόσοφον· ἢ γάρ;” (“Someone who is easily willing to taste all learning, and who gladly turns toward learning and is insatiable, this is the one we would justly call a philosopher. Isn't that so?”).

48 See 4.2.1 Book 2, p. 128.

acquainted with other Platonic dialogues. Polemarchus volunteers himself for Socratic examination when he intrudes upon his father's conversation. Socrates has just proposed a counterexample to Cephalus' implied notion that justice is speaking the truth and repaying loans. Socrates concludes that this common definition of justice is wrong, and before Cephalus can respond Polemarchus offers up a line from Simonides to defend the common-sense notion of justice. Socrates almost immediately begins to dominate the proceeding dialogue, challenging Polemarchus far more rigorously than he did the boy's father. Yet Socrates' eagerness does not cause Polemarchus to retreat; rather, Polemarchus continues to be an active and engaged interlocutor right up until Thrasymachus' outburst overtakes the conversation.

At first glance Polemarchus seems well-suited to be a student of Socrates. He is engaged enough to put forth his own views for examination and is willing to modify his position and propose new definitions in the face of Socrates' examination. However, unlike Socrates' later students, Glaucon and Adeimantus, Polemarchus is still wedded to traditional notions of justice and injustice as taught by the poets. His initial definition of justice is not his own, but is rather a parroting of Simonides. In the face of Socrates' challenges Polemarchus is able to supplement Simonides' teachings, but he still retains their sentiments at the core of his argument. Indeed, Polemarchus returns throughout his exchange with Socrates to the notion that justice is aiding friends and harming enemies (1.332d6, 1.334b7, 1.335a7), and he responds to the problematic scenarios Socrates proposes by refining his definition of the nature of a friend and of an enemy, rather than abandoning his central notion of the nature of justice altogether (1.334e5).<sup>49</sup>

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49 In contrast, as we later see, Glaucon and Adeimantus begin their challenge to Socrates by putting

Eventually, however, Socrates induces Polemarchus to discard his own interpretation of Simonides, and their discussion seems doomed to end in aporia. After all, Polemarchus began the conversation with an assertion that, after some attempts in vain to shore it up, he is led by Socrates to reject (1.335d12). We might expect Socrates then to make some statement to the effect that they are now in a worse intellectual position than when they started, and to conclude that they have failed to learn about the nature of justice or injustice. It comes as a pleasant surprise when a rather optimistic Socrates continues the discussion by eliciting a new definition from Polemarchus (1.336a10). However, Polemarchus does not get the opportunity to show whether or not he has the capacity to develop a unique definition of justice; Thrasymachus interrupts at this point, and takes up the role of Socrates' interlocutor.

Like his father, Polemarchus finds that his conversation with Socrates is cut short by the interjection of a new potential student. Polemarchus has already offered his definition of justice, and that definition failed to show any evidence of serious intellectual engagement with contemporary morality. There is nothing in Polemarchus' initial discussion with Socrates to suggest that the boy has latent philosophical talent beneath the surface, and no reason to think his next proposed definition, should his discussion with Socrates have continued, would have been anything other than another superficial proverb. Not only does Polemarchus lack innovation in his own beliefs, he fails to present any interesting challenge during his dialogue with Socrates. Though he has the passion for discussion, he does not have the intellectual rigor or curiosity for philosophy, and so is swiftly sidelined when a more promising candidate comes along in the form of

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traditional defenses of morality to the test and finding them lacking.

Thrasymachus.

### 3.2.4 *The Wrong Student: Thrasymachus*

It may seem odd to consider the beast-like Thrasymachus to be temperamentally suited to be Socrates' interlocutor, especially given the commentary Socrates (the narrator) provides on his behavior. After all, Thrasymachus has been trying to take over the conversation from the beginning, but finally at this point could keep quiet no longer: "crouched up like a wild beast about to spring, he hurled himself at us as if to tear us to pieces" (1.336b).<sup>50</sup> The wild Thrasymachus immediately unleashes an attack on Socrates; it seems like a man acting this way could hardly be a more promising philosophical pupil than the amiable Polemarchus. Yet it is difficult to deny that Thrasymachus has the requisite passion for seeking intellectual truths. Furthermore, as the discussion progresses it soon becomes apparent that Thrasymachus' views are far more sophisticated than Polemarchus' regurgitations of popular morality.

Thrasymachus is able to interrupt the conversation only because his companions can no longer constrain him; his anger at the discussion he is hearing gives him the strength to break free – specifically, his anger at Socrates, whom Thrasymachus describes as disingenuous in his philosophic inquiry. He suggests that Socrates is merely using Polemarchus to show off his own wit (1.336c2), and demands that Socrates himself put forth a definition of justice and allow it to be scrutinized by others. Thrasymachus' initial complaint to Socrates does not mention the content of his philosophical discussion, although later Thrasymachus does take issue with the Socratic tenet that justice is better than injustice. Instead, Thrasymachus bristles at Socrates' method. Why, he demands to

<sup>50</sup> ἀλλὰ συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον ἤκεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς διαρπασόμενος (1.336b).

know, does Socrates “act like a simpleton” (ἐνηθίζεσθε), participating in an exchange with Polemarchus instead of offering his own definition of justice? In this one question, Thrasymachus implies that Socrates knows more than he is letting on and at the same time suggests that Polemarchus is hardly a stimulating interlocutor for Socrates.

Polemarchus has no interesting or promising views on justice, and Socrates knows this; to engage Polemarchus in dialectic is simply for Socrates to flatter his own vanity.

Thrasymachus exhorts Socrates to offer his own definition of justice, with the condition that the definition cannot be a mere substitution of similar concepts, but must uniquely define justice itself.

Before turning to Socrates’ response to Thrasymachus’ challenge, it is worth noting that at this point Thrasymachus does seem to be a great improvement over Cephalus or Polemarchus with regard to the character traits discussed earlier. With his initial outburst he has shown the passion that Cephalus lacks, but in addition the particular quality of his complaint against Socrates demonstrates that he is not merely interested in witnessing a display of rhetoric, but wants Socrates to engage in the search for truth in earnest.<sup>51</sup> When Thrasymachus later gives his definition of justice as simply what is advantageous for the stronger, he indicates that he is a different class of student from Polemarchus as well. He does not merely parrot conventional morality in his definition as Polemarchus does, nor does he present himself as complacent in his position. Rather, he is proud of his definition precisely because it is iconoclastic, and as such is the result of a great deal of personal reflection. He does not cite a poet or,

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<sup>51</sup> Initially, at least, this is how Thrasymachus presents himself. As his exchange with Socrates progresses, however, it soon becomes apparent that Thrasymachus believes that he himself possesses the greatest amount of insight on the question of the virtues of justice and injustice, and that he is interested in a contest, rather than a collaborative effort, with Socrates.

initially, a scenario to defend his position, but instead lets his statement stand on its own. Yet in spite of the ways in which Thrasymachus is an improvement over his two predecessors, his personality has other features that disbar him from the role of Socrates' student.

The reader has a hint that all is not going to be well between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Socrates' first response to the sophist. Socrates protests that he *has* been diligently attempting to discern the nature of justice and that he cannot respond given the limitations Thrasymachus has imposed upon his speech. For the reader, Socrates' response has an air of insincerity about it when considered against the *Republic* as a whole.<sup>52</sup> After all, when Glaucon and Adeimantus propose a quite similar, albeit far more drawn-out, challenge to Socrates in book 2, his response is to admire the cleverness of the two young men and to develop the city-state analogy that will drive the majority of the rest of the work. Socrates *can*, it seems, give a definition of justice that does not depend upon it being beneficial or profitable to the individual. What he cannot do – if his sincerity is to be respected – is offer such a definition to Thrasymachus. Why this is the case becomes clear as the conversation between the two men progresses.

After Socrates protests that he cannot give Thrasymachus the kind of definition that the latter man seeks, Socrates prompts Thrasymachus to offer his own definition of justice. Thrasymachus is not too shy to comply; indeed, in his narration Socrates describes him as wanting “to speak in order to win a good reputation, since he thought he had a very good answer” (1.338a).<sup>53</sup> Thrasymachus announces that justice “is nothing

52 Although this point would not be apparent to the first-time reader.

53 καὶ ὁ Θρασύμαχος φανερὸς μὲν ἦν ἐπιθυμῶν εἰπεῖν ἵν' εὐδοκιμήσειεν, ἡγούμενος ἔχειν ἀπόκρισιν παγκάλην· (1.338a5-7)

other than what is advantageous for the stronger,” and then immediately exhorts those present to praise him for his wise insight (1.338c).<sup>54</sup> Instead, Socrates begins to subject Thrasymachus’ definition to philosophical examination, and it is soon apparent why Socrates could not offer Thrasymachus the same slowly-developed definition with which he later responds to Glaucon and Adeimantus.

When Socrates begins his examination, Thrasymachus immediately attempts to maintain control over the conversation. Socrates’ first response to Thrasymachus is to take his words quite literally: Polydamas, a famous athlete, is physically stronger than most, and beef is advantageous for his body. Since justice is simply what is advantageous for the stronger, and beef is advantageous for Polydamas (who is stronger than Socrates or Thrasymachus), then beef is just (1.338c3-8). Thrasymachus attacks Socrates as being deliberately uncharitable, and in so doing Thrasymachus makes clear that he is going to attempt to maintain control over the terms of the debate.<sup>55</sup> Thus Thrasymachus’ stance towards Socrates is a confrontational one; the two are not searching for the truth together, but rather Thrasymachus is attempting to beat Socrates in philosophizing.<sup>56</sup>

At Socrates’ prompting, Thrasymachus elaborates his answer, specifying that “the

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54 Ἄκουε δὴ, ἧ δ’ ὄς. φημι γὰρ ἐγὼ εἶναι τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον. ἀλλὰ τί οὐκ ἐπαινεῖς; ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐθελήσεις. (1.338c1-3)

55 Describing an interpretation of a particular individual's argument as “charitable” or not is a modern distinction, yet it captures Thrasymachus' charge (1.338d1-3) that Socrates interprets his argument in a way that does it the greatest evil (“βδελυρὸς γὰρ εἶ, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ταύτη ὑπολαμβάνεις ἢ ἄν κακουργήσεις μάλιστα τὸν λόγον.”)

56 Socrates the narrator suggests that Thrasymachus is merely seeking to win a good reputation through his answer (338a6), precisely the thing that Thrasymachus had accused Socrates of. Consider also Thrasymachus’ assertion that Socrates can never overpower him by argument (1.341b1).



stronger” should be understood as the ruling element in a city (1.338d10), and that “what is advantageous” are the rules and laws that those rulers have put in place to maintain their power (1.338e2-6). What the citizens of a given city call just is merely a set of conventions that the politically powerful have put into place both to maintain their own position and to ensure the complacency of the citizenry.<sup>57</sup> Socrates examines Thrasymachus’ answer and slowly builds the case that a ruler must act not based on what is advantageous for himself, but based on what is advantageous for his subjects (1.342e6-10). As the conversation closes in on this conclusion Socrates, as the narrator, describes Thrasymachus as becoming more and more truculent. When Socrates reaches his conclusion that Thrasymachus’ definition of justice is flawed, Thrasymachus refuses to concede the argument and instead continues to challenge Socrates. Rather than attack Socrates’ sincerity as an interlocutor, as he did earlier in the dialogue, Thrasymachus this time suggests that Socrates is simply a poor philosopher who is unable to make basic distinctions (1.343a7-10).

Throughout their interactions we see that although Thrasymachus is a passionate debater, he does not seek to be Socrates’ companion, let alone his student, in the discussion. What Thrasymachus demands is a role-reversal with Socrates: he challenges Socrates to briefly describe the nature of justice, and to defend his description against Thrasymachus’ attacks. Thrasymachus does not allow Socrates the latitude to build his elaborate analogy, and so Socrates refuses to respond. When it swiftly becomes clear that

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<sup>57</sup> Thrasymachus’ definition of justice is provocative for a number of reasons, including his unlocking of it from any notion of the good, but perhaps the greatest challenge it offers is that more popular notions of the just cannot be entered into the conversation as evidence, for Thrasymachus has challenged the notion that conventional wisdom on the subject is anything other than the ignorant shoring up of the status quo.

Socrates is not going to give over his role as teacher, Thrasymachus' pride in his own intellect compels him to do what Socrates has pronounced impossible and to give his own definition of justice. He might allow himself to become engaged in dialectic, but Thrasymachus views such an exchange as a battle for intellectual superiority rather than a mutually-driven search for the truth. Ultimately, then, Socrates' privileged position as the key examiner in the conversation is maintained, as is the dialogue form, but only in the face of Thrasymachus' protests.<sup>58</sup>

Not only does Thrasymachus lack the appropriately submissive attitude towards Socrates as a teacher, but he also dismisses the notion that truth can be found through dialectic.<sup>59</sup> Instead, he believes that he has the correct understanding already, and has little interest in exchanging ideas with Socrates. In fact, after Thrasymachus offers his first definition of justice – that it is simply what is advantageous for the stronger – he does not challenge Socrates to make a trial of his statement. Instead he taunts Socrates, immediately demanding that Socrates praise him (1.388c1). When Socrates responds in his typically inquisitive fashion, Thrasymachus at first refuses to engage with Socrates' questions, and only after further prompting is he induced to participate in the dialogue by offering some further clarification. After Thrasymachus makes his second key point about justice – that the unjust man always does better than the just one (1.343b1-344c8) –

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58 In addition to Thrasymachus' verbal protests, his whole body seems to reject his peaceful participation in the dialogue with Socrates. Recall that he burst in on Socrates' conversation with Polemarchus by hurling himself at them (1.336b5) and, near the end of his debate with Socrates, Thrasymachus agrees "reluctantly, with toil, trouble, and – since it was summer – a quantity of sweat that was amazing to behold" (350d1-3).

59 It is possible that one of the functions of book one is to distinguish between dialogue and dialectic and to establish dialectic as a special form of dialogue. This is investigated further in section 3.3 Problems in Book 1: the Method, p. 118 below.

he is even less interested in Socrates' input; the narrator reports that once Thrasymachus has finished his speech he desired simply to leave (1.344d1-5). Only at the insistence of those gathered does Thrasymachus consent to remain and explain himself further, and yet he continues to be skeptical of the virtues of dialogue. Socrates exhorts Thrasymachus to persuade those present that injustice is to be preferred to justice, and Thrasymachus responds with the exasperated retort that the only option left to him would be to pour his argument into the very soul of his listener (1.345b4-5).<sup>60</sup> Thrasymachus' distrust in the virtues of the dialectic method stand in direct contrast with the eager attitude of Glaucon, who only moments earlier broke with his silence to engage in an interlude with Socrates. I already discussed Glaucon's interruption above, on Glaucon's *suitability* as Socrates' student, but it seems appropriate to draw attention to this passage again, in the context of Thrasymachus' *unsuitability*. As a foil for Thrasymachus, Glaucon first implies his faith in the power of conversation by even initiating the exchange with Socrates; later Glaucon confirms his attitude when he states that he prefers a joint interrogation into the issue at hand over a combative exchange of speeches. Once this contrast between the two men has been established, Glaucon returns to the background, not to be seen again until book 2.

Instead, Thrasymachus does reluctantly continue in the role of interlocutor for a while longer, before finally announcing that he will give his agreement to whatever Socrates says, regardless of whether he actually agrees or not. Thrasymachus' contempt for dialectic is perhaps given its fullest expression in this final move. He has already

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<sup>60</sup> Socrates reacts to Thrasymachus' suggestion with an exclamation of horror, yet in his choice of language Thrasymachus is echoing Socrates' own words in the *Phaedrus*. See Berger (1994), and ch. 1, p. 84 n. 134 above.

attempted to cut the conversation off before it began, first by demanding praise immediately and then by threatening to leave, but by his assertion that he will dumbly approve everything that Socrates says, Thrasymachus mocks dialectic while he simultaneously makes clear why he could never serve as Socrates' prime interlocutor in the *Republic*. Thrasymachus has the passion that Cephalus lacks, and the intellectual promise missing in Polemarchus. However, his resistance reveals that dialectic requires willing, passionate, and engaged participants to be successful.<sup>61</sup> When book 2 opens, Glaucon and Adeimantus take up Thrasymachus' challenge, but in so doing they present themselves both as sympathetic to Socrates and as eager for him to show that justice *is*, in fact, preferable to injustice.<sup>62</sup> It is no coincidence that it is these two men, men who present themselves as Socrates' allies in the search for knowledge, who become Socrates' main pupils for the remainder of the *Republic*.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, a Thrasymachian reader who

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61 See the comments by Blondell (2002), "This abandonment of the sincerity requirement deprives Socratic testing of one of its principal functions – the education of the interlocutor. Without serious commitment, there can be no substantive pedagogical progress of the personal kind to which the elenctic Socrates is dedicated" (183). I return to discussion of this quote, as well as the sincerity requirement, in chapter 4 below.

62 After Glaucon finishes restating Thrasymachus' challenge, he comments, "It isn't, Socrates, that I believe any of that myself. I am perplexed, indeed, and my ears are deafened listening to Thrasymachus and countless others. But I have yet to hear anyone defend justice in the way that I want, as being better than injustice" (2.358c5-d1). Similarly, after his brother Adeimantus sums up the attitudes of Thrasymachus and "the many" towards justice, Adeimantus adds, "That, Socrates, and probably other things in addition, are what Thrasymachus (or possibly someone else) might say in discussing justice and injustice – crudely inverting their power, in my view. But *I* – for I have no reason to hide anything from you – want to hear the opposite from you, and that is why I am speaking with all the force I can muster" (2.367a5-b2). Both brothers from the start are eager to show that they are naturally inclined to support justice over injustice; they merely want Socrates to give them the *philosophical* means to defend this position.

63 Consider the observation by Griswold (1999) on the *Protagoras*:

"Socrates can throw a lot of sand in the gears, so long as Protagoras is willing to talk at all; but he ultimately cannot persuade someone, however intelligent and discursive, to philosophize (in his sense of the term) in a sustained way, unless that person already is prepared to commit to a certain view of what is ethically valuable for a human being. This in turn suggests that Socrates cannot, through force of argument alone, justify to someone his own stance about what fundamentally matters unless his interlocutor is

is eager to challenge Socrates and to put forth counter-ideas would have a difficult time with the following nine books, in which Socrates is given a great deal of latitude by his interlocutors and frequently engages in near-monologues. The *Republic's* reader must, like Glaucon and Adeimantus, be passionate enough to be drawn into the text, clever enough to follow it, and yet receptive enough to trust Socrates to lead the way.

### 3.3 Problems in Book 1: the Method

Book 1 seems disconnected from the subsequent books of the *Republic* not only because its main characters – the “failed” interlocutors of Socrates – are largely absent in the books that follow, but also because the style of philosophy it displays is distinct from that demonstrated by Socrates in the rest of the work. Book 1 belongs to a style of Platonic philosophy that is often referred to as aporetic – most basically, because book 1 ends in a statement of Socratic aporia, as Socrates claims that as a result of their discussion he “knows nothing.”<sup>64</sup> But the dialogues that are aporetic contain more common features than their endings; indeed, they might even be said to follow a certain “method” (μέθοδος), although Socrates himself does not use this word within the early dialogues.<sup>65</sup> Frequently, a dialogue of this kind begins with a character asserting that he has a particular kind of knowledge, often about the nature of a concept such as piety.<sup>66</sup>

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already disposed to Socrates' base line view of what matters” (305).

64 Socrates does not know what justice is, whether it is kind of virtue, or whether it is related to happiness. *R.* 1.354c: “ὥστε μοι νυνὶ γέγονεν ἐκ τοῦ διαλόγου μηδὲν εἰδέναι: ὅποτε γὰρ τὸ δίκαιον μὴ οἶδα ὃ ἐστίν, σχολῆ εἶσομαι εἴτε ἀρετὴ τις οὐσα τυγχάνει εἴτε καὶ οὐ, καὶ πότερον ὁ ἔχων αὐτὸ οὐκ εὐδαίμων ἐστὶν ἢ εὐδαίμων.”

65 Vlastos (1994) 1.

66 Perhaps the most programmatic of these dialogues is the *Euthyphro*, in which the eponymous main character asserts that he alone amongst his friends and family knows what piety is (*Euthyphr.* 4b5-e5).

Socrates then asks that individual to encapsulate his knowledge in a definition or explanation that includes all and only the instances of that concept. Once this definition has been proposed by the Socratic interlocutor, Socrates exposes that definition to the elenchus: he elicits further clarification of the definition as well as additional beliefs from his interlocutor as propositions, and ultimately shows either a contradiction in propositions or that these propositions, when taken together, result in a conclusion that the interlocutor rejects.<sup>67</sup> In either event, initial definition under scrutiny is rejected, and often the dialogue concludes with Socrates' assertion of ignorance.<sup>68</sup>

Given that the philosophical style of Socrates is so distinct between book 1 and the remaining books of the *Republic* that scholars have, as mentioned above, posited that book 1 was initially a separate work entirely, if I am to argue that for a fundamental unity to the work then I must explain the aporetic character of book 1, and the subsequent rejection of this kind of philosophizing. One general statement about the dialogue in

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67 Socrates adapts the methodology of the elenchus to the character of his interlocutor. Consider the difference between his examination of Polemarchus and his responses to Thrasymachus. In his exchange with Polemarchus, Socrates makes reference to the everyday Athenian's beliefs, but when he begins his consideration of Thrasymachus' definition of justice, Socrates comments that he is about to engage in a "harder problem" since he cannot discuss the matter on the basis of conventional views (*R.* 1.348e). For more on Socrates' modification of the elenchus to fit the interlocutor, see Carpenter and Polansky (2002).

68 One "problem of the Socratic elenchus", as articulated by Vlastos and reprinted in Vlastos (1994), is that Socrates can not claim to have shown the definition under consideration is *false*, but merely that it is logically inconsistent with the other propositions asserted by his interlocutor. Because those other propositions have not themselves been established as true, when faced with such a logical inconsistency one cannot say whether the definition is false, or one (or more) of the subsequent propositions. Kraut (1983) notes in response that it is an impossible task for Socrates to defend the truth of every one of his premises, because "once can't always give a reason for everything one believes, and this fact does not deprive one of proof" (62). Kraut continues to defend the elenchus method by stating that the additional propositions, unlike the definition under consideration, are "so eminently reasonable that they are *as yet* in no need of justification" (65; his emphasis). For further discussion of possible responses to Vlastos' "problem of the Socratic elenchus," see Benson (2002). I do not here consider the logical validity of Socrates' rejection of the definitions of his interlocutors in book one, but instead focus on the pedagogical justification for first presenting examples of the Socratic elenchus in the context of an aporetic dialogue, and then transitioning to a new style of philosophy.

book 1, mentioned briefly above in 3.2 above, is that it serves as an introduction to the essential elements of Socratic philosophy. The book models the kind of Socratic exchanges seen not only in Plato's earlier works, but also likely in the works of the other *Sokratikoi Logoi*. As discussed in 2.4.3, although little survives of the works of Plato's contemporaries from the first half of the fourth century, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the rival Socratics were also writing in a dialogue form and often featured characters and topics in common.<sup>69</sup> It is impossible to say whether or not specific exchanges in book 1 are meant to respond to the writings of Plato's philosophical rivals. But if we widen our focus from the specific exchanges within book 1 and instead consider it as a whole and as an exemplar of the Socratic elenchus, then the very act of juxtaposing that book with the nine books to follow serves as an unspoken refutation not only of the aporetic dialogue, but also of Plato's Socratic rivals.

Thus, by locating the *Republic* within the context of the kinds of professional rivalries carried out through texts discussed in 2.3.1-4 above, one pedagogical justification for the presence of book 1 presents itself: book 1 encourages the reader to question the dialogue form of which it itself is an exemplar, and in so doing prepares the reader to accept the positive philosophy and the largely monologue form of the subsequent books. A close reading of the reasons that *Socrates* gives for the failure of the elenchus reveals an additional pedagogical function of the first book within the context of the pedagogical structure of the *Republic*.

To begin, before Socrates issues his final statement in book 1, it is unclear that the

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<sup>69</sup> Kahn (1996) 23-29. For a catalogue of Platonic passages that seem to be allusions to the work of other Socratics, see *SSR* 1:358-73.

discussion has, in fact, ended in aporia. Thrasymachus has earlier stated that he will simply agree with whatever Socrates claims (1.350d7-e2), and Socrates has continued with his examination of the Thrasymachean notion that injustice is stronger and more powerful than justice. After further discussion, Socrates concludes that injustice is, in fact, never more profitable than justice (1.354a7), and Thrasymachus (perhaps sarcastically) agrees that this conclusion is one which Socrates may “feast” upon (1.354a10). Although Socrates has made a positive assertion of knowledge, and received no further protest from his interlocutor, he concludes this book by asserting that he has not had a “good banquet.” This is because, like a glutton, he has sampled a range of dishes, rather than fully tasting any one (1.354a11-b5). Or, to take a step back from the feasting metaphor, Socrates has sampled a range of topics from the precise definition of justice to its relationship to wisdom and virtue, and finally to the question of whether or not injustice is more profitable than justice. In so doing, he has failed to come to a satisfactory conclusion about any of these questions.<sup>70</sup>

The main explanation that Socrates gives for his declaration of aporia is that his conversation lacked structure, and this lack of structure can be attributed to Socrates' own inability to stay devoted to one line of questioning. Yet as we follow the dramatic flow of book 1 the reasons that Socrates moved from topic to topic are twofold: 1) because of a change in interlocutors, and 2) in reaction to those supplemental premises given by his interlocutors (especially Thrasymachus) that are *not* obviously true, but that themselves require further examination. A consistent interlocutor, or a pair of interlocutors who do

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<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, although Socrates asserts that he “knows nothing,” he never explicitly denies that he has defended the notion that injustice is never more profitable than justice.



not differ significantly in their philosophical worldview, corrects for the first reason, but it is difficult to see how Socrates could continue to argue in the elenctic style without continuing to encounter controversial supplemental premises from his interlocutor, and thus deviations or even departures from the original line of argument.

For all his assertions, Socrates' failure to engage in a thorough examination of one topic - the nature of justice - in the opening of the *Republic* is inextricably linked to the form of its dialogue. If Socrates' conversation is to have consistent structure, and if he is to see each argument through to its conclusion, he must not allow that the investigation to devolve into tangents, and in order to accomplish that goal, he must prevent questionable propositions from being introduced. The only sure way for Socrates to manage the conversation in this way is for him to lead it himself, and for the development of the philosophical inquiry to be guided not by an examination of an interlocutor, but by the proposals of Socrates himself.<sup>71</sup>

Through the use of negative examples, Plato has demonstrated in book 1 the kinds of character traits that are detrimental to the pursuit of philosophy, at least under the tutelage of Socrates in the *Republic*, and through the aporetic ending has shown the need for a new kind of philosophy from Socrates - the positive, monologue-driven philosophy to follow. Plato has also hinted, through the brief introductions to Glaucon and Adeimantus and through Socrates' assertions about why the dialogue failed thus far what attitudes the student should cultivate or emulate. Yet these hints are just that: mostly hints. The main work of book 1 has been to clear away inappropriate potential students -

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<sup>71</sup> There is still some role that an interlocutor may play - as we see in the remainder of the *Republic*, Glaucon and Adeimantus do continue to comment on Socrates' assertions, and do even redirect the flow of conversation at times. But the brothers do not accomplish this by introducing their own proposals, but rather by pointing Socrates back to comments and arguments that he himself had already made.

and possibly readers - and a problematic philosophical methodology. With book 2, Plato returns to the problem of the nature of justice, but in an entirely new way: with Socrates leading the discussion, and two philosophically-adept students following.

## 4. A Positive Pedagogy – Books 2 and 5

### 4.1 Introduction

Book 2 of the *Republic* opens with a new set of challenges for Socrates, this time originating from Plato's brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus. While these two were briefly introduced in book 1, they are not the first subjects of the Socratic elenchus. Instead, as discussed in chapter 3, in the opening of the *Republic* Socrates conducts a series of failed conversations with inappropriate students, each of whom lack an essential quality necessary to be a successful student of philosophy. In book 2 of the *Republic* the brothers come to the fore as Socrates' main interlocutors, and they continue to serve in this role for the remainder of the work. Unlike the characters of book 1, the brothers function as positive models for the reader – they have, as Socrates remarks, a natural character that makes them suited for philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Also unlike book 1, the discussion of books 2-10 does not end in aporia, but instead concludes with a monologue by Socrates in which he outlines his earlier points as a summary of how living the just life will lead to well-being in this life and beyond (*R.* 10.621b6-c8).

It is with book 2, then, that Plato fully introduces the positive elements of his pedagogy, some of which he prefigured in book 1. He instructs his reader regarding which kinds of character traits should be cultivated, but also about how to conduct the process of philosophy. In this chapter I address what we can glean about Plato's message on the *right* student and method, given that book 1 has established the *wrong* student and

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<sup>1</sup> *R.* 2.367e.

method.

However, there are two main difficulties with rendering such an account. The first is an issue with the structure of the *Republic*. As I discuss further below, Plato seems to re-start the argument of the *Republic* twice: the first time in book 2, when Glaucon and Adeimantus claim and reword the argument of Thrasymachus as a challenge to Socrates; and the second time in book 5, in which a number of the dramatic elements from book one reassert themselves, including (and, perhaps, particularly) comments from the interlocutors of the first book. An account of the pedagogical structure of the *Republic* should be able to explain why we have these two “beginnings” to the positive philosophy, especially if, as I have claimed, the *Republic* is to be thought of as an essentially unified text, rather than as a series of related conversations on morality and politics.

The second difficulty is methodological: how is it possible to assert *Plato's* positions on the appropriate student or process of philosophy, when what the text presents us are the words of *Socrates* (with the occasional comment by one of his interlocutors)? While it is true that I cannot claim knowledge of what the philosopher himself thought on this matter – indeed, no genre of writing gives such an assurance of authorial sincerity – I argue that a comparison of the educational program described by the participants in the dialogue (i.e., the education of the guardian class) with the educational program undergone by Glaucon and Adeimantus in the course of the dialogue shows a promising consistency between philosophical and dramatic content of the text.

Because, for reasons I address further below, it is possible to read the opening of book 5 as negating the preceding philosophy of books 2-4, this chapter does not proceed

in sequence from book 2 to book 5. Instead, I first discuss the opening of book 2 as “new beginning” and investigate the messages it contains about the proper kind of philosophical student and methodology. Next, I turn to the problematic beginning of book 5, which jeopardizes any confidence the interlocutors and reader have gained in the conclusions already reached. In the second half of this chapter I return to book 2, this time to survey the philosophy presented in books 2-4 and to offer an explanation for the pedagogical purpose behind this conversation. Once I have established how locating the *Republic* within the context of competing disciplines (as discussed in chapter 2) helps to explain the pedagogical function of particular passages, I return to book 5 and conclude with a brief discussion of the first two “waves” of book five – two difficult proposals of Socrates’ that do not initially seem necessary precursors to his introduction of the central philosophy in books 5-7.

## **4.2 Two New Beginnings for the *Republic***

The structure of the *Republic* has been divided along a number of different lines. For example, Bertrand Russell, in his *History of Western Philosophy*, describes the *Republic* as consisting of three parts: 1) the construction of Kallipolis (which ends, for Russell, at the end of book 5); 2) the definition of the word ‘philosopher’ (books 6 and 7; and 3) the various kinds of constitutions, including their merits and defects.<sup>2</sup> Russell’s division is a rough and general one, and fails to account for the content of books 1 or 10, neither of which seem related to the general descriptions he has given. Eric Voegelin adapts Russell’s schema but marks book 1 off as a prologue, and book 10 as an epilogue

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<sup>2</sup> Russell (2004) 111.

or conclusion.<sup>3</sup> Voegelin's sections are: 1) the genesis and order of the polis (II.11-IV.19); 2) embodiment of the idea (V.1-VII.18); 3) decline of the polis (VIII.1-IX.3). For Voegelin, this division of the *Republic* allows the reader to see that the "three parts of the main body are interlocked, indeed, on more than one level of meaning."<sup>4</sup> That is to say, on the level of general themes the three sections balance each other: both sections one and three deal with the polis generally, but both also require the philosophy in the "digression" seen in section two. Voegelin also finds connections between the subtopics of a given section, connections that further bind each unit together and embed it within the rest of the work.

Rather than group contiguous sections of text together by theme, another approach to examining the pattern of the text is to regard the central books (5-7) as the "apex" of the argument, with mirroring books on either side of that apex.<sup>5</sup> Such an approach is taken by Kenneth Dorter (2006) in *The Transformation of Plato's Republic*. He describes the structure of the *Republic* as following "a symmetrical arc, rising through a consideration of the nature and origin of justice to a vision of the good itself, that reaches its peak in incommunicability ([7.]533a) before descending again through a consideration of the nature and origin of *injustice* to a conclusion that mirrors the beginning."<sup>6</sup> Dorter notes as well that books 1 and 10 are symmetric not only because

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3 Voegelin (2000) 46-50.

4 Voegelin (2000) 48.

5 These are but two representative examples of ways in which the *Republic's* structure has been described. Another notably different approach is that advocated by Kennedy (2010), in which the *Republic* is divided into twelve equal units based on musical theory.

6 Dorter (2006) 7.

they are not “part of the main argument,” but also because “each book falls into two parts whose themes mirror the parts of the other. The first part of Book 1 and the last part of Book 10 are both concerned with religious motifs and the connection between afterlife and virtue; and the last part of Book 1 and the first part of Book 10 are both concerned with the appearance of knowledge without the presence of actual knowledge.”<sup>7</sup>

What this survey of the approaches to describing the structure of the *Republic* has shown is that, regardless of whether one employs the traditional “sectioned” approach or the more recent, complicated “mirror” approach, books 1 and 10 are marked off from the *Republic* as a whole, and the epistemological investigations of 6-7 are also distinct from the rest of the work. Books 2 and 5 stand out as the start of something new – either a new section or a step deeper into the core message. In their dramatic composition, however, books 2 and 5 are not corollaries – book 2 opens with a detailed charge by both Glaucon and Adeimantus for how Socrates must defend justice and the just life, whereas book 5 begins with a repetition of a number of the dramatic elements of book 1. Books 2 and 5 present two different “starts” to the positive philosophy of the *Republic* – book 2 builds upon the conversation and events of book 1, but book 5 attempts to re-imagine that opening scene and seemingly rewrites the conversation that has just taken place.

#### 4.2.1 Book 2

In order to address the pedagogical reasons for the second beginning in book 5, I first examine the opening of book 2. Socrates, as the narrator, opens book 2 by stating that he had thought himself done with the discussion, but it seemed that the conversation

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<sup>7</sup> Dorter (2006) 6-7.

of book 1 was only a “prelude” (προοίμιον).<sup>8</sup> This is because Glaucon, whom Socrates comments is always very courageous (ἀνδρείοτατος), takes up the question of the nature of justice and asks Socrates if he wishes to *think* that he has persuaded them, or to *truly* have persuaded them.

The language in this first section is suggestive in two ways. First, Socrates’ aside that Glaucon is ἀνδρείοτατος is the first use of the adjective ἀνδρεῖος (in the superlative form or otherwise) in the *Republic*, and this adjective proves to be a key term in the books to follow. Although the adjective ἀνδρεῖος continues to be used throughout the *Republic*, it appears disproportionately more often in books 2-4.<sup>9</sup> In this section the superlative form (ἀνδρείοτατος) appears twice more, both times in connection with the education of the guardian class.<sup>10</sup> Thus, through the use of this small aside by Socrates, Plato establishes early on the parallel between the education of the Socratic interlocutor Glaucon and the imaginary guardians within Kallipolis (who have yet, at this point, to be

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8 R. 2.357a

9 Forms of ἀνδρεῖος appear 35 times in books 2-4: 2.357a; 2.361b; 2.375a (twice); 2.381a; 3.386a; 3.386b; 3.395c; 3.399a; 3.399c; 3.402c; 3.410d; 3.410e; 3.411c; 3.416e; 4.426d; 4.427e; 4.429a; 4.429b (three times); 4.429c (twice); 4.430b (twice); 4.430c; 4.431e; 4.432a; 4.433b; 4.433d; 4.435b; 4.441d (twice); 4.442b (twice). Forms appear 16 times in books 5-10: 5.451c; 5.454b; 5.459c; 5.468d; 6.487a; 6.490c; 6.491b; 6.494b; 6.504a; 7.535a; 7.536a; 8.561a; 8.564b; 8.567b; 9.582c; 9.582e.

10 R. 2.381a and 3.411c. In the first passage (2.281a), Socrates and Adeimantus are discussing the censoring of certain ideas from poetry – specifically, the notion that gods should change their forms. Socrates asks if the most courageous and knowledgeable souls shouldn’t be least altered by outside forces, and Adeimantus agrees. Although the two men are discussing gods here, the linking of ἀνδρείοτατος and φρονιμώτατος suggests that the most knowledgeable will also be the most courageous, and vice versa: hence, as someone with a courageous soul, Glaucon is a good candidate to be a guardian. In the second passage (3.411c), Glaucon and Socrates are discussing the physical training and diet that is best. The one who experiences good physical training ends up even more courageous than he was before, but without some musical training, his natural love of learning will become weak and blind. It is perhaps particularly significant that this comment is made to *Glaucon*, who must learn to guide his ἀνδρειοτάτην ψυχὴν with the help of philosophy.



introduced).<sup>11</sup>

Second, in the language of his charge to Socrates, Glaucon highlights one of the key goals of the subsequent dialogue: not merely to think (δοκεῖν) that something is the case (in this instance, that Socrates has convinced his interlocutors), but to have knowledge of something that truly (ἀληθῶς) happened. Not only does this passage suggest the kind of levels of knowledge that the *Republic* will later formally introduce, but, more germane to the present investigation, it signals appropriate relationship between a teacher and his student. Socrates does not seek mere agreement on the part of his students, but desires for them truly to be persuaded. Thus, the actions of Thrasymachus at the conclusion of book 1 are rejected: true philosophical dialogue requires sincere participants.

Thrasymachus' abandonment of the "sincerity requirement" is frequently cited as a reason why he fails to be an appropriate subject of the Socratic elenchus. For example, Blondell (2002) comments that Thrasymachus' insincerity, "deprives Socratic testing of one of its principal functions – the education of the interlocutor. Without serious commitment, there can be no substantive pedagogical progress of the personal kind to which the elenctic Sokrates is dedicated."<sup>12</sup> Under this interpretation, philosophy is not something that can be conducted in the abstract, but must be localized; propositions are not to be analyzed in a vacuum, but must be considered as one component of an interlocutor's entire world-view. Such an interpretation of Plato's views on philosophy has the additional virtue of explaining Plato's reliance on a plurality of characters in his

<sup>11</sup> I explore those parallels further below.

<sup>12</sup> Blondell (2002) 183.

dialogues: in order for Plato to examine various particular philosophical questions, he creates characters who hold particular positions that Socrates can investigate. This is an “artistic strategy” of Plato that Tejera (1997) has, following Bakhtin, identified as Plato’s *dialogism*: “namely, the ability to honor his characters’ subjectivity by having them speak out of *their own worlds and their own assumptions*...They are subjects not objects; when they speak the world is seen as it appears in *their* consciousness.”<sup>13</sup> And yet, if we examine closely the wording of both Glaucon’s and Adeimantus’ challenges to Socrates, we find that the brothers distance themselves from the positions that they describe.<sup>14</sup> A close examination of these two challenges to Socrates can help clarify the message the dialogue is sending about the role of sincerity and point of view in philosophical conversation.

Glaucon begins the book with a kind of examination of Socrates: he asks him whether or not there are various kinds of goods: some loved for their own sake, others for the sake of their consequences, and a third group that are loved both for their own sake and for their consequences (2.357b-d). After Socrates assents to these premises, Glaucon asks him what sort of good justice is, and Socrates replies that it is one of the things loved both for its own sake and for its consequences. Here, rather than challenge Socrates’ assertion directly, Glaucon makes an interesting move. He responds that Socrates’ answer is not “how it seems to the masses” (οὐ τοίνυν δοκεῖ...τοῖς πολλοῖς), who instead grudgingly practice justice for the sake of its consequences (2.358a).

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13 Tejera (1997) 71.

14 There are similarities between the sympathetic interlocutors presented in the *Republic* and the role of Phaedrus in his eponymous dialogue. Like the two brothers in the *Republic*, Phaedrus is presenting the arguments of *someone else* to Socrates to be refuted.

Glaucón continues in this vein throughout his description of Socrates' task, referencing the positions or views of others, but not himself, on justice. Glaucón promises that he will define justice according to what others say about it, and will show that those other people have good reason to think that the life of the unjust person is better than that of the just one (2.358b). But lest Socrates suspect that Glaucón is thinly veiling *his own* notions about justice, Glaucón emphasizes that it is others who say that the unjust person is better (ὡς λέγουσιν) and that he himself does not believe this (ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγε, ὃ Σώκρατες, οὐ τι δοκεῖ οὕτως). Still, Glaucón longs to hear a defense of justice by Socrates so that Glaucón, who it seems is unable to solve this puzzle himself, might have a response for “the many” who think so dismissively of justice.

We should note, however, that Glaucón does not merely talk generally about the opinions of others. As his lengthy set up of the philosophical problem continues, Glaucón invokes *particular* individuals who experience this strange inversion, in which injustice is preferable to justice. The first such individual is the quasi-historical Gyges of Lydia, who once obtained a ring of invisibility.<sup>15</sup> Once freed by the ring from the possibility of being seen committing acts of injustice, as well as from the resultant social and legal consequences of being caught, Gyges seduces the king's wife, kills the king, and rules the kingdom himself (2.359d-360b). Glaucón generalizes this story, claiming

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<sup>15</sup> The exact wording of Glaucón makes the story a little difficult to follow. Glaucón first states that this is a ring that an ancestor of Gyges of Lydia is said to have possessed (φασιν δύναμιν τῷ Γύγου τοῦ Λυδοῦ προγόνῳ γενέσθαι.) It is unclear who the unnamed agent is in the next sentence (εἶναι μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ποιμένα θητεύοντα παρὰ τῷ τότε Λυδίας ἄρχοντι), either the ancestor – who finds the ring, kills the king, etc – or Gyges himself – who finds the ring earlier possessed by his ancestor, and then commits the subsequent crimes. At 10.612b4, Socrates references the “ring of Gyges” (τὸν Γύγου δακτύλιον). The story of Gyges rising from a lowly station to the position of king also occurs in Herodotus (I.8-13); the ring of invisibility does not feature in Herodotus' story, although the unsuccessful hiding of Gyges (so that he may spy on the king's wife) is a pivotal plot point. For a survey of the references to Gyges in Greek literature, see Smith (1902a) and (1902b).

that if there were two such rings, one given to a just and one to an unjust person, then after a time both the “just” and the unjust person would behave badly, and identically so, and “one might say” (ὅν φαίη τις) that this story is evidence that no one is just willingly, but individuals are only just when under (social) compulsion to be so (2.360c). In this second charge to Socrates, again we find Glaucon distancing himself from the conclusion that justice is not choice-worthy by placing this conclusion in the mouth of a (hypothetical) everyman.

Glaucon’s third charge to Socrates also involves hypothetical figures: the completely just and the completely unjust man. The completely just man has been stripped of any reputation for justice, while the unjust man can avoid any charge of injustice (2.361a-c). Before Glaucon reveals the kinds of lives these two men will lead, he admonishes Socrates to remember that it is not *he himself* who is making this case against the just life, but rather “those who praise injustice at the expense of justice” (μὴ ἐμὲ οἴου λέγειν, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐπαινοῦντας πρὸ δικαιοσύνης ἀδικίαν). It is *these men* who say that the gods and humans prepare a much better life for the unjust man than for the just.

Thus all three components of Glaucon’s challenge to Socrates require, at best, a reinterpretation of the “sincerity requirement”, and a reevaluation of the character differences between Glaucon and Thrasymachus. Although Glaucon presents Socrates with three distinct arguments against the desirability of the just life, each of the three contain similar elements: Glaucon’s protests that he himself does not believe the positions he is describing, but also his location of the charge within *someone’s* belief system.

Unlike Thrasymachus, Glaucon is not simply presenting an abstract premise – he is grounding the premise in the beliefs of individuals, who furthermore are supported in their opinions by the experiences of (hypothetical or mythical) men.

Next Glaucon’s brother Adeimantus issues his own challenge to Socrates regarding justice and the just life. Unlike Glaucon, Adeimantus does not repeatedly distance himself from the position that he asserts, but neither does he affirm it as his own belief. Instead, Adeimantus occupies a middle ground and cites the words and actions of other individuals in his own philosophical charge. Fathers, Adeimantus states, do not praise justice itself, but only the good reputation that comes with living justly.<sup>16</sup> Adeimantus adds evidence from the poets, since Homer and Hesiod also praise the fruits of justice, rather than justice itself.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, both “private individuals and poets” argue that “unjust deeds are more profitable than just ones”<sup>18</sup> In addition, certain religious practices present absolutions for unjust deeds, in effect freeing unjust individuals from any divine consequences in this life and the next.<sup>19</sup>

At each stage, Adeimantus’ argument is grounded in the actions and attitudes of *others*: average citizens, poets, and religious figures. In the conclusion to his challenge to Socrates, Adeimantus states that the preceding argument, with the possible addition of

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16 R. 2.363a.

17 R. 2.363a5-c.

18 R. 2.363e5-364a5: πρὸς δὲ τούτοις σκέψαι, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἄλλο αὖ εἶδος λόγων περὶ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ἀδικίας ἰδίᾳ τε λεγόμενον καὶ ὑπὸ ποιητῶν. πάντες γὰρ ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὕμνοῦσιν ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἢ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μὲντοι καὶ ἐπίπονον, ἀκολασία δὲ καὶ ἀδικία ἡδὺ μὲν καὶ εὐπετέες κτήσασθαι, δόξῃ δὲ μόνον καὶ νόμῳ αἰσχρόν: λυσιτελέστερα δὲ τῶν δικαίων τὰ ἄδικα ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος λέγουσι.

19 R. 2.364e-365a5.

a few other points, is what individuals like Thrasymachus would say about justice and injustice. At this point Adeimantus comes closest to making the kinds of disavowals of his brother, by adding the aside that such talk is “crudely inverting their power” in his view.<sup>20</sup> Adeimantus concludes his charge by stating that he wants to hear Socrates’ defense of justice, in order that he and Glaucon do not have to resort to thinking Thrasymachus was right.<sup>21</sup>

While Adeimantus is not as rigorous and explicit as Glaucon in separating his own views from those of others in his challenge to Socrates, his focus throughout his speech on the opinions and actions of others, coupled with his concluding statement that everything he has said is the kind of thing that Thrasymachus would say, makes clear that he, like Glaucon, does not actually believe that the unjust life is more choice-worthy than the just one. But while both brothers might not believe the propositions they are presenting to Socrates, they are both sincere about learning. Their requests to Socrates are evidence for their faith in the philosophical abilities of him as their teacher, and this is the key attitudinal difference between the brothers and Thrasymachus.

Indeed, if we return briefly to Thrasymachus’ own disassociation in book 1, we find, in response to Socrates’ comment that he believes Thrasymachus is now “saying what you believe to be the truth,” Thrasymachus’ programmatic charge that, whether Thrasymachus believes something or not, Socrates should test the argument.<sup>22</sup> This is a

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20 R. 2.367a5-b: ταῦτα, ὃ Σώκρατες, ἴσως δὲ καὶ ἔτι τούτων πλείω Θρασύμαχος τε καὶ ἄλλος πού τις ὑπὲρ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ἀδικίας λέγοιεν ἄν, μεταστρέφοντες αὐτοῖν τὴν δύναμιν φορτικῶς, ὡς γέ μοι δοκεῖ.

21 R. 2.368c.

22 R. 1.349a: ἀλλ’ οὐ μέντοι, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ἀποκνητέον γε τῷ λόγῳ ἐπεξελεθεῖν σκοπούμενον, ἕως ἄν σε ὑπολαμβάνω λέγειν ἅπερ διανοῆ. ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖς σύ, ὃ Θρασύμαχε, ἀτεχνῶς νῦν οὐ σκώπτειν, ἀλλὰ τὰ δοκοῦντα περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας λέγειν.

much milder disavowal than the repeated distancing of Glaucon; Thrasymachus does not actually claim not to believe in what he is saying, but he simply states that his belief in his own argument shouldn't matter. It is only later in the conversation, after Socrates has caused Thrasymachus to blush with shame, that Thrasymachus asserts that he will speak counter to his own beliefs in order to please Socrates.<sup>23</sup>

The opening of book 2 shows that philosophy does not require that the interlocutors *themselves* believe in a given notion; in fact, it implies that successful philosophical discussion requires individuals who are *sympathetic* to each other's positions, but who are in pursuit of a firm philosophical ground to back up their vague sympathies.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, to generalize from the three part charge of Glaucon and the speech of Adeimantus, philosophy must be grounded in the opinions or experiences of *someone*. No proposition can be examined or challenged on its own, because no proposition truly exists on its own; all are embedded in a web of supporting ideas – some as ill-defined as custom or habit, some as codified as religious scripture. If book 1 serves to remove from the reader's mind the notion that a particular style of philosophy – the

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τί δέ σοι, ἔφη, τοῦτο διαφέρει, εἴτε μοι δοκεῖ εἴτε μή, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν λόγον ἐλέγχεις;

23 R. 1.350d-e. Note that the concluding section of book one is marked not by Thrasymachus' advancement of philosophical positions, but by his agreement to each of Socrates' statements, occasionally with a comment like, "so I'll say, in order to agree with you."

24 Reeve (1988) also identifies Glaucon (and, by extension, Adeimantus) as being naturally sympathetic to Socrates' argument, and therefore "the challenge Glaucon poses is very different from the one that Thrasymachus poses" (40). Reeve claims that Glaucon and Adeimantus are already "familiar with, and sympathetic to, the theory of forms...hence they are philosophic men" and are uniquely qualified to "be party to an investigation of justice" (41). In part, this reading depends upon categorizing each of Socrates' interlocutors as one of the three classes of individuals in Kallipolis, and yet it is not clear – especially from their performance as interlocutors – that either of the brothers have the intellectual capacity to be thought of as representing philosopher-guardians, rather than (as I argue) as *candidates* to be philosophers. It is also unclear that prior knowledge of the theory of forms (in this lifetime) is necessary to be a philosophic man.

elenchus – is best suited to the pursuit of truth,<sup>25</sup> the opening of book 2 presents the reader with a new model, in which the reader, as Socrates’ student, is welcome to question and engage with the text, so long as she, like Glaucon and Adeimantus, *wants* to believe that the just life is best.

#### 4.2.2 Book 5

If the opening of book 2 is meant to establish the methodology of the *Republic*, why then does a second (or third, depending on the counting) “beginning” occur at book 5? In addition to a distinction in the themes or philosophical content of books 4 and 5, the dramatic elements with which book 5 opens also mark it as a new beginning. At the conclusion to book 4, Socrates has finished outlining the various classes that rule Kallipolis, he has described the education of the guardian members of that society, and he has identified justice within this city as each component doing its own work (4.433e). Finally, Socrates has brought to a close, or so it would seem, the analogy between city and soul by relating the justice in each to the other. All that is left to do, Socrates concludes, is to look at the five kinds of constitutions – both of cities and of souls – to see the various shades of vice that come about when there is a deviation from the just arrangement.

This discussion of alternate constitutions does not resume until book 8. Instead, at the opening of book 5 Socrates begins to enumerate each of the bad constitutions at Glaucon’s request, but is interrupted when Polemarchus grips Adeimantus’ cloak, draws him near, and whispers in his ear (5.449a1-b5). Adeimantus quickly joins Polemarchus

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25 This is not to say that the elenchus does not serve any purpose in philosophical education. It can, for example, serve to make an individual aware that he holds conflicting beliefs that require further examination. However, the elenchus cannot help the individual to advance beyond this realization to new, positive conceptions of the world.



in demanding that Socrates return to his discussion of the constitution of Kallipolis and give more details about the matters concerning children: procreation, rearing, and the elimination of the traditional family structure. Before Socrates can respond, Glaucon also requests that Socrates explain these matters further, and Thrasymachus – silent for two books, but present nonetheless – adds his voice to the mix.

Socrates defends himself by saying that he had deliberately attempted to sidestep these issues due to their contentious nature, and Thrasymachus chastises him by asking if the group present want to listen to arguments, or to smelt ore – an evocation of Socrates' own words at 1.336e4-9. Finally, and after a number of caveats about the insecurity of his knowledge, Socrates takes up the question of female guardians, and the discussion settles into the rhythms familiar from books 2-4: Socrates leads the way and issues proposals, with the occasional affirmative comment or request for clarification from Glaucon and Adeimantus. The other audience members again fade into the background, where they remain for the rest of the work.

As mentioned briefly above, and noted by a number of scholars, the dramatic elements that open book 5 strongly evoke those that open the *Republic* as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Like the opening scene of the *Republic*, Glaucon and Socrates are progressing together when Polemarchus, with a tug of a cloak, stops them.<sup>27</sup> Adeimantus is naturally sympathetic with Polemarchus, and is the first of the two brothers to request Socrates' conversation; after Glaucon joins in the appeal, Socrates consents to the demands of the group. The evocation seems clear, but its purpose does not: why create such an echo with the

<sup>26</sup> See Shorey (1933) 424 note c and Dorter (2006) 137-139.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *R.* 1.327b.

opening of the *Republic* again, why do so here, and why have Thrasymachus speak once again – this time actually interested in hearing what Socrates can suggest?

The comments of Thrasymachus, brief though they are, are the key to understanding this new beginning to the *Republic*. The fact that Thrasymachus speaks at all, after such a long silence, brings to the fore once again *his* charge against Socrates: justice is what is advantageous for the stronger. In his defense of his iconoclastic definition of justice, recall that before Thrasymachus arrived at his assertion about justice being what is advantageous for the stronger, he first began with an observation on the relationship between laws, government, and societal norms: each type of rule makes laws that support its own form of government, and individuals brought up in any given society learn to think that such laws are just, and that disobeying them is wrong (1.338e). Thrasymachus' argument might lead one to a kind of cultural relativism: justice can only be defined in terms of a particular individual in a particular city. But instead Thrasymachus draws a general rule from the wide range of possible laws and cities, and asserts that because established governments are stronger, and governments will define justice in terms that are most beneficial to themselves, then justice is what is advantageous for the stronger (1.339a).

Socrates' rebuttal of Thrasymachus in book 1 relies on a definition of the craft of ruling; Socrates argues that a ruler, and especially the best kind of ruler, seeks what is advantageous for his subjects, and not for himself (1.347b5-e). Their final debate concerns whether justice or injustice benefits an individual; discussion of rulers and laws is largely left behind. When Glaucon and Adeimantos bring up their own charges against

justice at the beginning of book 2, they too have abandoned Thrasymachus' point about the ways in which rulers can shape the beliefs of their citizens. And yet before book 5 begins the question of other, non-ideal governments has been raised, as well as the relationship between the constitution in which one is reared and one's political and moral outlook: at the close of book 4, Socrates states that an individual born and brought up in Kallipolis won't change any of its laws, since they have been educated by the state in the manner described, and Socrates notes that there are four other kinds of constitutions, each of which has a corresponding kind of soul. Just when, then, the alert reader is prepared to hear about degenerate governments, with their non-ideal leaders, we instead evoke the opening of the *Republic*, Socrates declares they are starting from the beginning, and Thrasymachus speaks.

Those who have already read through the *Republic* know the topics addressed in the books to come – in particular, the education of philosophers and the allegory of the cave. Yet why has this discussion of the philosophers' education come in at this late point, rather than as a part of the discussions of education in books 2-4? One explanation is that there was no need for a detailed discussion of the education of the philosopher class within Kallipolis, since one can assume from the fact that they are raised in an ideally just state that they will have been molded towards justice. Thrasymachus, in as much as he can be seen as a pointer to his own arguments, exposes a weakness in the entire investigation of books 2-4: because those doing the philosophizing were not *themselves* brought up in an ideal state, their own beliefs about justice are almost certainly *not* in alignment with the actual form of justice. They are relying upon their

own intuitions to guide them in their conversation on justice, and yet those intuitions have potentially been corrupted by the political system in which the dialogue's participants live. For the characters of the dialogue as well as the reader, all of whom stand outside Kallipolis, the longer and harder road of reshaping one's intuitions and views of the world is necessary. Thus books 5-7, far from being a digression, are an essential response to the as yet unanswered charge of Thrasymachus, as well as to the question of how those living in a non-ideal world can do philosophy at all.

### **4.3 Two Educational Programs**

What, then, are we to make of the educational program that we do find in books 2-4, and what of the strange "waves" that precede the epistemological discussion of books 6-7? If I am right that Thrasymachus destabilizes the prior discussion on justice, there is a danger that books 2-4 can be thought to have no pedagogical purpose. Furthermore, if the response to Thrasymachus requires the kinds of epistemological explanation found in the allegory of the cave, then most of book 5 – and especially the first two "waves" of philosophy – seems like stalling en route to this "main point". If we continue to consider the *Republic* as a pedagogical text, functioning within the context of competing disciplines in fourth century Athens, certain features of the initial discussion of Kallipolis as well as the radical philosophy of book 5 can be understood as serving the propaedeutic mission of the work. Far from digressions, these discussions are essential for Plato to argue to his reader that philosophy is the one true discipline of knowledge.

#### ***4.3.1 The Program of Books 2-4: Adeimantus***

First, then, what pedagogical value can be found in the discussion of education in books 2-4? This discussion is embedded within Socrates' description of the Kallipolis,

which is itself introduced in a circuitous fashion. After asserting that he will take up the charges of both Glaucon and Adeimantus to defend justice, Socrates makes an argumentative move, the result of which is the dual conversation on justice in the city and justice in the soul.<sup>28</sup> Relying on a conceptual link between sight and knowledge, Socrates argues that since those present aren't clever, they should adopt a strategy used by those who don't have "keen eyesight" (2.368c5: ὁξὺ βλέπωντος): if shown small letters from a distance that have larger corollaries, they should chose to examine the large letters first. In this analogy, justice in the soul is the small, difficult to see inscription, while justice in the city is the larger thing that "perhaps will be easier to discern" (2.368e5).<sup>29</sup>

Although the discussion of the just city has been introduced as a mere investigative device, it consumes the next three books of the *Republic*. It initially appears that the pursuit of justice in the city will be quite brief when Socrates begins to describe the so-called "city of pigs"; in this city, made up of producers and merchants, each individual does what he does best (2.370c1-5) and all share their goods with each other (2.371b5). These people, who live a simple life with no shoes in the summer and only

28 The analogy of city and soul has been criticized by Williams (2001) in the article "The analogy of city and soul in Plato's *Republic*." Williams points out that if the city has a reasoning, a spirited, and an appetitive element, then the individual citizens representative of the elements are not just, because they themselves must not have an appropriate relationship in their souls. Lear (2001) offers a response to Williams in which he appeals to the *Republic* as a work on psychology in order to show that city and soul are not analogous in the *Republic*, but are internal and external projections of one phenomena. Close reading of the introduction of the city-soul analogy reveals that Socrates does not state that the two certainly be identical, but rather that after pursuing justice in the larger we can then consider whether justice in the soul is similar.

29 R. 2.368e5: ἴσως τοίνυν πλείων ἂν δικαιοσύνη ἐν τῷ μείζονι ἐνεῖη καὶ ῥᾶον καταμαθεῖν. At this point, then, the discussion of justice in the city is presented merely as a strategy for the ultimate goal: uncovering the nature of the justice in the soul. Yet almost immediately Socrates suggests that the investigation into justice in the city will only be a kind of warm up for an investigation into justice in the soul. They will still need to find justice in the soul, and they will still need to compare that justice with justice in the city (2.369a): εἰ οὖν βούλεσθε, πρῶτον ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι ζητήσωμεν ποῖόν τί ἐστιν: ἔπειτα οὕτως ἐπισκεψώμεθα καὶ ἐν ἐνὶ ἐκάστω, τὴν τοῦ μείζονος ὁμοιότητα ἐν τῇ τοῦ ἐλάττονος ἰδέα ἐπισκοποῦντες.

loaves of barley meal and wheat flour to eat, live in what Socrates describes as a “healthy city” (2.372e5). It is only after Glaucon protests that this city is a bit too austere for his tastes that Socrates proceeds to describe the “feverish city”, filled with luxury. It is *this* city that Socrates gradually molds into his Kallipolis by shaping the policies and the practices of its citizens, and *this* city whose justice Socrates searches for.

The above discussion on the argumentative framework in which the discussion of education in Kallipolis is embedded highlights how tenuously the philosophy in books 2-4 is related to the brothers’ challenge to Socrates: justice in the city *might* resemble justice in the soul, and the city under investigation is not a healthy one, but a feverish one. Yet nonetheless it is an important feature of Socrates’ argument that he does start from the luxurious city, for this starting point enables him to gain Glaucon’s, and through him the reader’s, consent that this is a city worth living in. Rather than defend his “healthy” city, Socrates begins from a city that is, to all appearances, a typical Greek polis, and gradually removes from it unacceptable elements.

Much of the cleansing of the feverish city occurs during a lengthy discussion on the education of its citizens, including its guardian class, in which Socrates engages both Adeimantus and Glaucon. Adeimantus is Socrates’ initial interlocutor, and together the two men begin the task of defining the musical education program of the polis. If we recall the form of Adeimantus’ initial charge to Socrates, and in particular the manner in which he focused on the role of poets in shaping perceptions of justice (2.363b1-265c5), then it is clearly no accident that Adeimantus is the interlocutor whom Socrates leads through a discussion of the censoring of poetic content.

This section on education (2.378d-3.398c5) is striking in the degree to which it is negative and pragmatic: Socrates saves his discussion of the theoretical properties of music and harmony for his later interaction with Glaucon, and here focuses instead on the exclusion of particular stories and myths. Mimetic poetry is excluded not because of its three-part remove from reality, but because those performing such poetry might become infected with the poor characters they are imitating (3.395b2-396a5).<sup>30</sup> Even if such poetry does not include examples of bad men and actions, at the very least if such poetry requires a guardian to present the speech of a swineherd, then it also causes that guardian to violate the principle of doing only one job (3.397e-398b5).<sup>31</sup>

In his discussion with Adeimantus Socrates effectively neutralizes Adeimantus' charge that injustice is better than justice by identifying that charge's underlying argumentative structure – that notions of the costs and benefits of justice come from the poets – and by suggesting that if we change the content of poets' songs, such moral questions would simply never occur. This response to Adeimantus is not invalidated or shown false by the introduction of Thrasymachean relativism – under this reading, Socrates is actually in agreement with Thrasymachus on the potential external factors can have for shaping moral intuitions.

Here Plato also demonstrates a pedagogical practice that will reoccur throughout

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30 This notion that the act of imitating can alter the imitator's character can be seen in Shakespeare's sonnet 111, where he likens such a process to the staining of a dyer's hand: "Thence comes it that my name receives a brand, / And almost thence my nature is subdued / To what it works in, like the dyer's hand: / Pity me then and wish I were renew'd;"

31 The reading that Socrates dismisses all imitative poetry from Kallipolis in book three is not universally accepted. For the notion that the third book only censors poetry that displays individuals of poor character or action, see Greene (1918). For arguments supporting a more complete censorship, see Tate (1928) and Belfiore (1984).

the *Republic*: the spiraling of themes. In books 2-3 Plato raises questions about the relationship of images to reality, and of the power of poetry and society to shape citizens' notions of the world, as preparation for the kinds of later assertions of general ignorance found in the allegory of the cave. Yet in books 2-3, such questions are only addressed, as mentioned above, on the superficial level of particulars. The conversation with Adeimantus resolves as if the topics it has evoked have been effectively dealt with, with Socrates stating that they have completed their discussion of speech and stories, and Adeimantus consenting (3.398b5-c). This sense of closure is, in fact, illusory, yet it is also important in that it marks a kind of philosophical flag planting: the notion that imitations of reality are all around us, and that such imitations can have a dangerous effect on the real world, is now claimed territory to be explored later in greater detail.

There is also a relationship in books 2-3 between specific components of the educational practices within Kallipolis and the education that Socrates gives the two brothers throughout the *Republic*. One of the first pedagogical issues Socrates brings up to Adeimantus is the content of the stories told to children, because such stories allow children to “take beliefs into their souls” (2.377b5).<sup>32</sup> This is language that has appeared recently in the *Republic*, when Thrasymachus asks Socrates in book 1 if he should persuade him by pouring his argument into Socrates' soul (1.345b5).<sup>33</sup> While Socrates reacted in horror to Thrasymachus' suggestion, in his conversation with Adeimantus

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32 R. 2.377b5: ἄρ' οὖν ῥαδίως οὕτω παρήσομεν τοὺς ἐπιτυχόντας ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων μύθους πλασθέντας ἀκούειν τοὺς παῖδας καὶ λαμβάνειν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἐναντίας δόξας ἐκείναις ἅς, ἐπειδὴν τελεωθῶσιν, ἔχειν οἰησόμεθα δεῖν αὐτούς;

33 R. 1.345b5: ἢ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν φέρων ἐνθῶ τὸν λόγον; Cf. Phaedrus 276a1-b1, in which Socrates describes philosophical discourse as knowledge written in the soul of the listener.



Socrates speaks approvingly of the ways in which proper myths can shape the souls of the young. While Socrates protests that he himself is not a poet (2.379a), given the manner in which souls are pictured as responding *particularly* to myths, the reader is prepared for the provision of philosophical myths that can replace these “bad myths” of Hesiod and Homer. And indeed, such myths appear – not only in the myth of the metals (3.414e8-415d5), with its lessons of communal interdependence for the residents of Kallipolis, but also in the allegory of the cave and the myth of Er, with their lessons for the reader.<sup>34</sup>

One of the kinds of “bad myths” that Socrates outlaws are stories that present death in a bad light – specifically, stories such as Achilles’ speech to Odysseus, in which the deceased hero claims that he would rather labor in another man’s service than be a king in the underworld (*Ody.* 11.489-91).<sup>35</sup> These stories are not to be dismissed because of their poetic quality, but because they would cause free men and children to prefer slavery to death (3.387b1-5). Similarly, lamentations of famous men and mourning must be restricted, since such actions also convey the message that death is an awful thing that should be feared. Given this focus on the powerful effect stories of death can have on the characters of men, it is unsurprising that one of the philosophical myths we find later in the *Republic* addresses the question of death– and, as I show in chapter 5, the myth with which the *Republic* ends takes advantage of the powerful pedagogical force of myths of the afterlife to underscore *Republic*’s key message about the primal importance of the

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34 I address both of these myths in chapter 5.

35 Interestingly, these words are repeated again at *R.* 7.516d4-5. The latter citation occurs within the context of the allegory of the cave: Socrates asks Glaucon whether the man who has returned from the outside world would envy those still chained below, and wish to join them again. I return to this quotation in chapter 5.

philosophical life.

Not every outlawed statement or theme has a corresponding, new philosophical myth. The injunctions against praising money (3.390e1-8) or against showing people overcome by laughter (3.388e7-389a) are not explicitly balanced by philosophically enlightened topics, although one could argue in the first instance that the *Republic* does give a new subject of praise (justice and the good). But nonetheless there is a further, more troubling disparity between the educational system described in books 2-3 and that implied by the *Republic* as a whole: the final element that Socrates argues must be prevented in the content of the musical education in Kallipolis is the use of mimetic poetry (3.396c-e), and yet the *Republic* is itself a mimetic text, in that anyone reading from it must assume the voices and arguments of its characters.

Indeed, the *Republic* is not only mimetic, but it also contains the kinds of narration that Socrates describes a good and fine person as privileging (3.396b10-c). Most properly, then, the *Republic* should be classed as a work of the “mixed style” - the style that Socrates states is “most pleasing to children, tutors, and the majority of people” (3.397d5-7).<sup>36</sup> And so there is an aesthetic justification for Plato’s use of this style in the *Republic*: the mixed style is the one that will be most appealing, and as such is the form most likely to shape the minds of readers towards philosophy. Yet a tension remains if the *Republic* itself is forbidden within Kallipolis, and so it is worth investigating whether such a ban would take place.

As mentioned above, in book 3 Socrates dismisses poetry that imitates bad actions

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<sup>36</sup> R. 3.397d5-7: ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Ἀδείμαντε, ἡδύς γε καὶ ὁ κεκραμένος, πολὺ δὲ ἡδιστος παισὶ τε καὶ παιδαγωγοῖς ὁ ἐναντίος οὗ σὺ αἰρήνῃ καὶ τῷ πλείστῳ ὄχλῳ.

or character (3.395c5-d1) as potentially damaging to the guardians' character. But as well the guardians should not imitate any other crafts than those that help them become better guardians (3.395b7-c5); that is to say, Socrates allows for the guardians to imitate people who are courageous and pious, but does not permit the imitation of particular skills such as shoemaking.<sup>37</sup> When we combine all of the rules of censorship from book 3, what is outlawed is any work that contains either poor conduct or descriptions of the performance of *techné*. If these are the rules for exclusion, it is unclear that the *Republic* would be banned, although it could be argued that the characters of book 1 should not be imitated. *At this point*, however, the argument for the banning of the *Republic* within Kallipolis, and thus for an inherent contradiction in the work, is not a foregone conclusion.

So Socrates' conversation with Adeimantus in books 2-3 has begun from an average city, and gradually cleansed it into a Kallipolis. The idea that individuals' attitudes towards justice and the good life are shaped by poetry and society is raised, and bad or inappropriate myths and poetry are exiled (later to be replaced by philosophical versions). Even if the specifics of the *Kallipolitan* educational system are later challenged, these broader philosophical moves – and in particular, the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, and society – remain in the reader's mind, to be built upon later.

#### 4.3.2 *The Program of Books 2-4: Glaucon*

After his conversation with Adeimantus on the censoring of certain kinds of music in Kallipolis, Socrates declares the discussion of musical training in speech and stories complete (3.398b6-c). Although Socrates attempts to move past this issue by

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *R.* 3.397e2-7, in which Socrates details that each man must stick to his own craft.

commenting that anyone could divine their rules for lyric odes and songs from what they have already said (3.398c3-5), Glaucon protests that he, at least, requires a more thorough explanation. As mentioned above, the ensuing conversation between Glaucon and Socrates is far more theoretical than that between Socrates and Adeimantus; with Glaucon, Socrates will discuss how rhythm and harmony permeate the soul (3.401c). This discussion on music quickly shifts to one on the proper forms of temperance, courage, and other virtues, since knowledge of such matters belongs to the same “craft and discipline” as musical training (3.402b7-c7).

Yet, as mentioned in 4.2.2 Book 5, in light of the charge of Thrasymachus Glaucon and Socrates are ill-equipped at this point in the dialogue to engage in an investigation into the proper forms of virtues – any observations they do make will fall victim to the epistemological uncertainties raised by the discussion of books 5-7. In section 4.3.1 The Program of Books 2-4: Adeimantus, I showed how Adeimantus’ conversation with Socrates still has pedagogical value, even if neither man can “escape” the influence of the culture in which he was raised, because ultimately this conversation shows how the opinions and attitudes of the populace can be changed through the manipulation of the content of poetry. Now I turn to Glaucon and Socrates’ conversation, in order to understand how this discussion might be protreptic for the reader, even if the philosophy it contains will subsequently be undercut.

Whereas Socrates’ discussion with Adeimantus can be thought of as a criticism of the education offered by poets and bards, with Glaucon Socrates broadens his criticism to include both informal and formal educational systems that compete with philosophy.

Socrates concludes the discussion on musical education by turning to the question of sexual pleasure within pederastic relationships, and argues that such relationships must be chaste if they are ultimately in the interest of the eromenos – after all, an erastes who acts in any way other than paternally towards his young pupil has shown his soul to be improperly trained (3.403b3-c2).

Having completed their review of the musical training within Kallipolis, Socrates next turns his interlocutor towards the physical training, including diet, practiced by residents of the ideal city (3.403c10-412a7). As with his discussion on musical training, Socrates begins from current practices and habits in an average Greek city, and gradually cleanses them from Kallipolis. In the process, Socrates reveals that this cleansing of intemperance will also rid the city of most doctors and lawyers, since the majority of those are only required in a city without the proper musical and physical education. Thus, Socrates removes from his ideal city those two disciplines that are most directly in competition with philosophy during the period in which Plato was composing the *Republic*.<sup>38</sup>

Socrates does not exclude oratory and medicine completely – what he excludes is the notion of those two fields as professions.<sup>39</sup> Those who must defend themselves in court already find themselves in a shameful position; those who take pride in their courtroom skills are to be condemned (3.405b5-c5). Similarly, medicine can be practiced in a limited fashion, for wounds or seasonal illness (3.405c5-d5), but should not be practiced in what Socrates calls the “current” fashion (vñv), in which it waits upon

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38 For more on the competition between disciplines in fourth century Athens, see 2.3 The Rise of Disciplines (p. 49) and following, above.

39 For a consideration of how philosophy might be a kind of medical practice, see Moes (2007).

diseases (τῆ παιδαγωγικῇ τῶν νοσημάτων ταύτη).<sup>40</sup> The youth of Kallipolis, Socrates argues, will be wary of relying on anyone else for judgments (3.410a5-7), and will have almost no need for the craft of medicine (3.410a11-b2) – certainly, they will have no need at all for medicine in its current, professionalized sense.

By the end of the discussion on the two main components of the educational program within Kallipolis, the two brothers have come to agree that the poets cannot be the ultimate arbiters of value, that pederastic relationships without philosophical enlightenment should be avoided, and that medicine and oratory only have value within a corrupt system, in which they ensure their continued position through their encouragement of feverish policies. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in as much as the brothers are models for the reader of appropriate philosophical students, in book three Plato argues directly against disciplines and pedagogical practices that compete with a philosophical education. Like book 1, then, this initial discussion on Kallipolis is important to the pedagogical function of the *Republic*, even if a deeper philosophical journey is required to defend the just life.

#### 4.3.3 *The Waves of Book 5*

Although the need for this deeper philosophical journey – the longer path – is introduced indirectly by Thrasymachus at the beginning of book 5, first Socrates responds to the challenge that in his brief outline of the government and policies of Kallipolis he has given too little explication of the treatment of women, children, and families in the ideal city. And so the epistemological discussions of books 5-7, namely

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<sup>40</sup> Indeed, this kind of medicine is particularly nefarious, because it gives one psychosomatic pains and headaches that impede philosophical thought, while at the same time accusing philosophy as being the cause of these imaginary ailments (3.407b7-c5).

the description of the line of knowledge and the analogy of the cave, are prefaced by “three waves” of arguments. The waves metaphor is introduced at 5.453c10-d7: Socrates states that he hesitated to address the upbringing of women and children in Kallipolis because it is a difficult problem, yet when one falls into water, be it a small swimming pool or the ocean, one must try to swim. The analogy is that the philosophical conversation is made difficult by “waves,” or ideas so unsettling or startling that they risk capsizing the entire enterprise.

Socrates describes the three waves at length, each more potentially dangerous to philosophical investigation than the last. The first wave, identified by Socrates as successfully avoided (5.457b7), is a defense of the notion that women can be guardians of the city, and should have the same kind of education – including the physical education – as the male guardians. The second wave is that there will be no family units, but that the guardians will all live in common and procreation will be arranged by the rulers (5.459d7-e2). Finally, Socrates comes to the third wave: Kallipolis will be ruled by philosopher-kings (5.472a-473e5).<sup>41</sup>

This final wave segues into a defense of the status of philosophy, a description of what kind of constitution makes for a good philosopher, and a rough outline of the philosophers’ education in Kallipolis. Ultimately, it transitions into the discussion of the good and the sun, line, and cave analogies, each of which presents the problem of knowledge and points to a solution from philosophy.<sup>42</sup> Finally, then, the “waves” discussion comes to address the epistemology that underpins philosophical investigation

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41 For a discussion of navigation metaphors in Plato’s *Phaedo* and *Protagoras*, see Kuperus (2007).

42 For a discussion of Plato’s use of myth, metaphor, and analogy, see chapter 5.

and insulates the discussion of the nature and value of justice from charges of relativism.

If Plato's reader were impatient with the detailed discussion of the practicalities of life in Kallipolis, he would only be following the model of Glaucon. Although Glaucon joined Socrates' other interlocutors at the beginning of book five in requesting more information on life in Kallipolis (5.450b5-c5), he soon becomes weary of Socrates' detailed defense, and protests that Socrates needs to leave these issues aside and turn to the question of how Kallipolis could come to be (5.471e1-5). Glaucon's protest moves the conversation past the second wave, and sets the course for the defense of the prominent role of philosophers, but it also raises the question of why the discussion of the two waves happened at all. After all, when Glaucon comments that they can all "take for granted" the benefits of the ideal constitution which Socrates has enumerated and countless others which he has not, Glaucon seems little interested in the results of Socrates' descriptions for the past book. What possible pedagogical function might these two waves have had that can justify their inclusion and, in particular, their location immediately before the praise of philosophy?

If we continue to locate the *Republic* within the milieu of competing intellectual disciplines, one answer presents itself: the first two waves of book 5 are necessary to protect the subsequent philosophy from comic ridicule. Plato's relationship with comedy is a complicated one: Socrates' appearances in comedy and the techniques of comic writers played a formative role in Plato's construction of his dialogues, yet at the same time Plato's dialogues frequently take a critical attitude toward comedy.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, as

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<sup>43</sup> For the debt Plato owes to Attic comedy in his writing style, see Clay (1994) 41, Nightingale (1995) 172-192, and 2.4.3 Teaching with Philosophical Texts, p. 74.



Socrates begins his three waves, he repeatedly references the ways in which laughter can undercut a philosophical argument: the notion that women would exercise with men causes laughter (5.452a9: γελοιώτατον), yet they must discuss the matter without fear of how others will mock them (5.452b6-c1), for such laughter can be defeated by philosophical arguments (5.452d2-e).

There are striking similarities between the philosophical ideas presented in the first two waves and one comic play in particular: Aristophanes' *Assembly Women*.<sup>44</sup> Like Socrates' Kallipolis, in Aristophanes' play property, food, and sex are communal, and women play a key political role.<sup>45</sup> Although exact dates for the two works are unknown, it seems fairly certain that Aristophanes' play preceded Plato's work.<sup>46</sup> The question of whether or not Plato can be seen to be *directly* responding to Aristophanes' work is a more difficult one, and one that had been the subject of a great deal of scholarly debate.<sup>47</sup> But regardless of whether Plato is responding to Aristophanes or both authors are reacting to a third source, the parallels between *Republic* book 5 and *Assembly Women* show that Socrates has very good reason to fear that the ideas he presents would make excellent fodder for comedy.

The question remains as to what kind of response Plato, as a philosophical writer,

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44 Other Aristophanic comedies can also be linked with Plato's philosophy. Saxonhouse (1978) compared the entire project of the *Republic* with Aristophanes' *Birds*. Nightingale (1995) relates Eupolis' *Flatterers (Kolakes)* to Plato's *Protagoras*.

45 For a discussion of the relationship between *Assembly Women* and *Republic* book 5, see Schofield (1999) 34, 51.

46 Tordoff (2007) 242 n. 4.

47 Dawson (1992) argues that, "the fact that the Aristophanic and Platonic versions of the argument are used for contrary political ends would appear to preclude the possibility of direct borrowing," and suggests instead a "common source" for Plato and Aristophanes (38-39).

is making to comic playwrights. Answering this question requires not only a theory of Plato's intentions, but Aristophanes' as well – is Aristophanes genuinely mocking the political state he displays in the *Assembly Women*, is he attempting serious political philosophy, or is there an element of both? Saxonhouse (1978) assumes that there is little serious content in Aristophanes, and argues, “if it is funny in Aristophanes, why isn't it funny in Plato?”<sup>48</sup> The conclusion is that Plato means these passages in book 5, as well as earlier passages from books 2-4, to be comic themselves. By mocking his own “Kallipolis”, Plato indirectly shows that “the attempt to praise justice by uniting politics and philosophy and by making the philosopher Socrates engage in the political activity of founding a city only rendered the discussion of justice more laughable.”<sup>49</sup> A survey of figures who laugh in the *Republic* shows one difficulty with this reading. Cephalus issues a laugh (1.331d8) before abandoning philosophical conversation to go sacrifice. In the analogy of the cave, Socrates warns against laughing at disturbed or confused individuals (7.517e2-518b3), because such souls could be confused because they have descended from light into darkness. Anyone who *did* ridicule such a soul would be ridiculous himself – the implication being that the mocker's own ignorance would be revealed by the very action of mockery. In both these cases, the figure who laughs is shown to have less knowledge than the one mocked. Given this more general attitude towards laughter in the *Republic*, and the frequent association between laughter and ignorance, it is difficult to accept Saxonhouse's position that the reader is meant to laugh off all of the political philosophy in the *Republic* as plainly silly – unless, perhaps,

48 Saxonhouse (1978) 891.

49 Saxonhouse (1978) 889.

through their laughter the reader is meant to recognize her *own* ignorance, in which case the political philosophy *would* be meant to be taken seriously.

Another interpretation, offered by Nightingale, is that Plato “disentangles the communistic ideas from their comic rendering by making Socrates suggest that the material is ‘serious’ and not ‘ridiculous’...Where the comic poets go wrong, Plato indicates, is by making fun of ideas and people that are in fact good.”<sup>50</sup> Nightingale’s reading, like Saxonhouse’s, maintains the comic stance of Aristophanes’ work, but finds that Plato appropriates these comic topics for philosophy and in so doing shows philosophy’s superiority to comedy.<sup>51</sup> Finally, there is the position taken by Tordoff (2007), who argues that Plato, at least, worried that Aristophanes’ *Assembly Women* “may be taken by some to offer a serious and important critique of an issue, in which case Athenians might think they have extracted from comedy the answers that Plato claims only philosophy can provide.”<sup>52</sup>

As different as each of these three positions are, they are all consistent with reading Plato as offering a philosophical replacement for a role more traditionally occupied by the comic poet. For the present discussion on the pedagogical role of the waves in book 5, it suffices to say that Plato has already argued for the elimination of oratory and for minimizing the role of medicine (see 4.2.3), and here shows that

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50 Nightingale (1995) 178.

51 Nightingale (1995) does address the “serious use” of comedy within Plato, as well as comedy’s role in social criticism in Athens (180-192). However, she groups *Republic* book 5 with “Plato’s response to the ‘ridiculous’ or humorous side of comedy” (172-180).

52 Tordoff (2007) 262. I say “finally” because the fourth and last possible interpretive combination – that Aristophanes is serious and Plato is comic – does not have scholarly support.

philosophy can replace comedy as well. I am not proposing here to resolve the issue of how exactly Plato is “replacing” comedy – as a humorist or as a political commentator. Rather, what I am suggesting is that, by the time Socrates introduces the idea that the philosophers will rule Kallipolis, Plato has inoculated his reader against criticisms of philosophy as an absurd pursuit.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

While the opening of book 2 suggests the kind of students and methodology appropriate to philosophy, it does not initially argue why such a student should choose philosophy as the discipline from which he or she will gain knowledge about the world. Throughout books 2-4, Socrates describes the ideal state by slowly removing inappropriate elements from the feverish city, and in so doing he (not coincidentally) removes the need for oratory and most of the need for medicine. At the same time as these alternative disciplines are attacked, the descriptions of the educational system in Kallipolis reinforce the notion that many of the metaphysical and ethical beliefs of individuals are defined by their society. While the reader does not yet have the positive defense of philosophy that the metaphors of books 6-7 will provide, these initial books give the reader a compelling reason to desire a methodology that will help to differentiate reality from convention.

That need for a deeper epistemological investigation is underscored by Thrasymachus’ interjection in book 5. Like book 2, book 5 can be thought of as beginning a positive program after a negative one: books 2-4 have shown that oratory and medicine are unnecessary in the ideal society, and now the reader is presented with what philosophy can offer. First, though, Plato protects the philosophy to come from the

damning laughter of the ignorant through demonstrating that he can take topics from the purview of comedy and appropriate them for philosophy. Once philosophy's detractors and competitors have been eliminated, the reader is presented with a defense of the power and promise of philosophy.

## 5. Speaking in Images – Lies, Myths, and Allegories

### 5.1 Introduction

When Glaucon introduces his challenge to Socrates in book 2 and exhorts him to give a full defense of justice, he does so by means of a three-pronged attack on justice.<sup>1</sup> In Glaucon’s first charge to Socrates, he states that the majority of people believe that justice is not worth practicing in and of itself.<sup>2</sup> In his third charge, he imagines the completely just and the completely unjust man: the completely just man has been stripped of any reputation for justice, while the unjust man can avoid any charge of injustice (2.361a-c). Yet it is his second charge, an example of *mythologos* in the form of the tale of the ring of Gyges, which captures readers’ imaginations.<sup>3</sup> Socrates specifically invokes this story again at the conclusion of his defense of justice in book 10 (10.612b4) when he states that they have discovered that justice itself is the best thing for the soul, whether it has Gyges’ ring or not.<sup>4</sup>

Nor is this the only example of a myth or story assuming a prominent position in the argument of the *Republic*.<sup>5</sup> Even if we construe the notion of a myth narrowly,

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1 See 4.2.1 Book 2, p. 128.

2 *R.* 2.358a.

3 Glaucon begins his story of the ring of Gyges as a quasi-historical event, but later in the tale comments that the more fantastic elements are reported by those “who tell mythic tales” (2.359d5: μυθολογοῦσιν).

4 10.612b4: ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνην αὐτῇ ψυχῇ ἄριστον ἤρομεν, καὶ ποιητέον εἶναι αὐτῇ τὰ δίκαια, ἐάντ’ ἔχη τὸν Γύγου δακτύλιον, ἐάντε μή, καὶ πρὸς τοιοῦτω δακτυλίῳ τὴν Ἄιδος κυνῆν;

5 See Brisson (1998) 141-155 for an appendix listing all occurrences of “muthos” and of compounds from “muthos” in the Platonic corpus, as well as an analysis of the various senses of discourse it can convey. According to his results, the *Republic* accounts for 23 percent of all occurrences of “mythos”, and most of those are concentrated in books 2-3 in the discussion of the musical education of the guardians. Compounds of muthos that appear in the *Republic* include the adjective *muthodes* (*R.*

specifying that it must have some sort of otherworldly element, still we find myths marking several key passages of the *Republic*: the ring of Gyges in the challenge of book 2, the myth of the metals in the education of the guardians in book 3, and the myth of Er at the conclusion of book 10.<sup>6</sup> By casting our net more widely to include allegories or extended metaphors, we find the *Republic* is full of figurative language: the ship of state of book 6 (6.488a-489a); the sun analogy, line analogy, and allegory of the cave of books 6-7; and indeed even the whole story of Kallipolis itself, which only “exists in words”.<sup>7</sup> It would be quite difficult to deny that Plato makes use of the non-literal possibilities of language in his work, but it is possibly even more difficult to explain *why* such language appears in the *Republic*, and in particular why it so often appears in such prominent positions in the philosophical argument.

In this final chapter on Plato’s pedagogical techniques, I examine three different examples of figurative language as case studies: the myth of the metals, which is known to be false to Socrates’ interlocutors but it meant to be believed by the imaginary residents of Kallipolis; the sequence of analogies and allegories in books 6-7; and the myth of Er. My focus in this examination is what these case studies reveal about Plato’s pedagogical use of stories: what effect are these tales meant to have on the reader, and how do they serve the overarching pedagogical structure of the *Republic*? In order to

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7.522a7), *muthopios* (R. 2.377b11), *muthologos* (R. 3.392d2, 3.398a8-b1), *muthologia* (R. 2.382d1, 3.394b9), *muthologeō* (R. 2.359d6, 2.376d9, 2.378e3, 2.379a2, 2.380c2, 2.392b6, 3.415a3, 6.501e4, 9.588c2).

6 For a discussion of Plato’s use of imagery throughout his dialogues, see Gordon (2007).

7 9.592a9-b1: ἐν ἧ νῦν διήλομεν οἰκίζοντες πόλει λέγεις, τῆ ἐν λόγοις κειμένη, ἐπεὶ γῆς γε οὐδαμοῦ οἶμαι αὐτὴν εἶναι. There is considerable debate over the degree to which Plato should be thought to be putting forward “serious” political philosophy through the discussions of Kallipolis. See 4.3.3 The Waves of Book 5, p. 151.

provide context for Plato's use of figurative language, I first briefly review the *mythos/logos* dichotomy that scholars have found in fifth and fourth century writings – a dichotomy that has more recently been challenged. Next, I turn to the question of how scholars have variously interpreted the presence of *mythos* in Plato's writings, so that I may locate my own position. After these introductory sections, I present my three case studies, each of which underscores the ways in which the *Republic* is designed to mold the reader into the proper philosophical student.

### 5.1.1 *Mythos vs. Logos?*

The question of the relationship of *mythos* to *logos* brings with it attendant questions about the definitions of the two terms, ancient notions of truth (*aletheia*) and knowledge, and the role both ancient writers, such as Plato, and modern scholars have played in the embellishment of this dichotomy. Defining either term is a difficult task, as the use and meaning of both terms transforms from one period of Greek literature to the next. Beginning with Homer, the term *mythos* seems to connote speech acts ranging from a word to a whole story, but it does not label that communication as false or imaginary.<sup>8</sup> Nor does it appear to be opposed to *logos*; indeed, the two appearances of the term *logos* in Homer (*Il.* 15.392 and *Od.* 1.56) are both examples of “deceptive speech” (“*logoi aimulioi*”). If anything, in Homer *mythos* is opposed to *epos* as the content of speaking verses the act of speaking, among other oppositions.<sup>9</sup>

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8 For an overview of the use of *muthos* in Homer, see G. Naddaff's introduction to his translation of *Plato the Myth Maker* (1998), esp. pp. vii-ix.

9 In *The Language of Heroes* (1989), Martin defines the dichotomy between *mythos* and *epos* slightly differently, arguing that a *mythos* is a speech-act with authority and a performative aspect, whereas an *epos* is a short act with a physical component (12).



Nor is the dichotomy between *mythos* and *logos* apparent in the first philosophical writers: the Presocratics. Rather, the first visible sign of this dichotomy survives in the work of poets – specifically, in Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 1.28-29.<sup>10</sup> In this ode, Pindar opposes the elaborate, false tales of others (“*muthos* decorated with *pseudea*”) with his own true speaking (“*alathes logos*”).<sup>11</sup> It is important to our investigation of these two terms that Pindar cannot merely state that *his* words are *logos* and his competitors’ are *mythos*. From the fact that he must add the notions of “lies” and “truth” to *mythos* and *logos* respectively to make his point clear, we can gather that *mythos* and *logos* alone would not increase his own authority at the expense of his rivals. Yet we do see in Pindar the beginning of a notion of *levels* of epistemological certainty, as well as the idea that truth is something to be valued. Furthermore, a case could be advanced that Pindar’s choice to pair *mythos* with lies and *logos* with truth is no accident, but rather is in accord with the connotations of the two terms in question. Although the evidence from Pindar does not support the notion that *mythos* and *logos* were opposing terms at this time, it does provide one key moment on the incremental transformation of these terms – a transformation that, as I investigate further below, Plato exploited in his own use of the terms.<sup>12</sup>

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10 ἢ θαυματὰ πολλά, καί ποῦ τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον / δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεῦδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι...

11 For more on Pindar’s development of this dichotomy, see Naddaff’s introduction to Brisson (1998) viii-ix. Pindar uses the word *mythos* only three times in his surviving poems: Ol. 1.29, Nem. 8.33, and Pyth. 4.298. In Nem. 8.33, like in the example of Ol. 1.29 above, the term *mythos* has a modifier that lends it a negative connotation (“crafty” or αἰμύλος). There is no accompanying adjective in Pyth. 4.298, in which Pindar states that *sophia* deceives with *mythos*, and although the result described in this example is negative, it is not clear that *mythos* by itself has that connotation.

12 There remains scholarly debate over whether or not the *mythos/logos* dichotomy exists in Plato. Morgan (2000) states, “The Greek word *mythos* retained a fairly neutral connection later than has sometimes been claimed; it is only in Plato...that *mythos* comes close to having a consistently negative

*Mythos* remains difficult to define precisely in the fifth century, but similar uses to that of Ol. 1.28-29 provide evidence for its gradual association with the less true or believable of two accounts.<sup>13</sup> Such examples frequently take place in the context of competition for authority: the stories others tell are *mythoi*, which can neither be proven nor disproved. Thus *mythoi* are not necessarily *false*, but there are reasons why they are less preferable than *logoi* – reasons that have everything to do with the rise of a technical vocabulary. This technical vocabulary is generated by the Presocratics, and by Heraclitus in particular. Though these writers do not explicitly demote *mythos*, such a demotion is implied by their elevation of *logos*. Heraclitus, for example, employed *logos* in the particular sense of “rational discourse” or ordered reason.<sup>14</sup> According to Heraclitus, this rational discourse is available to all,<sup>15</sup> but few men actually come to understand it or see it in their lives.<sup>16</sup> Instead, people are misled by a poet such as Hesiod, who is “most men’s teacher” and yet does not even know “day or night.”<sup>17</sup> Such misguided individuals follow the poets or the crowd as their teacher, although there are many bad and few good.<sup>18</sup> In

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sense” (17), whereas Murray (1999) comments, “If we look in Plato’s work for a consistent distinction between *muthos* (myth) and *logos* (reason), let alone a development from one to the other, we look in vain” (261). The negative associations in Plato are less attached to the notion of a *mythos* than to the individual who is telling that *mythos*, yet who does not himself have real knowledge of the subject matter at hand. These issues are explored further below.

13 See, for example, Thucydides’ use of *muthodes* to refer to stories that cannot be questioned through the historians’ tools (1.21, 22).

14 See Guthrie (1962) 1:419-435 for a general overview of the meaning of *logos* in fifth century Greece. For a focused account of *logos* in Heraclitus, see Fattal (1986).

15 See Fragment 2, found in Sextus Empiricus, *Against the mathematicians*, 7.133.

16 See Fragment 1, found in Sextus Empiricus, *Against the mathematicians*, 7.132.

17 See Fragment 57, found in Hippolytus, *Refutation of all heresies*, IX, 10, 2.

18 See Fragment 104, found in Proclus, *Commentary on the first Alcibiades*, 256. Morgan (2000) takes this passage to imply that the poets should be identified with the uneducated mob (55), but does not

these passages, Heraclitus refines and claims a technical definition for *logos*, based in the notion of account or reason found in its \**leg-* root. In so doing, he creates a goal for his audience – the understanding of the true *logos* all around them – which can only be achieved through philosophy. The poets do not mislead their audiences because of their use of *mythos*; rather, because they themselves do not have deeper knowledge, poets cannot help but to lead others astray when they attempt to assert their authority on philosophical issues.<sup>19</sup>

The creation of a technical *logos* in the work of Heraclitus and other Presocratics relies on a devaluation of regular discourse, which in turn depends on a change in the concept of truth or *aletheia*. Briefly, the relationship is as follows: philosophy has superior value to all other fields because it alone can lead those who practice it to the one true *logos*; this *logos* is superior to all other kinds of discourse because it alone is related to *aletheia*; *aletheia* has an eternal, universal component that makes it desirable.<sup>20</sup> Like the appropriation of the term *logos*, the use of *aletheia* in this sense is a development of the fifth century.<sup>21</sup> As Heidegger has argued, reviving a position from Classen, prior to

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quote the second half of the fragment, in which Heraclitus states that there are many bad *and few good*.

19 Cf. Morgan (2000): “[Philosophers] did think that most poets did not have the intellectual enterprise to understand the true nature of the world; their productions could not, therefore, be trusted without their own philosophical supervision” (3).

20 These brief statements in turn require other propositions or assumptions for their support, such as the notion that human beings (and the world) are inherently rational (and that this rationality is a good to be cultivated further) or the idea that what is unchanging is preferable to what changes. We can see in the new notion of *logos* as well a rise in the notion that the capacity of a truth for individual access, examination, and verification of it is related to the believability of that truth, at the same time that the Presocratics retain the idea of authority: the authority that comes through philosophy is an authority that (hypothetically) any individual who is properly trained might attain, whereas that which comes through divine inspiration does not offer the same democratic possibilities.

21 Cole (1983) provides a review of the development of the meaning of *aletheia*, and its relationship to *nemertes* and *atrekes*.

this point *aletheia* is related to “unhidden” or “unforgotten”.<sup>22</sup> Bruno Snell added to Heidegger’s insights the notion of agency in *aletheia*, as implied by *lethe*: *lethe* is not simply “forgotten”, but is the “gaps in the memory,” and therefore should be thought of more as “forgetfulness”.<sup>23</sup> *Aletheia*, then, is not simply something that is not forgotten, but it is something that is remembered. And it is this particular understanding of the concept of *aletheia* that illuminates how, in Greek society, poets could claim to have a special relationship to *aletheia*: not because such poets have divinely-inspired messages, but because their act of recollection is the very act of renewing the “truth” in things. *Mythos*, irrespective of its fictionality or not, can be used to maintain *aletheia* every bit as much as *logos*.

In order for philosophers to establish themselves as occupying a superior epistemic position to that of poets, they must have an epistemic goal that is distinct. In other words, while poets might be able to preserve stories, ideas, or even memories of individuals, philosophers provide access to an *aletheia* that has no need of human intervention or maintenance. This new kind of *aletheia* is related to the idea of a complete and full account – an idea that was always a part of *aletheia*’s meaning, but which the philosophers expanded upon with their technical use of the term.<sup>24</sup> This

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22 Heidegger’s treatment can be found in *Sein und Zeit* 33 and 220-223 and in *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*, Bern 1947, 26-33. Cf. Classen (1867) 195.

23 Snell (1975) 14: “ἀληθές ist das im Gedächtnis lückenlos Festgehaltene (das in seiner Fülle hergezählt werden kann).”

24 Cole (1983) suggests that *aletheia* was always associated with “qualities of care, precision, order and coherence” (27). Cherubin (2009) prefers to relate *aletheia* to the notion of a full account in Homer rather than to an idea of concealment, since in several passages (e.g., Il. 23.259-61) the point of *aletheia* is that the individual in question should “notice things that others could not (and not necessarily because those things were concealed)” (55).

technical use can be seen in particular in the work of Parmenides.<sup>25</sup> For him, *aletheia* is related to a path of inquiry: it is both the path (DK B2.3-4) and the goal (DK B1.29-30).<sup>26</sup> As Rose Cherubin has shown, in his particular formulation of *aletheia* Parmenides “is suggesting that *aletheia* might be accessible by inquiry or seeking” or at least could be “oriented or guided by *aletheia*.”<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, Parmenides’ *aletheia* is not something that is accessible through observation or even divine revelation, but which requires the kinds of inquiry that only philosophy can provide.<sup>28</sup>

Yet even as Parmenides crafts a notion of *aletheia* as the eternal, unchanging goal of philosophy, he conveys this notion to his reader enshrouded in a myth: the man in his poem who attempts to journey on the way of truth has been taken up in a chariot to the temple of an unnamed goddess, and from her he receives his insights about the distinction between *aletheia* and *doxa*. Thus, even while ideas circulate about the superior path and goal of philosophy as opposed to poetry, still the philosopher employs the tools of the poet. The notion, therefore, that there was some kind of advance from irrational *mythos* to rational *logos* in Greek thought oversimplifies both: *mythos* is never clearly

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25 *Aletheia* appears in three places in Parmenides’ work: DK B1.29-30, when the heart of *aletheia* and the opinions of mortals are stated to be the object of inquiry; B2.2-3, when the road of “how it is and how it is not not to be” is identified as the road of *peitho* and *aletheia*; and B8.1-49, when the goddess announces a stop to her *noema amphis aletheies*.

26 In the writings of Parmenides *aletheia* might almost be said to occupy a similar position to that of *logos* in Heraclitus.

27 Cherubin (2009) 59.

28 Cf. Cherubin (2009) 66-67.

*irrational*,<sup>29</sup> and the additional technical sense of *logos* gives it an elusive mystique.<sup>30</sup>

Plato draws from a number of his philosophical and literary predecessors in his own use of *logos* and *mythos*. Like the philosophy of Parmenides and Heraclitus, in Plato's writings the ultimate goal of inquiry is some kind of universal and eternal knowledge, whether in an effable all-and-only definition of a term or in the apprehension of a form. Like Pindar, Plato defines his own teachings in opposition to those of his rivals: in the case of Plato, these rivals are not only poets, but also orators and medical writers.<sup>31</sup> Given the historical relationship of *mythos* and *logos* sketched out here, it should not be surprising that Plato makes frequent use of myths, stories, and images in his philosophy. After all, there is nothing in the history of *mythos* that marks it as incompatible with Platonic philosophy; if anything, it is Plato's *own* comments on myth that makes his use of figurative language surprising.

### 5.1.2 *Mythos in Plato*

While it is easy to see that Plato's philosophical works contain a great deal of figurative language in the form of myths, metaphors, and allegories, scholars are divided about the role that such elements play vis-a-vis Plato's philosophy. Annas (1982) argues that myths in Plato are a particular epistemological problem, because Plato "uses the

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29 Indeed, it is not clear that it is irrational even in Plato, although such an idea might be inferred from Socrates' statement that the mixed style – a style he has associated with poets – is the one most pleasing to children, their tutors, and the masses (*R.* 3.397d5-7), who are untrained in philosophy and so presumably ruled by the non-rational parts of their souls.

30 The case that Greek intellectual thought proceeded from the irrational to the rational was made by Wilhelm Nestle, *From Mythos to Logos: The Self-Development of Greek Thought from Homer to the Sophists and Socrates* (1940). For an evaluation of Nestle's work, and this position more generally, see Most (1999). The idea that *mythoi* in the ancient world often have serious philosophical grounding has been explored by the recent collection edited by Wians (2009).

31 For a reading of the polemical nature of Socrates' account of the politics and culture of Kallipolis, see 4.3.2 The Program of Books 2-4: Glaucon, p. 148.

myth form to express truths that are profound and important; yet for him myth or any form of storytelling has low epistemological status, the preferred philosophical method being argument.”<sup>32</sup> For Annas, Plato’s myths are meant to be read alongside his rational arguments: they supplement it, yet they are also always subordinate to it. She states, “It is, clearly, a mistake to make Plato’s myths or imagery central to interpreting his thought, at the expense of the arguments; to make this use of the more accessible passages would be unplatonicly lazy and unphilosophical.”<sup>33</sup> While Annas finds many philosophically interesting ideas in Plato’s figurative language, she does not clearly state why, if such language is epistemologically suspect, it appears so often. Furthermore, at least as far as the *Republic* is concerned, figurative language is more than frequent; it is pervasive. As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, myths or stories often appear at the climax of philosophical discussion: the myth of the metals (*R.* 3.414d1-415d5), for example, concludes the discussion of education in Kallipolis, and the myth of Er (*R.* 10.614b1-621b6) ends the *Republic* as a whole.<sup>34</sup> Figurative language also underpins the entire project of the *Republic*, from the framing notion that the just city is merely a tool for investigation (2.368d) that exists only in words (9.592a9-b1) to the intermittent reminders that the whole project has a storytelling element to it.<sup>35</sup>

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32 Annas (1982) 121.

33 Annas (1982) 121.

34 See Murray (1999) 258.

35 In book 2 of the *Republic*, in introducing the discussion of the education of the guardians, Socrates comments that he and his interlocutors should describe the education of the guardians as if they were telling a story “ὡσπερ ἐν μύθῳ μυθολογοῦντές” (*R.* 2.376e). Compare this to the exchange between Socrates and Phaedrus at *Phdr.* 276e, in which Phaedrus identifies “telling stories about justice” as a noble pastime (“παγκάλην λέγεις παρὰ φαύλην παιδιάν, ὃ Σόκρατες, τοῦ ἐν λόγοις δυναμένου παιίζειν, δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ἄλλων ὧν λέγεις περὶ μυθολογοῦντα.”) and Socrates replies that “much nobler is serious engagement, when one uses the dialectic method” (“ἔστι γάρ, ὃ φίλε Φαῖδρε, οὕτω: πολὺ δ’

It is embedded at both the micro- and macro-level of the dialogue because, as I argue further below, it is precisely this layering of the figurative language that renders the student particularly amenable to its message. But before I examine some of the myths and stories of the *Republic* through the lens of philosophic pedagogy, I first consider how some scholars have attempted to explain the use of myth in Plato, and in so doing have attempted to resolve a version of the “epistemological problem” pointed out by Annas.

One response to the presence of figurative language is to consider it as largely separate from the philosophical language, and so to consider Plato’s use of figurative language as less motivated by philosophy than by pragmatism of one of two sorts: language borrowed from the poets also borrows their authority, or poetic language is meant to give a rough guide to those who could not otherwise comprehend Plato’s texts. In a way, these two kinds of pragmatism are based in the same essential concern for Plato: that philosophy come to replace other kinds of understanding of the world. Plato must replace the authority that rhapsodes or tragedians have, not because (or perhaps, not *only* because) they set themselves up as having some sort of real knowledge, but because such composers of myth are not concerned with the ethical example that they are setting.<sup>36</sup> Plato himself, “is not concerned with the factual veracity of history here, but with the ethical truth that should be expressed through myth.”<sup>37</sup> Philosophical myths can

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οἶμαι καλλίων σπουδὴ περὶ αὐτὰ γίγνεται, ὅταν τις τῆ διαλεκτικῆ τέχνῃ χρώμενος,”). The use of μυθολογέω in both passages is typical of Plato’s inconsistent portrait of Socrates’ attitude towards *mythos*.

36 For the theatrical elements in Plato’s use of myth, see Mattéi (1988). Edmonds (2004) argues that Plato frequently incorporates elements of traditional myths in his own philosophical versions, because such a device “folds Plato’s version into the traditional discourse as it acknowledges the rival versions and places itself into the familiar contest with them.” (167). For further discussion of Plato’s manipulation of the authority of mythic discourse, see Lincoln (1999).

37 Murray (1999) 252.



serve to replace other kinds of myths, and in so doing they can allow those who cannot comprehend *philosophical* arguments for acting a certain way to still lead morally correct lives. Under such a reading, the myth of the metals in the *Republic* is being useful “in its power to both keep those who are not (yet) able to rule from ruling and to constantly motivate these same persons to strive for justice, wisdom, courage, moderation, and goodness.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, for Plato myth is “a sort of back-up: if one fails to be persuaded by arguments to change one’s life, one may still be persuaded by a good myth. Myth, as it is claimed in the *Laws*, may be needed to ‘charm’ one ‘into agreement’ (903b) when philosophy fails to do so.”<sup>39</sup> Or, to put it another way, it allows individuals without the mental wherewithal to dabble in a kind of philosophy: the myth plays “for ordinary people a role similar to that of an intelligible form for the philosopher.”<sup>40</sup>

The above position is of a piece with that criticized by Elias (1984) as a “weak defense”, in which poetical language is only included in Plato’s works as a nod towards those “too dull, lazy, or busy to grasp rationally what is demonstrable by rational means.”<sup>41</sup> Yet some scholars combine the idea of “Plato the pragmatist”, who is creating myths for the dull amongst us, with “Plato the philosophical myth-maker”, who *also* creates myths for philosophically-motivated reasons. The latter position is summarized nicely by Morgan (2000), who groups Plato with a wide host of other ancient

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38 Fendt & Rozema (1998) 71. While Fendt & Rozema are speaking of the internal audience of the inhabitants of Kallipolis here, their arguments also apply to the reader, who is meant to use the myths as a guide when the philosophical point is difficult.

39 Partenie (2009) 8, referring to Leg. 903b.

40 Brisson (1998) 116.

41 Elias (1984) 38.

philosophers who think that “the world of appearance is unstable. This, in turn dictates a certain attitude to language, that is put under great stress since it expresses the world of appearance, but must also be the tool by which reality, or truth, is revealed.”<sup>42</sup> Language is, as a whole, untrustworthy, because no combination of words can accurately convey a thought, let alone express some universal truth. In Rowe’s (1999) articulation of a similar position, this “sense of the 'fictionality' of human utterance, as provisional, inadequate, and at best approximating to the truth” makes the distinction between *mythos* and *logos* in Plato largely academic, since doubts about any type of language infects Plato’s philosophy “at its deepest level, below other and more ordinary applications of the distinction between mythical and non-mythical forms of discourse.”<sup>43</sup> Platonic myth, according to this reading, elides this difficulty of language by not attempting to attain precision in discourse. Because the philosophy is rendered in the form of a myth, it is implicit that the student cannot simply absorb it without reflection; instead, she must convert the images of the myth to rational, ineffable ideas.<sup>44</sup>

Although I am interested in the philosophical basis for Plato’s use of figurative language, I approach the issue from a different angle. First, I consider how such language functions within the pedagogical structure of the *Republic*, which is to say, I examine how the myths progressively prepare the student to come to accept the arguments implicit in the *Republic* regarding the limitations of ordinary human

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42 Morgan (2000) 9.

43 Rowe (1999) 265.

44 A more negative version of this position assigns the blame for Plato’s “retreat” to myth not on problems inherent in language, but on Plato’s own inability to logically prove his doctrines. See Hegel (1963) 19-20.

knowledge and the necessity of the philosophical life. I accomplish this by looking at three case studies, each of which shows a distinct pedagogical use of myth by Plato.<sup>45</sup> In the conclusion to this chapter, after this examination is complete, I return to the question of whether or not myths are an “epistemological problem” for Plato, and what light my pedagogical reading has shed on his decision to employ them in his philosophy.

### 5.2.1 Case Study One: The Myth of the Metals

It is with the “myth of the metals” or “noble lie” (3.414b6-417b8) that Plato ends book 3 of the *Republic*, and so this myth can be thought of as either a coda or a conclusion to the book and a half discussion of education within Kallipolis.<sup>46</sup> After his systematic cleansing of inappropriate poetry and his establishment of a regime of physical maintenance, Socrates outlines the political structure of Kallipolis: specifically, he differentiates between the populace, the guardians, and the auxiliaries (3.414b5).<sup>47</sup> Yet there is one more thing that his city needs – a “device” or “contrivance” (μηχανή). But before he specifies the details of this story, Socrates first evokes an earlier discussion about whether or not the gods ever lie (2.382a4-d3).

This earlier conversation had centered around a division of lies into “lies in words” (2.382c6: τὸ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ψεῦδος) and “lies in truth” (2.382c2: τὸ τῷ ὄντι ψεῦδος). The latter are to be uniformly rejected, for they are especially harmful. These

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45 The three case studies again are: the myth of the metals, which is known to be false to Socrates’ interlocutors but it meant to be believed by the imaginary residents of Kallipolis; the sequence of analogies and allegories in books 6-7; and the myth of Er. See page 167 above.

46 Book four opens with Adeimantus’ protest that Socrates has not made the guardians happy, and turns the topic of conversation to justice in the city and in the soul.

47 For a pedagogically focused explanation of the philosophy of books 2-3, see 4.3.1 The Program of Books 2-4: Adeimantus, p. 141.

lies cause an individual to hold a misconception in their soul, and as a result to be in some way ignorant about the world. Lies in words, in contrast, are prophylactic or corrective of false understanding. Like a “useful drug” (2.383c10: φάρμακον χρήσιμον), such lies contain as much of the truth as possible, and so can be especially fitting for circumstances in which the truth is unknown, such as “ancient events”. *This* conversation, in turn, recalls the recent injunction against the story of Cronus punishing Uranus, and being punished by Zeus (2.377e5). That story must be censored, Socrates reveals, because of the strange moral messages it sends – even if it were true (2.278a1: εἰ ἦν ἀληθῆ), only those who are especially mentally prepared and trustworthy should hear it.

These earlier discussions on uncomfortable truths, misleading lies, and useful lies all bear on the introduction of the foundation myth with which the population of Kallipolis is to be indoctrinated, as they raise the question of whether Socrates is appealing to an epistemological or moral rationale (or both) in the introduction of the myth of the metals.<sup>48</sup> Taking up the epistemological defense, Murray (1999) argues that because “human beings, not being gods, can never know the truth” then “myth-making is an essential human activity.”<sup>49</sup> In response to our ignorance, “all we can do is to make our falsehood as like the truth as possible (382d2) so as to make it useful.”<sup>50</sup> Yet the myth Socrates is about to tell does not seem to be categorically like those “lies in words” that

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48 By an epistemological rationale, I mean that the lie is defensible because it brings its receiver some *knowledge* they would not have access to otherwise; by a moral rationale, I mean that the lie is defensible because it makes its receiver morally better.

49 Murray (1999) 260.

50 Murray (1999) 253.

conclude book two, in spite of his deliberate reference back to that discussion. Indeed, the reference here actually highlights one of the *weaknesses* of the earlier discussion: if lies in words are necessary in scenarios in which the truth is unknown or unknowable, then how can there be any assurance that they do, in fact, approximate the truth? At least one of two additional conditions is necessary to render such an assurance. The first is for the lie in words to be invented by someone who does, in fact, know the truth, but who has packaged this unrecognizable truth in a familiar garb in order to make it relatable or comprehensible by the one receiving the lie in words. This possibility is epistemologically defensible, since the lie in words presumably contains more truth than the receiver could acquire in any other way, but it is also possible to see it as morally defensible, if it is better for an individual to possess knowledge – regardless of how approximate – rather than ignorance. The second possibility is that the *receiver* can judge whether or not a lie is “in words” or “in truth” based on how the lie accords with other, knowable truths (possibly attained through philosophy). This possibility does not require an omniscient (or even better-knowing) source for the myth for its epistemological or moral validity: instead, the burden is on the receiver to judge the kind of lie he is facing and to believe or reject it.<sup>51</sup> I return to these two possibilities in my analysis of the pedagogical function of the myth of the metals; first, let us consider what this myth actually states, and how it has traditionally been understood as functioning within the political narrative of the *Republic*.

The “myth of the metals” or “noble lie” is really two myths. The first is the

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51 This must be the sense in which the “lie in words” was initially introduced, since Socrates did not suggest some kind of verification of the truth-status from the gods.

“Phoenician story” about the autochthonous origins of the people of Kallipolis, which is a variation of the myth of Cadmus.<sup>52</sup> In Socrates’ version, the people of the city are to be told that their whole upbringing was but a dream, and in fact they were formed, nurtured, and armed within the earth and emerged only once whole and ready to defend her (3.414d2-e5). Unlike Cadmus’ polemical Spartoi, the people of Kallipolis take on the task of uniting with their “brothers” to defend their common “mother” earth. The next section of the myth adapts the Hesiodic idea of a progression of ages from golden to iron.<sup>53</sup> In Hesiod, the story told is one of degeneration from the heroic figures of the past to the meager people seen today; Socrates, in contrast, associates the metals not with ages but with individuals. The residents of Kallipolis are to be told that while in the earth, each of them had certain metals mixed in with their constitution: gold for rulers, silver for auxiliaries, and bronze or iron for the craftsmen and farmers (3.415a1-c5). Furthermore, they are likely to produce children like themselves, but not *certain* to do so, and therefore all children must be watched to see the makeup of their constitution. Glaucon comments that while the founding members of the city might not believe in the myth, it is possible that later generations could be made to accept it (3.415c8-d2).<sup>54</sup> This myth, then, is

52 Since Cadmus was a Phoenician hero, his myth seems the obvious referent. The story of Cadmus, as preserved in Apollodorus, *Library* 3.4.1, can be summarized as follows: Cadmus was instructed by the gods to follow a sacred cow and to found a city where she fell down. Once the cow had laid down in what was to be Thebes, Cadmus attempted to prepare sacrifice and so desired to draw water from the nearby spring of Ares. This spring was guarded by a dragon, whom Cadmus killed and whose teeth Cadmus sowed in the ground on the advice of Athena. Once sowed, the teeth transformed into armed men called the Spartoi, who slew each other until only five were left. Although the other direct source for the myth is also from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 178-179), oblique reference in tragedy (Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 474, Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 931-946) speak to its circulation by Plato’s time. See Schofield (2009) 101 n. 1.

53 Cf. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 106-201.

54 The question of whether or not the guardians of Kallipolis believe in the myth is open. Of anyone in society, they are the most likely candidates for realizing the truth and, once they had understood this story to be a falsehood, they would be guilty of lying to their fellow citizens. Even if Socrates is

meant to be an origin myth: it is the story of the first, autochthonous generation, from which all future generations descend. All taken together, this is Socrates' "well-born" lie (3.414c1: γενναῖον).<sup>55</sup>

The presence of the noble lie at the very foundation of Kallipolis has, for some, been endemic of Plato's larger tendencies towards tyranny and anti-democratic sentiments. This position is summarized nicely by Karl Popper, who calls this myth the "Myth of Blood and Soil" and states that in it, we see that "Plato's utilitarian and totalitarian principles overrule everything, even the ruler's privilege of knowing...the truth. The motive of Plato's wish that the rulers themselves should believe in the propaganda lie is his hope of increasing its wholesome effect...of arresting all political change."<sup>56</sup> Nor is it only the sensibilities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reader that would be perturbed by the inclusion of deceit at the foundation of Kallipolis.<sup>57</sup> For a Greek reader, and an Athenian in particular, as Demosthenes puts it (19.184) "there is nothing which is

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interpreted as stating that the guardians also would believe in the myth, there is still an instance of lying by an authority figure in the form of Socrates-the-creator lying to the city's founders, and those individuals passing the lie on to their children.

55 Arendt (1968) takes issue with the translation of ψεῦδος as a "lie", and contends that this story should instead be thought of (following Cornford) as a "bold flight of invention" or else (following Voegelin) as satirical, rather than as a recommendation of lying (298 n. 5). Yet it is difficult to see why one should *not* consider this to be, at minimum, a "lie in words", given how much attention has already been given in the *Republic* to these kinds of lies, and to the fact that they are lies in the generally recognized sense of being falsely claimed to be (wholly) true.

56 Popper (1943, 2008) 148.

57 The Noble Lie has received criticism from a number of different political theorists and philosophers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, among them John Rawls (1972), who states that "such devices as Plato's Noble Lie" should not be used to support otherwise unstable social systems (454), and Bertrand Russell (2004), who claims that such a lie is "incompatible with philosophy" (113). A number of scholars speak of the Noble Lie as wrong on Kantian terms: because it treats the individuals in a society as means, rather than as ends in and of themselves (cf. Drombrowski 1997, 575). Although Kant's means/ends distinction is useful in discussing modern (post-18<sup>th</sup> century) reactions to Plato, it is not helpful in illuminating the reaction of an Athenian reader, nor the possible pedagogical rationale behind Plato's inclusion of the myth.

a greater injustice than speaking lies. For where the political system is based on speeches, how, if the speeches are false, can the system be secure?”<sup>58</sup>

Why does Plato include the myth of the metals, especially given that such a myth might alienate his audience?<sup>59</sup> After all, as Schofield (2009) observed, “there is nothing remotely egalitarian or democratic about the myth of the metals. In making sure that it wasn’t, Plato must have been perfectly aware that he was taking a stance that might be regarded as idiosyncratic (at best) or (potentially more uncomfortable) anti-Athenian.”<sup>60</sup> Schofield, like many other scholars, attempts not to absolve Plato of the charge of being anti-democratic, but instead explains why Plato must have thought the myth was necessary, given his inegalitarian society. Such a response defends Plato’s use of the myth by locating it within the internal logic of the political structure of Kallipolis: the myth contributes to the stability of Kallipolis for one reason or another.<sup>61</sup> And although some of these responses discuss the pedagogical role of the myth, they usually do so in terms of how the myth contributes to the education of the residents of Kallipolis, and not how it contributes to the education of Glaucon and Adeimantus, or of the *Republic’s* readership.<sup>62</sup>

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58 Demosthenes 19.184: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔσθ’ ὅ τι μείζον ἂν ὑμᾶς ἀδικήσειέ τις ἢ ψευδῆ λέγων. οἷς γὰρ ἔστ’ ἐν λόγοις ἢ πολιτεία, πῶς, ἂν οὗτοι μὴ ἀληθεῖς ᾧσιν, ἀσφαλῶς ἔστι πολιτεύεσθαι; For a treatment of the range of Greek attitudes on lying, see Hesk (2000).

59 Cf. Schofield (2007) “The Athenians generally thought of lying and deceit as the way not they but the Spartans conducted political life” (140).

60 Schofield (2009) 111.

61 Schofield (2009) outlines three goals of the myth: 1) theological justification for the way the capacities of individuals are determined and ordered; 2) theological imperative designed to prevent the system from being undermined by nepotism; and 3) divine prophecy of the consequences of ignoring the imperative (110-111).

62 Two examples of pedagogically focused readings of the myth which nonetheless contain the myth’s function within the imaginary city are given by Reeve (1988) and Lear (2006). Reeve interprets the lie



If we examine the myth of the metals' role in the pedagogical structure of the *Republic*, the image of Plato the author that emerges is not of an individual who is out of step with the thinking of his contemporaries or who cannot find rational support for his vision and so resorts to myth, but rather of a savvy teacher who capitalizes on the very Athenian aversion to deceit. To recapitulate the earlier discussion, Socrates presented the great evil in lying as coming from *receiving* the lie. We hate lies because we fear holding untruths in our souls, and not (necessarily) because we hate telling lies.<sup>63</sup> In the passage from Demosthenes quoted above, the problem with lies is that they can cause unrest in the political system, presumably because no one will be able to trust the information they are hearing. Again, this is a problem for those who have received dubious information; it is not necessarily a problem for those who seek to spread it.<sup>64</sup>

Socrates is the initiator of this lie, but he has co-conspirators in the form of his two interlocutors. Although Glaucon scoffs halfway through Socrates' rendering of the myth that it was not for nothing that Socrates had been reluctant to talk, the young man

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as for the good of the lower two classes inasmuch as it aligns their perceptions of the world as closely as possible with the truth - which, not having philosophical souls, they could not come to know (208-213). Lear points to the illogical nature of thinking in childhood as the reason the noble lie is necessary, as well as the reason why it is effective (31-34). For both, the use of the noble lie is illustrative of the influence of Plato's understanding of psychology on the educational system he proposes within Kallipolis.

63 Cf. *R.* 2.382a7-9. It is possible to condemn or disapprove of lying because of the impact of the lie on the one telling it. A Kantian response to lying, for example, holds that by disrespecting the rational agency in others we likewise harm it in ourselves. A response from cognitive psychology might reference the cognitive costs first of originating the lie, and then of remembering it.

64 The problem with lying that Demosthenes sites only because a problem, the cynical individual might note, *if such deceptions are uncovered*. Unlike Socrates' critique, Demosthenes' does not come into play unless citizens realize that they have a reason to be incredulous. Thus, from Demosthenes we could conclude not necessarily that lies are bad for the political system, but that lies that are uncovered to be so are bad.

never protests that the invention or spread of this myth is inappropriate.<sup>65</sup> From his privileged epistemological position alongside Socrates, he is at no risk from this “lie in words.” He knows it to be *representative* of the truth, even if it is not strictly true, and so his complicity in the lie does induce any risk of additional ignorance in his soul. The act of participating in the creation of this lie places Socrates’ interlocutors in a superior epistemological position to that of even the most clever future philosopher-king, at least at the moment of creation. And they are joined in this position by the reader, who, in her position as an observer, becomes a de facto member of the in-group of individuals who know the truth that the myth signifies. Membership in this group requires continued engagement with Socrates, the ring leader in this political project.

Even if the reader deviates from the model of ideal student presented by Glaucon and rejects the rather self-interested position sketched out above, the *Republic* offers a response to protests that she might offer. For, as discussed above, there are *two* ways in which a lie in words can be recognized as such: by an observer external to the lie, or by an individual who has received the lie and subjects it to rational scrutiny. Thus the reader can content herself that the (imaginary) upper class in Kallipolis will have the mental wherewithal to understand the lie in words as such, and from her privileged position she knows that those who do *not* come to this conclusion (such as, possibly, the “bronze” class) at least have more truth in their souls regarding their relationship to their fellow citizens than they would have otherwise.

Not only does the myth of the metals serve to unite the reader more firmly with

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65 In the dialogue immediately preceding the myth, Glaucon commented that Socrates seemed hesitant, and Socrates replied that Glaucon would understand once the myth had been revealed. Halfway through the revelation, Glaucon notes, “οὐκ ἐτός, ἔφη, πάλαι ἠσχόνου τὸ ψεῦδος λέγειν” (3.414e6).

Socrates through their common in-group status, but it also allows the reader to model for herself how one who has been told a lie in words might come to recognize it as such, or not, but regardless is better off for it.<sup>66</sup> This is not to say that a reader *must* come to this point of view and regard the myth of the metals positively, but rather that, like book one, this myth serves to model the appropriate attitude of a philosophical student.<sup>67</sup> Although Socrates has concluded his ideal educational program with a lie, it is a lie that is ultimately to its recipients' benefit. The reader who recognizes this and puts her faith in Socrates as a teacher is, in turn, prepared for the next step: she is ready to get her own lie in words, the truth of which she must uncover for herself.

### **5.2.2 Case Study Two: Mapping the Sun, Line, and Cave**

Books 6-7 contain the “longer road” (6.504b1-4) by which Socrates and his interlocutors can come to understand the greatest and most appropriate subject of inquiry (6.504c8-d2). After reminding his charges that they had earlier avoided the “longer and harder way” (4.435d), Socrates proceeds to set out three examples of figurative language about distinct, but related, topics: the sun analogy (which concerns the existence of forms), the line of knowledge (which specifies the limits of ordinary human knowledge), and the allegory of the cave (which is introduced as describing the effects of education and lack of education). Of these three examples, the allegory of the cave is the longest and most detailed: it seems like an ekphrasis of a play.<sup>68</sup> Given that the cave analogy is

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<sup>66</sup> While it can be debated whether ultimately the individuals in Kallipolis are, in fact, “better off” because of their residence in Kallipolis, at this point in the *Republic* there has been little suggestion that Kallipolis would not provide a generally good life for all classes. Indeed, when a concern is next voiced about unhappiness in the city (4.419a-420a), it is by Adeimantus on behalf of the guardians, and not on behalf of the deceived craftsmen.

<sup>67</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>68</sup> For the elements of theatricality in Plato's dialogues, see Mattéi (1988).

so extensive, it is perhaps appropriate that it captures the imagination of readers, and given that it is relatively self-contained, it is not surprising that it is often excerpted from the *Republic*, or that its constituent parts can be referenced without requiring explanation about, among other things, the politics of Kallipolis.<sup>69</sup> Yet for scholars interested in interpreting the message of this central image, it is precisely the intricacy of the image that presents problems: which elements of the allegory are *significant*, and which are merely enlivening detail?

One response to this problem has been to read these three passages as related to each other, or as all contributing to the same ineffable message. Like the proverbial tale of three blind men each feeling and reporting on the leg, tail, or trunk of an elephant, and concluding that they are touching three very different objects, each of these passages might *seem* to be describing a different phenomenon, yet they are in fact describing aspects of a common epistemology and ontology. If this proposition regarding the ultimate subject matter of these three metaphors holds, then it seems to hold as well that the order of the metaphors is not key to their interpretation: after all, it does not matter much if the tail, leg or trunk of our hypothetical elephant is described first.<sup>70</sup>

Such an approach undergirds the philosophical interpretation of scholars such as David Reeve (1988) when they place the sun, line, and cave alongside each other on a

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69 For a brief review of the enduring image of the cave amongst philosophers, see Clay (2000), esp. pp. 230-231. One instructive allusion to the allegory of the cave, referenced by Clay, comes from Sir Francis Bacon, who uses the term “idols of the cave” to reference the ways in which our own interests and pursuits color our understanding of the world.

70 Cf. Reeve (1988) 51: “Because the Line and Cave are introduced to explain the Sun...I shall reverse the textual order of presentation, beginning with the Cave and ending with the Sun. With luck, the journey will then be one of increasing illumination.”

common diagram of Plato's philosophical message.<sup>71</sup> Yet the very act of attempting to map one metaphor on the other is difficult, as I outline further below, and this difficulty suggests that the order of the metaphors is important: these images do build on each other. I begin with a brief sketch of each of the three examples individually, before commenting on the problems with overlaying the stories upon each other. By focusing instead on the impact that these key pieces of figurative language are meant to have on the reader, the manner in which they cooperate is illuminated.

Book 6 begins with a long discussion of the education of the philosophers. In order to ensure that Kallipolis is ruled by those best suited to the task, a potential guardian must be tested not only in terms of his emotions and constitution, but also in particular subjects (6.503e1-504a1). These particular subjects concern knowledge gained through the "longer road" (5.504c8), which ultimately yields insight into the form of the good. The sun analogy is introduced in order to explain the nature of the form of the good, and to describe how it relates metaphysically to other forms and to the world as we experience it. The sun analogy is a metaphor based on vision: Socrates begins the analogy by pointing out that just as a person might possess the physical ability to see, and objects might have features to be perceived (e.g., color), without the presence of light no act of vision can occur (6.507d11-e2). Furthermore, while different lights are effective, the most brilliant and source of all is the sun; applied as an analogy to the forms, this observation means that while there are many forms that allow us to apprehend the world, it is the form of the good that is the ultimate source of all forms.

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<sup>71</sup> Reeve's diagram can be found at the beginning of his work *Philosopher Kings*: Reeve (1988) ii.

The sun analogy not only specifies the ultimate goal of the guardian's education, but of a philosopher's education more generally. The result and reward of years of mental labor is not simply knowledge or truth, but apprehension of the form of the good (6.508e1-509a1). Glaucon reacts to this news enthusiastically, stating that such a thing must be an inconceivable beauty.<sup>72</sup> Yet he immediately signals his status as a philosophical novice by inquiring whether this form of the good is, in fact, pleasure (6.509a8). Socrates reacts with horror at the notion, and turns the conversation to a new analogy: the line of knowledge.

The line analogy is ostensibly a continuation of the sun analogy. In it, Socrates lays different kinds of objects along a divided line. Take a line, he suggests, and divide it into two unequal sections (fig. 1a). The large section represents the visible realm, the small section the intelligible realm. Socrates does not dictate how unequally the line should be divided, merely that when each of those two sections are again subdivided, this next division should occur in the same proportion as the line (fig. 1b).<sup>73</sup> This rule regarding proportion has the practical effect that, regardless of what proportion the individual chooses, the two central sections of the line will be equal.<sup>74</sup> The four segments are then labeled (fig. 1c), from the largest section of the visible to the smallest section of the intelligible, as follows: images of things (reflections, shadows, etc); ordinary visible objects (plants, animals, etc); concepts gained from attention to and extrapolation from

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72 R. 6.509a6-8: ἀμήχανον κάλλος, ἔφη, λέγεις, εἰ ἐπιστήμην μὲν καὶ ἀλήθειαν παρέχει, αὐτὸ δ' ὑπὲρ ταῦτα κάλλει ἐστίν:

73 R. 6.509d6-8.

74 As demonstrated by Klein (1965) 119 n. 27.

visual objects (e.g., geometry); and finally, and most mysteriously, a first principle grasped through the process of dialectic (6.511b1-6). These sections on the line have, Socrates suggests, different levels of knowledge attached to them (fig. 1d), from imagination and belief in the visible realm to thought and ultimately understanding in the intelligible realm (6.511d6-e2).

**Figure 1 : The Line (Initially)**

A.	Visible		Intelligible	
B.	4	2	2	1
C.	reflections or shadows	ordinary objects	mathematical objects	objects of thought
D.	imagination	belief	thought	understanding

Socrates segues from the line of knowledge to the allegory of the cave with the comment, “now compare the effect of education (παιδείας) and lack of education (ἀπαιδευσίας) with the following experience.”<sup>75</sup> The experience he describes is of people living in a cave and chained such that they are staring at the cave’s rear wall. Between the prisoners and the cave entrance there is a large, elevated fire that provides light, and between that fire and the prisoners there is an elevated, walled road. Puppeteers are crouched behind this wall, and use facsimiles of objects to create shadows on the wall that the prisoners look at. The prisoners are “like us” (7.515a5: ὁμοίους ἡμῖν), and take for true reality these shadows of objects.

This, presumably, is the section of the allegory that deals with the effect of lack of education. Next, Socrates introduces a man who, once suddenly freed “by nature”

<sup>75</sup> R. 7.513e6-514a1.

(7.515c6: φύσει), is compelled to stand up, walk around, and finally leave the cave. Although such a man would initially be pained by looking directly at the light of the cave's fire, he would come to realize that he had previously known only images of things, and not the real things at all. Further, if compelled to leave the cave, and forced into the sun, he would again first feel pain and confusion, but later come to recognize that he now has true wisdom about his world (7.516c3-5). This same man, should he return to the cave, would experience difficulty seeing in the relative darkness, and would provoke ridicule and murderous feelings in his chained companions. Socrates caps off the analogy by commenting on its relationship to the earlier images: he tells Glaucon that if he thinks of the upward journey out of the cave as similar to the journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, then he understands the analogy. For the sun is like the form of the good (and here we return to the sun analogy) since the form is the cause of all that is proper and beautiful, and provides the source for visual phenomena, and truth and understanding in the intelligible realm (7.517b3-c5).

In brief then, these are the three metaphors for the longer road. Given that all three are visually-based metaphors, and that Socrates does refer back to the earlier metaphors in his subsequent images, it is perhaps unsurprising that one might be tempted to diagram each relative to the other two. If one were to divide the elements of the cave analogy along the line of knowledge, it might look something like this:



**Figure 2: The Line and Cave**

Visible		Intelligible	
reflections or shadows	ordinary objects	mathematical objects	objects of thought
images on the wall of the cave	puppets	real trees, etc	sun, stars

So far, it seems, so good: there are four sections to the line, and we can find four equivalents in the cave analogy. Yet the process of mapping the cave on the line reveals startling truths about the radical nature of Socrates’ epistemology.<sup>76</sup> For, to follow the cave analogy, the objects of our ordinary perception – the trees, animals, and objects around us – are but shadows of puppets, which themselves are mere approximates of the real objects. Only if the cave analogy is read *following* the line analogy does this radical epistemology present itself. Or, to put it another way, if the reader were presented with the two images simultaneously, as in figure 2, then she would likely place her level of knowledge as somewhere in the third section (mathematical objects/real ordinary objects). But if the reader approaches each of these metaphors as relatively independent, the line analogy first causes her to admit *some* limitations on her knowledge, before the allegory of the cave suggests that in fact, *nearly all* of her perceptions of the world and knowledge based on those perceptions is suspect.

But why would such a radical theory of uncertainty be necessary? Recall the allegory of the sun, which first introduced the “long road.” After quickly outlining a theory of the forms, stating that the good is the form that rules over all, and claiming that

<sup>76</sup> Clay (2000) offers another criticism of such mapping enterprises, based on the fact that the line is meant to illustrate *individual* knowledge acquisition, whereas the cave illustrates the societal component to education (232-235).

apprehension of this form is to be most honored of all, Socrates is faced with an eager student who asks, perhaps a bit nervously, what this thing is that is superior to truth and knowledge in beauty, if not pleasure (6.509a8). Glaucon is attempting to follow the philosophical analogy that Socrates has laid out and to understand the corollaries to its components, but he lacks the intellectual resources to fully do so. Yet he makes the attempt regardless, and tries to fill in the picture based on his own understanding of the world.

For Socrates, this kind of student initiative is dangerous, and reveals the problems with figurative language. If a student is too eager and sure of herself, she risks overstepping the bounds of her understanding. In part, we can see the eagerness of the student as a direct result of the description the form of the good as such an ineffable but beautiful object. Such a description incites in the student a desire to apprehend this object, and it is this desire that will provide motivation for the long road. Yet it is a desire that must be tempered, both for Glaucon and for the reader. The line provides the first stage of this tempering because it causes the student to admit a degree of ignorance; the cave analogy completes the process by greatly expanding that degree.

Although the allegory of the cave is largely epistemologically negative, it has enough positive elements to prevent a motivated student from despairing of ever achieving knowledge. The prisoner who does escape manages to do so not because of some process of lottery or selection, but because he is released from his bonds by nature (7.515c6: φύσει). It is their natural constitution that will lead the philosophically inclined to become dissatisfied with contemplating illusions of reality and that will compel them

to try to come to face with reality itself. This natural constitution is one that Glaucon and Adeimantus possess, and that the reader can imagine herself to have as well.<sup>77</sup> If she does make progress on her intellectual journey, the reward for her mental labors will not come from her fellow citizens, but from the experience of apprehending the form of the good. That experience, and the knowledge that accompanies it, will distance her understanding and experience of the world as much from her common man as a living man is elevated from a shade in Hades.<sup>78</sup> Yet even if she is worried about the journey she is to make, she possesses something that the resident of the cave does not: she has the allegory of the cave itself to guide her. While this might not seem like much, the allegory of the cave can serve for the reader what the myth of the metals did for the guardians: it too is a kind of “lie in words”, or a reflection of reality. Just as she accepted that it was appropriate to teach the myth of the metals to the residents of Kallipolis, for it gave even the philosophically-obtuse an understanding of the world that they would not possess otherwise, so too she must accept the allegory of the cave as her own myth to be understood if possible, but trusted and believed in regardless.

### **5.2.3 Case Study Three: The Myth of Er**

Plato's *Republic* ends on a rather strange note. By the end of book 9, Plato seems to have concluded his investigation into the political workings of his ideal city Kallipolis, and seems also to have furnished a response to the challenge taken up by Glaucon and

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<sup>77</sup> Plato has already given the reader hints about the make-up of this constitution, both in the negative model's of book 1's interlocutors, as well as in the positive characters of Glaucon and Adeimantus. See 3. Beginning the Republic and 4.2.1 Book 2.

<sup>78</sup> Socrates quotes the same passage of Homer – Achilles' speech to Odysseus (*Ody.* 11.489-91) – earlier excluded from the education of Kallipolis' residence (3.387b1-5). Here again, the reader can feel superior to Kallipolis' residents, for she can understand the philosophical interpretation of this passage of Homer, and so there is no danger that it will make her prefer to act cowardly rather than risk death.

Adeimantus in book 2: namely, why it is always preferable to live the just life rather than the unjust one. In his final set of exchanges with Glaucon, Socrates concludes that the truly just man, which is to say the man who has his soul ordered according to the proper constitution, would continue throughout his life to strive to maintain that order in his soul. As a result, he would avoid the corrupting politics of his own city. Only in Kallipolis, that ideal city whose inner workings have consumed much of the preceding philosophy, could such a man practice pure, ennobling politics. And yet, as Glaucon comments, Kallipolis, “exists in words” but “does not exist anywhere on earth” (9.592a9-b1).<sup>79</sup> Socrates adds that there “may be a model of Kallipolis in the heavens for anyone who wishes to look at it and to found himself on the basis of what he sees” (592b5), but ultimately agrees with Glaucon that this truly just man would abstain from politics here on earth. This is the conclusion to book 9.

As Julia Annas puts it in her *Introduction to Plato's Republic*, as readers we are “surprised to find another book added on.”<sup>80</sup> And what a book – Socrates returns to the question of the place of mimetic art in Kallipolis, and then goes on to tell the so-called myth of Er, a tale of judgment after death followed by reincarnation. Many commentators on Plato's *Republic* have found the arguments of book 10 problematic. Annas goes so far as to call book 10 “gratuitous and clumsy.” She notes that, “We can see why Plato thought it relevant to the rest of the *Republic*; but the level of philosophical

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79 9.592a10-b5: Μανθάνω, ἔφη· ἐν ἧ νῦν διήλθομεν οἰκίζοντες πόλει λέγεις, τῇ ἐν λόγοις κειμένη, ἐπεὶ γῆς γε οὐδαμοῦ οἶμαι αὐτὴν εἶναι. Ἀλλ', ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίσειν. Διαφέρει δὲ οὐδὲν εἴτε που ἔστιν εἴτε ἔσται· τὰ γὰρ ταύτης μόνης ἂν δὲ οὐδὲν εἴτε που ἔστιν εἴτε ἔσται· τὰ γὰρ ταύτης μόνης ἂν πράξειεν, ἄλλης δὲ οὐδεμιᾶς.

80 Annas (1981) 335.

argument and literary skill is much below the rest of the book.”<sup>81</sup> Slightly less damningly, Nicholas White, in his *Companion to Plato's Republic*, calls book 10 “an appendix to the whole work...[and] not a fully cohesive one.”<sup>82</sup> Still others condemn book 10 by omission, such as Terence Irwin, who gives it scant discussion in several of his works on Plato's moral theory. The response to book 10 has not been uniformly negative. More positive readings of book 10 regard it as a kind of epilogue, which can be understood to elevate the previous philosophy to mythic levels or at the very least which provides a secondary justification for the just life.<sup>83</sup> Yet even these approaches do not suggest that book 10 is necessary to the *Republic*; it is merely a nice addendum to the work.<sup>84</sup>

Although the myth of Er is quite detailed, for the purposes of this case study I examine one particular passage in order to consider how we should regard the relationship between book 10 and the *Republic* as a whole. First, to set the scene: after banishing mimetic poetry from Kallipolis, Socrates comments that “the greatest rewards of virtue” have not yet been discussed (10.608c1). He provides a rather quick argument for the immortality of the soul, and then Socrates states that the prizes, wages, and gifts

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81 Ibid. Annas reevaluates her position slightly in her subsequent article “Plato’s Myths of Judgment” (1982), in which she acknowledges the philosophical depth of the myth of Er. Her reading of the myth differs dramatically from my own, as she holds that the myth suggests, “a cosmos that is individual to individuals’ concerns and does not necessarily guarantee rewards for our being just” (138). This reading depends on a reading of the myth that is heavily deterministic, and that downplays the significance of the very passage that I explicate below.

82 White (1979) 246.

83 Cf. Yunis (2007) 23, White (1979).

84 Cf. Halliwell (2007), who argues that the myth of Er is meant to function affectively, rather than philosophically, on Socrates’ interlocutors and on the reader.

that a just man receives when alive are nothing in number or size compared to those that await each man after death (10.614a-b). In response to Glaucon's request to hear more about these posthumous awards, Socrates proceeds to tell the story of the Pampylian fighter Er, a man who died, traveled to the land of the dead, and then revived in order to report all that he had seen in his journey to the underworld. Glaucon's request to hear this story are the last words spoken by a Socratic interlocutor in the *Republic*, since the story of Er is told in an extended, unbroken monologue, and it is with this *mythos* that Plato closes his work.

So what does this myth, given such pride of place in the *Republic*, contain? Er reports back that after death souls face a judgement based on their deeds, and are either sent up to the heavens or down into the earth, where they spend the next thousand years. And so it seems that the souls are judged based on their overall deeds, and the presumption is that such souls must exclusively be rewarded or punished. After the souls have finished serving out their thousand year reward or punishment, they then travel together to the spindle of Necessity, where they will chose their next lives. An array of possible lives is laid before the souls, and it is up to each to decide which life he prefers. Socrates breaks the narrative here to note that it is here that a “human being faces the greatest danger of all”, since it is here that he “must reason out which life is better and which is worse and choose accordingly, calling worse the one that will lead the soul to become more unjust, and better the one that leads it to become more just” (10.618c).<sup>85</sup>

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85 10.618b6-c6: ἔνθα δὴ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὃ φίλε Γλαύκων, ὁ πᾶς κίνδυνος ἀνθρώπου, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μάλιστα ἐπιμελητέον ὅπως ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἀμελήσας τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος καὶ ζητητῆς καὶ μαθητῆς ἔσται, ἐάν ποθεν οἷός τ' ἦ μαθεῖν καὶ ἐξευρεῖν τίς αὐτὸν ποιήσει δυνατὸν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα, βίον καὶ χρηστὸν καὶ πονηρὸν διαγιγνώσκοντα, τὸν βελτίω ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν ἀεὶ πανταχοῦ αἰρεῖσθαι·

Er reports that the first man to choose decides upon the greatest tyranny or, to be more specific, he chooses the life of Thyestes-like figure. This soul snatches up that life, seeing the benefits of kingship. He failed to examine it closely enough to see that he would also be fated “to eat his own children, among other evils” (10.619c). Our storyteller – it is difficult to separate Er from Socrates in these moments of commentary – describes the soul as bemoaning his choice and as blaming everything and everyone except for himself for this terrible decision. The storyteller then notes that this poor soul was one of those “who had come down from heaven, having lived his previous life in an orderly constitution, sharing in virtue through habit but without philosophy” (619c5-d).<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, this soul was not alone in making a bad decision about his next life after just having been rewarded for living a life of just deeds. The narrator continues, noting that many other formerly-heavenly souls make this same mistake, since they were “untrained in suffering.” However, those souls who have come up from within the earth took their time with their decisions, and so generally made good decisions about their next lives. And so the general path for non-philosophical souls seems to be this: chose a good life, practice good deeds through habit rather than philosophy, get rewarded in

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86 10.619c5-d: εἶναι δὲ αὐτὸν τῶν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡκόντων, ἐν τεταγμένῃ πολιτείᾳ ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ βίῳ βεβιωκότα, ἔθει ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας ἀρετῆς μετελιηφότα. Annas (1982) provides a very different interpretation of the message of the myth of Er than I provide below. Her reading is based on the notion that “most of the souls fresh from heaven (*not* just the unphilosophical ones, as is often assumed) make bad choices just because of their unworldly conditions” (135). I disagree with her reading, given that the first soul who makes a poor choice is specifically noted to have lived his just life “ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας”, and here our subsequent explanations of the myth part ways. From her reading that *both* philosophical and non-philosophical souls choose poorly, Annas gathers that the myth of Er is infused with a kind of determinism, in which individuals cannot release themselves from cycle of reward and punishment. The purpose of this myth, according to Annas, is to make clear that we “choose to be good, or not, against the background of a cosmos that is indifferent to individuals’ concerns and does not necessarily guarantee rewards for our being just” (138), a conclusion that serves to undercut the supposedly deterministic world view of the myth.

heaven for a thousand years, chose a bad life through carelessness, commit bad deeds, get punished below the earth for a thousand years, chose more cautiously and so get a good life, etc. Only those who have “always practiced philosophy in a sound manner” will manage to circumvent the second half of that cycle, in which the soul makes a bad decision and has to learn through suffering to be more cautious. These souls of philosophers will always choose good lives, for they will always choose carefully and with an eye towards their understanding of what kind of life best allows for philosophical contemplation and the maintenance of a just alignment in the soul.

One of the messages of this myth is that only those who are agents of justice, that is to say only those who live a just life through choice and decision rather than through accident, attain the knowledge necessary to make a prudent selection of a future life.<sup>87</sup> Yet the endless cycle of punishment and reward seen in the *Republic* seems particularly extreme, as suggests not only the thousand years in the heavens or below the earth, but also the constant back and forth between living an easy, thoughtlessly just life (we might call this the life of a Cephalus) and living the wretched life of a tyrant. Even more troubling, recall that the unfortunate soul who makes that terrible first choice is one who came down from heaven, having “having lived his previous life in an orderly constitution, sharing in virtue through habit but without philosophy.” This orderly constitution is ἐν τεταγμένη πολιτείᾳ.<sup>88</sup> Socrates’ language here evokes a nearly identical

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87 As a whole this message is in keeping with the general tenor of Platonic philosophy, in which knowledge is required to live a truly virtuous life. We might, for example, compare the story of reincarnation told here with that seen in the *Phaedo*, in which those who have practiced social virtues such as moderation and justice through habit end up becoming bees or ants in their next lives (*Phd.* 82B1).

88 Plato uses the verb *tasso* and its derivatives in a variety of ways in the *Republic*. Most frequently, it shows up with its basic meaning of “to draw up in order of battle,” during discussions of soldiers in



use in book 6, when Socrates is describing the lives of the philosopher-kings. He has just unveiled the fact that the ideal city will be ruled by philosophers, and engages his interlocutor Adeimantus in a brief discussion of why the masses would disdain philosophy, and the notion of philosopher-kings. The truly philosophical man, in contrast, looks at and contemplates things that are orderly and divine, and in so contemplating soon becomes as orderly and divine as a human can be.

It is this passage in book 6 that Socrates seems to be recalling at the end of book 9 with his discussion of the philosophical man's rejection of politics. Like the philosopher described in book 6, the man of book 9 looks to the heavens for the model of the ideal constitution so that he emulate it and arrange his own soul like the divine Kallipolis. And yet, if we associate the notion of an orderly constitution closely with Kallipolis, this association implies that those who live in an orderly constitution yet who do not study philosophy – which in Kallipolis would include the producers and the guardians – are precisely the kinds of individuals who would be fated to make a terrible choice of their future life. So this myth also has the extraordinary implication that those producers and auxiliaries who live within Kallipolis are *worse off* in their next lives than their corollaries living elsewhere, for while the philosophically-disinclined elsewhere have some opportunity to learn the negative effects of injustice, those in Kallipolis are shielded from any such negative experience. Ultimately, this fact about Kallipolis seems to contradict Socrates' earlier claim to Adeimantus at the beginning of book 4 that Kallipolis seeks justice for all, and does not simply seek the happiness of the philosopher-class

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Kallipolis, for example, but it also frequently shows up in the sense of “to agree upon, to settle.” Less commonly, the verb appears in discussions of the proper arrangement of the soul. In one case it appears in a near identical usage – as a perfect participle – and that case occurs in book six (6.500c).

(4.420b-c).<sup>89</sup>

The myth of Er itself helps to explain why the residents of Kallipolis might suffer from their participation in this ideal city. For there are some non-philosophical souls who do make good choices about their next lives: notably, Odysseus, who is forced by lot to choose last of all (10.620c2-d2). Although all of more exciting or interesting lives have already been chosen, Odysseus sees one lying off to the side and neglected and, remembering his former suffering, chooses this quiet life for himself.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, other heroes such as Orpheus and Ajax make better choices than the resident of the well-ordered city, because they each apply the lessons that their suffering have taught them about what is to be desired and what is to be avoided in life. Yet, as discussed above, the producers and auxiliaries of Kallipolis would be protected from such painful learning. The guardians exist to ensure that the cupidity and audacity of the two lower classes are kept in check, and therefore these individuals never suffer from their overindulgence in these traits, nor do they philosophically examine their lives. Indeed, the fact that in the ideal city these individuals do what they do best explicitly discourages regular citizens of Kallipolis from thinking about ethics, politics, or other philosophical issues at all, trusting

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89 Reeve (1988) rejects the notion that we should associate the orderly-city of book 10 with Kallipolis. For, Reeve argues, “Although the producers and guardians...do not themselves formally study philosophy, their polis is steeped in it. And they themselves have been made friends of justice by their education. Moreover, if they were included in the present class, it would not be in their true long-term interests to live in the Kallipolis. For they would pay in their next incarnation for their happiness in this one” (319). Reeve is right that reading the well-ordered constitution as a Kallipolis-like state gives us this extraordinary conclusion, yet I do not think this conclusion is so absurd that it must be rejected out of hand. After all, the similar wordings of the descriptions of Kallipolis (*R.* 6.500c2, 9.592b-c) and of the former residence of the unfortunate soul (*R.* 10.619c5-d) strongly suggest a connection between the two.

90 Odysseus declares himself content with his selection, and notes that he would have chosen this quiet life even if given the first choice (10.62c7-d2).

such endeavors to the philosopher-kings. The emphasis the myth of Er places on wisdom gained through suffering helps to explain why these residents of Kallipolis would be ill-prepared to face what Socrates calls the greatest danger of all to an individual.

Yet if this reading of the myth of Er holds, what pedagogical purpose does it serve to include this odd fact about the not-so-ideal city, especially given Socrates' earlier assertions that Kallipolis is designed with an eye towards making the whole city as happy as possible?<sup>91</sup> Again, thinking of the context of the passages in question and the pedagogical structure of the *Republic* provides a means for reconciling book 10 with book 4. In book 4, Socrates' response about the happiness of the city as a whole is only given after Adeimantus protests that someone might object he is not making the guardians very happy, since they derive no good from the city (4.419a). At this point in the dialogue Socrates has not had the opportunity to argue for the intrinsic benefits of having a just soul, nor has he shown the kind of good that the philosophers *do* derive from the city – that in Kallipolis a philosophically inclined man is best positioned to discover the nature of the good. Socrates' response to Adeimantus is a product of both the restricted philosophical position Socrates finds himself in and of the pedagogical challenge Adeimantus presents: Adeimantus must be convinced to continue in this investigation of the just city, and to temporarily put aside his beliefs about what he thinks makes a good life – namely land, fine big houses, gold, silver and “all the things that those who are going to be blessedly happy are thought to require.” But if this discussion shows why Socrates might have to delay in revealing how Kallipolis makes the

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91 4.420b2-7.

philosopher-class happy, it does not answer the puzzle of why the myth of Er damns the producers and auxiliaries so. Why can't the producers and auxiliaries, through being “friends of justice,” live happily in this life and the next?<sup>92</sup> Why end the *Republic* with this strange myth at all, when the reasons for choosing justice for itself have already (ostensibly) been established by the end of book 9?

To answer that question, and to understand the crowning position of the myth of Er in the pedagogical structure of the *Republic*, let us consider the journey that Adeimantus and Glaucon have taken, which the reader has observed. They began this journey by protesting that the good life must involve luxurious living – after all, the just but austere Pig City was not good enough for these brothers.<sup>93</sup> They came to realize that philosophy was the only epistemically and morally defensible discipline, and recognized that the ultimate rewards of philosophical pursuit lie not in pleasure or political power, but in the ineffable apprehension of the most beautiful object, the good.<sup>94</sup> By the end of book 9, Adeimantus and Glaucon have also come to accept Socrates' contention that the man who does just deeds is better off than the man who does unjust ones. Yet while the philosophy of books 1-9 present reasons for aspiring to apprehend the good, there is no urgency behind the argument. The goal is a worthy one to aspire to, but it would be much easier to simply listen to Socrates spin out stories, content with the certainty that his lies in words are allowing you to easily take some element of truth into your soul and to live your life in accordance with virtue, even if you have no real knowledge of it. It is only

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92 Cf. Reeve (1988) 319.

93 Cf. 2.372d2-e1.

94 See 4.3 Two Educational Programs and 5.2.2 Case Study Two: Mapping the Sun, Line, and Cave.

with book 10 and its concluding myth that the student receives a charge not to be content simply with living in a just city, or, like Cephalus, with happening to live a life filled with just deeds, but actively to seek justice within themselves. Should they not, they will face the consequences in their next lives.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

With these three case studies in mind, let us return to the question of why Plato employs figurative language in his philosophy. Both the myth of the metals and the myth of Er occur at the culmination of their respective philosophical discussions, and the allegory of the cave is the conclusion to three epistemological analogies. It cannot be coincidence that Plato resorts to figurative language particularly at these key moments in the philosophical argument.<sup>95</sup> As my discussion above has shown, each example of figurative language results in a particular philosophical charge for the student: to trust in Socrates and join him in philosophy; to doubt the veracity of the world around her and acknowledge the limits of her own knowledge; and finally to recognize the critical importance of immediately turning to philosophical pursuits. These messages to his reader each serve to indoctrinate her in the notion that philosophy is a discipline that is essential to her life, while at the same time they imply that the truths philosophy will reveal cannot be expressed, but can only be experienced.

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95 There are parallels between Plato's evasion of explanation at the culmination of his argument and the careful construction of medical texts and Isocrates' oratory discussed in 2.4 Teaching With Texts: like those stochastic texts, Plato avoids attempting to convey in words aspects of his philosophy that require direct study under a teacher.

## Conclusion

Almost hidden by the bombastic exchanges between Thrasymachus and Socrates in book 1 is a moment of philosophical work by the members of the audience, Polemarchus and Clitophon.<sup>1</sup> Although each of these men has had or will have his own exchange with Socrates,<sup>2</sup> at the time of their exchange they are observers, watching Socrates practice the elenchus on Thrasymachus. The reader might be forgiven for largely forgetting about their presence, since the narrator Socrates seldom reports the reactions or comments of those not directly involved in the current exchange, and instead focuses the reader's attention on the foregrounded individuals. Yet Polemarchus and Clitophon are present as well, and by their interjection the reader is reminded that there is an *internal* audience to the philosophical debate.

Polemarchus and Clitophon's interlude begins when Polemarchus asserts that Socrates' logic in debunking Thrasymachus' definition of justice is absolutely clear, and Clitophon responds with a protest. The two men then debate Thrasymachus' position amongst themselves by citing not only what Thrasymachus has actually said, but also what he meant by what he said. Clitophon, in his attempt to shore up the Thrasymachean position, provides a kind of exegesis for the conversation that has just occurred, and declares that there is a particular way of interpreting Thrasymachus' definition that saves

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1 R. 1.340a1-b9.

2 Polemarchus' exchange with Socrates was interrupted at R.1.336a11. Although the authenticity of Clitophon's eponymous dialogue was doubted in the Renaissance, recent scholarship has defended it. See Slings (1999) and Bowe (2007).

it from the Socratean charge. Ultimately, Clitophon's philosophical move is rejected by no less than Thrasymachus himself, when Socrates poses the revised definition to him.<sup>3</sup> Thrasymachus and Socrates resume their debate with each other, and Polemarchus and Clitophon again fade into the background.

What are we to make of this brief moment of commentary and philosophizing – is this meant to be a model conversation for the reader, as an example of the kind of engagement and debate that one can have with the text? Furthermore, do we have preserved here a reenactment of how the dialogues could have functioned within a pedagogical context, where two or more individuals acted out the dialogue while the audience watched and commented? Ultimately, an answer to these questions remains speculative, although an affirmative response seems plausible. Certainly, the notion of a group of individuals reviewing a text together out loud, possibly with one particular person guiding the reading, accords with both the mixture of orality and literacy discussed in chapter 2, and with the practices of group education reviewed in chapter 1. Yet this kind of activity seems to function best with those dialogues that, like book 1, are elenctic in nature. The dialogue form provides a moment of a potential gap in communication, a moment in which the audience could provide their own interpretation of what was misperceived, and how. Furthermore, the fact that such dialogues frequently end in *akrasia* encourages the dialogue's audience to reconstruct "what went wrong" and to attempt to rescue the dialogue with a positive ending.

Although the text of books 2-10 of the *Republic* might be read out loud to a group, with few exceptions the work does not offer the same space for reader interpretation as

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3 R. 1.340b10-341a4.

we see in Clitophon and Polemarchus' interlude: those two observers, after all, questioned not only Thrasymachus' position, but Socrates' summation of that position as well. Socrates does have interlocutors in books 2-10, but rarely do Glaucon or Adeimantus put forth ideas that are recast and examined by Socrates; instead, Socrates lays out a positive philosophy, and the two brothers request clarification upon occasion. Finally, the work (after book 1) does not end in akrasia, but rather in the puzzling myth of Er, which might require thought and reflection but, as presented, does not need to be revised in order to "save" the *Republic*. While we might understand the protreptic nature of the elenctic, "Socratic" dialogues, which encourage those who encounter them to engage in a self-examination modeled on the elenchus Socrates practices on others, it has been the project of this dissertation to ask how a text such as the *Republic*, in which the dialogue form seems largely *pro forma*, might too have been intended not only to have a protreptic effect on its reader, but to engage them in the rudimentary philosophical and psychological work necessary to be prepared for Platonic philosophy.

In chapters 3-5, I tested the thesis that the *Republic* is composed with an eye towards having an educational effect on its reader from a number of different angles. By foregrounding the educational function of a given passage, I have shown that the ways in which various, seemingly disparate sections of the *Republic* act in concert with each other. In chapter 3, I showed how Plato used characters with constitutions ill-suited to philosophy (under his definition of the practice) as foils for the reader's positive role models, Glaucon and Adeimantus. Similarly, the elenctic style of philosophy of book 1, which is associated not only with Socrates but also with Plato's rival authors of



*Sokratikoi logoi* (as discussed in chapter 2), is rejected for its limitations, in favor of the kind of positive philosophical program unveiled in the subsequent books. In his dismissal of Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus from the Socratic conversation, Plato suggests that should the reader wish to engage with Socrates, she must eschew the kinds of inappropriate temperaments displayed by these three. Similarly, while the elenchus might reveal an individual's lack of knowledge, as a tool for philosophical enlightenment it is limited, and must be succeeded by a new kind of philosophical methodology – a kind of discipleship and following of Socrates.

In chapters 4 and 5 I explored this new kind of philosophical methodology and investigated how Plato used other tools, beyond the elenchus, to affect change in his reader's disposition and outlook. The educational program of Kallipolis, I showed, in part should be read as a reaction by Plato to the kinds of rival disciplines addressed in chapter 2. Plato has designed this model educational system not only to suggest the kinds of practices that are helpful to a budding philosopher, but also to eliminate from contention those enterprises with rival claims on being valuable *techne*: medicine and oratory. It is only once these competing disciplines have been shown to be fundamentally corrupt that Plato then introduces the path of philosophy in book 5.

This path will be arduous, and possibly even dangerous, and a student must undertake it with the understanding of how radically ignorant she is of the true nature of her world. Such an understanding is easier to assert than to truly believe, and so Plato layers myths and allegories in his work to gradually produce in the reader the kind of fundamental shift that his philosophy requires. First the reader observes the myth making

process from the outside, watching as Socrates develops a “myth in lies” that encapsulates the true nature of things in a way in which the myth’s recipients can understand, when they might not have otherwise. She can see the benefit to this use of figurative language, and furthermore can recognize how one who is told such a story might use it for their own epistemological gain. In the middle section of the *Republic*, the reader herself is subject to a series of allegories, each of which require her to further acknowledge the limitations of her understanding. Through figurative language, Plato attempts to induce in his reader the kind of conversion that logic alone cannot achieve, and promises to the attentive reader not only the rewards of the experience of the form of the good but also, in the myth of Er, an escape from the endless cycle of reward and retribution that non-philosophical individuals face.

The picture that my project paints of Plato’s educational techniques is not necessarily a rosy one, nor is it uncontroversial. I suggest that Plato is egalitarian neither in his belief about who has the capacity to practice philosophy, nor in his conception of where valuable philosophical insight can originate. Indeed, in selection process of book 1 of the *Republic*, I identify Plato as placing a similar kind of emphasis on the psychological and intellectual make-up of his successful pupil as that stressed by his competitor Isocrates. Like the authors of stochastic works, Plato suggests that only certain potential students can be transformed through education into successful philosophers. Furthermore, this process of transformation is equal parts active and passive: the student cannot be content to simply live a good life through habit rather than through reflection, but neither can she challenge the fundamental axioms implied by the

*Republic*: that she lacks true knowledge, and cannot find such knowledge through any other pursuit than philosophy.

Like the medical treatises and oratorical texts discussed in chapter 2, Plato does not reveal the pragmatic, daily routine of his program of philosophical education. Like the texts of Plato's intellectual rivals, the *Republic* is not designed to replace the important role of a teacher for a student's development in his chosen disciple. Yet Plato's work does a great deal more than simply suggest that philosophy is a better pursuit than its competitors. By having sections of the *Republic* recall and reflect on each other, repeating themes of the interplay between society, experience, and knowledge, and using figurative language with multiple layers of meaning, Plato crafted a text that can initially function in the absence of a teacher, and that can ensure that when the student does arrive at Plato's academy, she has already cleared away many of her misperceptions, and laid in her soul a foundation upon which a new view of the world can be built.

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## Biography

Laura Aline Ward was born in 1981 in Alabama. She attended Virginia Tech and received honors degrees in Philosophy (B.A.), in Classical Studies (B.A.), and in Psychology (B.S.) in 2003. While at Virginia Tech, she was selected to receive the William H. Williams Senior Prize for the top graduating senior in philosophy and the Advancing Women Award for work promoting the interests of female students. In 2004, she earned an M.A. in Philosophy from Virginia Tech with the thesis, “Objectivity in Feminist Philosophy of Science” (Valerie Hardcastle, advisor).

She matriculated at Duke University in 2004, where she held a Graduate Fellowship in Classical Studies from 2004-2010. While at Duke, she was a Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Fellow (2008-2009) and a member of the Franklin Humanities Institute Dissertation Working Group (2008-2009). In the summer of 2006, she attended the American Academy in Rome Summer Program in Archaeology with the financial assistance of the Mary A. Grant Award from CAMWS and a Travel Fellowship from the Duke Department of Classical Studies. In the summer of 2008 she held a Summer Research Fellowship at Duke. She received an honorable mention for the Chester P. Middlesworth Award (2006) and the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching (2009), and was recognized in 2010 as one of the top 5% of instructors at Duke.